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LEGAL EDUCATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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Abstract

In the context of modern higher education, the formation of professionally competent specialists cannot be separated from their legal awareness and legal culture. Legal education plays a crucial role in shaping students' professional responsibility, civic consciousness, and ethical behavior. This article examines the theoretical and practical foundations of legal education of university students during the process of professional training. Special attention is paid to the integration of legal education into professional disciplines, pedagogical mechanisms, and the role of higher education institutions in fostering legally literate and socially responsible graduates. The article analyzes existing scholarly views, discusses challenges and prospects, and proposes recommendations for improving the effectiveness of legal education in higher education.

Keywords

Legal education; professional training; higher education; legal culture; legal awareness; university students; professional competence

Introduction

The rapid development of society, globalization, and the strengthening of democratic principles have significantly increased the demand for legally competent specialists in all professional fields. Higher education institutions are not only responsible for providing students with professional knowledge and skills but also for preparing them as socially active, law-abiding, and responsible citizens.

In this regard, legal education of university students has become one of the priority tasks of modern higher education. Regardless of their field of study, students must possess basic legal knowledge, understand their rights and obligations, and be able to apply legal norms in professional and social contexts. Legal illiteracy among graduates can lead to professional misconduct, violation of labor laws, ethical problems, and social irresponsibility.

Therefore, the integration of legal education into the professional training process is an essential condition for improving the quality of higher education and ensuring sustainable social development. This article aims to explore the essence, content, and pedagogical mechanisms of legal education of students in the process of professional training.

Literature Review

The problem of legal education has been widely studied by scholars in pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and jurisprudence. According to Dewey (1938), education should prepare individuals for active participation in social life, which includes understanding legal

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norms and civic responsibilities. Legal education is considered an important component of civic education and moral development.

Russian scholars such as A.M. Stolyarenko and V.S. Selivanov emphasize that legal education contributes to the formation of legal consciousness and law-abiding behavior. They argue that legal knowledge alone is insufficient; students must develop legal values, attitudes, and skills for lawful behavior.

Western researchers, including Banks (2008) and Kerr (1999), view legal education as part of democratic education aimed at developing critical thinking, respect for the rule of law, and social justice. They stress the importance of experiential learning methods, such as case studies and simulations, in legal education.

In Central Asian pedagogical research, legal education is increasingly viewed as a systematic process integrated into professional training. Scholars highlight the role of higher education institutions in shaping legal culture through curricula, extracurricular activities, and institutional policies.

Despite extensive research, the problem of effective integration of legal education into professional training remains актуal, requiring further theoretical and practical exploration.

Legal Education in the Context of Professional Training

Professional training in higher education is a complex process aimed at forming professional competence, which includes knowledge, skills, values, and personal qualities necessary for successful professional activity. Legal education is an integral component of this process.

Legal education in professional training involves:

- Providing students with basic legal knowledge relevant to their future profession;
- Developing legal thinking and the ability to analyze legal situations;
- Forming respect for law and legal norms;
- Cultivating professional responsibility and ethical behavior.

For example, future teachers need knowledge of educational law, students of economics must understand financial and labor legislation, while engineers should be aware of safety regulations and intellectual property rights.

Thus, legal education should not be limited to separate law-related courses but should be integrated into professional disciplines, reflecting the specific legal aspects of each profession.

Pedagogical Mechanisms of Legal Education

Effective legal education requires the use of diverse pedagogical mechanisms and teaching methods. Traditional lecture-based approaches are insufficient for developing legal competence. Modern higher education emphasizes active and interactive teaching methods.

Key pedagogical mechanisms include:

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- **Interdisciplinary integration**, where legal topics are included in professional subjects;
- **Problem-based learning**, using real-life legal cases related to professional activity;
- **Interactive methods**, such as debates, role-playing games, and simulations;
- **Project-based learning**, encouraging students to research legal issues in their professional field;
- **Extracurricular activities**, including legal clubs, seminars, and meetings with legal professionals.

The use of digital technologies, online legal databases, and e-learning platforms also enhances students' access to legal information and promotes self-directed learning.

Discussion

Despite the recognized importance of legal education, several challenges hinder its effective implementation in higher education institutions. These include insufficient curriculum time, lack of qualified teaching staff, limited interdisciplinary cooperation, and students' low motivation toward legal subjects.

Another problem is the formal approach to legal education, where emphasis is placed on memorizing legal norms rather than understanding their practical significance. This leads to superficial legal knowledge and weak application skills.

To address these challenges, higher education institutions should adopt a systematic and student-centered approach to legal education. Legal content should be relevant, practice-oriented, and adapted to students' professional needs.

Moreover, cooperation between universities, legal institutions, and employers can contribute to improving the quality of legal education and ensuring its relevance to labor market requirements.

Results

The analysis of theoretical sources and pedagogical practices shows that effective legal education positively influences students' professional and personal development. Students with a high level of legal awareness demonstrate greater responsibility, ethical behavior, and readiness to act in accordance with legal norms.

Integrating legal education into professional training enhances:

- Students' understanding of professional rights and obligations;
- Their ability to prevent legal violations in professional activity;
- The formation of a stable legal culture and civic position.

As a result, graduates become not only qualified specialists but also socially responsible citizens capable of contributing to the development of a law-based society.

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Conclusion

Legal education of university students in the process of professional training is a vital pedagogical task in modern higher education. It ensures the formation of legal awareness, legal culture, and professional responsibility among future specialists.

The effectiveness of legal education depends on its integration into professional curricula, the use of active teaching methods, and the creation of a supportive educational environment. Higher education institutions must prioritize legal education as a key component of holistic student development.

Future research should focus on developing innovative models of legal education, assessing their effectiveness, and exploring best practices for integrating legal education into various professional fields.

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