*Open Access*
*ORIGINAL ARTICLE*

# Analyzing the Features of the *Populist* Approach in Formal and Public Education from the Perspective of Primary School Teachers

Mazhar Babaee [*1], Hedyeh Azagh[2], Shima Yazdanpanah [3]

1. Corresponding Author: Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran E.Mail: Mazharbabaee@gmail.com
2. Undergraduate Student of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, Sanandaj, Iran
3. Undergraduate Student of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, Sanandaj, Iran

## Abstract

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to analyze the features of the *populist* approach in formal and public education from the perspective of teachers in Kurdistan province. To achieve this goal, documentary/bibliographic and descriptive-analytical methods along with descriptive content analysis were used. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire. The findings were classified under six themes, twelve categories and twenty-eight concepts. The concept of *populism* in the discussion of "common people" was derived from the findings to indicate an inability to change behaviors with the use of learnt materials. The quality of being common depends on the information possessed by the person, the type of insights and beliefs he holds and the culture in which he lives. Teachers' approach to *populism* in formal and public education is characterized by resistance to change, traditional thoughts, lack of reflection, and lack of progress. For this reason, the education system under scrutiny is recommended to focus on modifying its teachers' perspectives and attitudes.
*Keywords*: Analysis, populist approach, formal and public education, teachers, Kurdistan province

## Introduction

Common beliefs are often part of complex cultural processes that include not only beliefs but also other values and behaviors (Henderson, 2016: 25). One of the ways to preserve and transmit these customs and especially common beliefs is the educational system of that society; Because the educational system "has the task of transferring culture and preparing the generation being educated to participate in the society" (Taghizadeh Shirazi, Haj Hosseini and Aali, 2018: 54). It is in such a mission that the weight and depth of the teacher's responsibility is revealed; Because his learnings are directly reflected in the family and society and help human beings to better enter the cultural, social and economic life and help the material and spiritual development of the society by cultivating human resources. (Sadeghi, 2016: 29).

In a research entitled " Investigating the Effects of Folk Beliefs in Qajar Era Iran on Medicine " written by Omraei et al (2023), the findings showed, the ignorance, the limitations, etc., caused a deterioration in the beliefs and opinions of the people. enter and the tendency towards superstitions will increase. Liu (2023) in his research entitled "Guided management of rural folk beliefs under the background of rural revitalization strategy" showed that The management of folk beliefs can lead to innovation in the development of traditional culture.

In such context, the present study was conducted to analyze the *populist* approach in the field of formal and public education from the perspective of primary school teachers in three cities of Kurdistan province, including Sanandaj, Marivan and Saqez. A clearer understanding of the current situation in the education system can thus

be achieved and small steps should then be taken to recognize and improve the issues in education and to correct the negative aspects related to the *populist* approach in formal education.

## Methodology

This study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How can *populism* and its features be analyzed? (2) How can the potential benefits and challenges of popular behaviors be explained from the perspective of teachers in Kurdistan Province? (3) How can the meaning of *common* people and *populism* in its general sense be explained from the viewpoint of teachers in Kurdistan province? (4) How can the features of a *populist* approach in formal and public education be analyzed from the viewpoint of teachers in Kurdistan Province?

Based on the study objectives and questions, documentary-bibliographic and descriptive-analytical methods along with a descriptive quantitative content analysis of written text were used. The research was carried out in two main steps and in several stages: In the first step, the documentary-bibliographic method was used to examine valid sources and extract the meaning of *common* people and related concepts from different Persian and English dictionaries. Then, using the descriptive-analytical method, the meaning of *common* people was described and explained from the perspective of experts in different professions. In the second step, a conceptual study of the *populist* approach from the perspective of primary school teachers in Kurdistan province (three cities of Sanandaj, Marivan and Saqez) was conducted. A researcher-made questionnaire plus open-ended questions were therefore designed and distributed among the teachers. Then, the features of this approach were categorized and *common* people emerged with six themes, twelve categories and twenty-eight concepts. Finally, the answers given to each question were analyzed.

## Results

The findings of this study were classified under six themes, twelve categories and twenty-eight concepts. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics from the perspective of primary school teachers:

**Table 1.** Meanings of the *populist* approach.

| Theme | Category | Concept |
|---|---|---|
| Short-sighted | Static information | Being illiterate |
| | | Lack of knowledge |
| | Intellectual prejudice | Dealing with modernity |
| | | Lack of criticism |
| | | Opposition to the elite |
| One-dimensional | Superficial attitude | Popular behaviors |
| | | Superficiality |
| | | Aggression |
| | Crude existence | Aggression |
| | | Dealing with minor matters |
| | | Lack of planning |

In formal and public education, *populism* as an approach can include the attitudes, beliefs, ideas and thoughts of the teachers, parents, school principals, students and books and the behaviors displayed by those who contribute to the quality of education in the society. This is caused by how the educational system functions in a society, and education reform can thus help promote culture and values in the society.

Table 2 shows the *populist* approach to formal education revealed in the attitudes of primary school teachers:

**Table 2.** The *populist* approach

| Theme | Category | Concept |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional methods of education | Lack of creative thinking | Traditional thoughts |
| | | Do not think |
| | Prejudice and ignorance in education | Elitism |
| | | Lack of familiarity with scientific principles |

| Lack of individual and cultural change | Lack of scientific insight and progress | Resistance to change<br>Lack of foresight<br>Lack of progress |
| --- | --- | --- |

When employees' attitude toward education is a *populist* one, many educational problems can arise and form the basis of many other problems in other areas of life. The reason for this association is that *populists* do not react positively to change in education and rely more on their previous information and do not use new and up-to-date knowledge to improve their knowledge to create excellence in the education system.

## Discussion and conclusion

The results showed that illiteracy and superficiality are only one of the components of the populist approach and that populism involves an approach beyond these meanings. Also, the challenges of showing vulgar behaviors contain sanctification and lack progress, and their avoidance is effective in all areas. In general, a comprehensive definition of populism in formal and public education includes the inability to change beliefs and attitudes using what has been learned by the individual. Since this study carried out an analysis of the *populist* approach in education, the findings cannot be generalized to social, political and religious domains. This research can be useful for educational system authorities and education specialists to modify and improve on the current approaches in education. These professionals are recommended to not only change their attitudes and thoughts and become aware of new scientific principles and methods of education, but are also advised to use new creative procedures in the field of education to break away from the common society.

## Reference

Liu, H. (2023). Guided Management of Rural Folk Beliefs under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy. *Journal of Sociology and Ethnology*, 5(2), 61-67. DOI: 10.23977/jsoce.2023.050210

Omraei L, Akbari A, Sepehri Rad O, Vossoughi Motlagh R A. (2023). Investigating the Effects of Folk Beliefs in Qajar Era Iran on Medicine, *Journal of Quran and Medicine*. 7(4): 231-240. URL: http://quranmed.com/article-1-876-fa.html. (Text in Persian).

Sadeghi, H. (2016). «The role and position of the teacher in the education system». *Journal of Peyvand,* 439, pp: 28- 30. (Text in Persian.)

Taghizadeh, M., Haj Hosseini, M. and Ali, M. (2019). Comparative analysis of educational approaches in the age of globalization: Educational tenets and consequent models. *The Journal of New Thoughts on Education*, 15 (1), 53-91. doi**:** 10.22051/jontoe.2019.20341.2213 (Text in Persian).