

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE



UDC 343.6



Original Theoretical Research

<https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-2-42-46>



Formation of a Legal Culture Through a Modern Education System

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Abstract

Introduction. Today, the development of legal awareness, both in individuals and in society as a whole, has taken on particular significance and is the subject of much debate. The law permeates every aspect of human activity, and the ability to navigate legislation has become an essential skill. It is not only future lawyers who need to understand legal nuances – a grasp of the fundamentals of the law will also be useful for those who choose a different career path. The aim of this study is to examine the content of currently applied approaches to fostering a legal culture, the ultimate goal of which is to develop students' understanding of and respect for legal norms and principles.

Materials and Methods. The methodological framework is based on research methods that are widely used in the academic community. Their application involves the use of a comprehensive set of approaches to conduct a detailed analysis of the issue at hand: systemic, activity-based, functional, and interdisciplinary.

Results. An analysis of the academic literature in the fields of cultural studies, education, and law has revealed that, to date, there is no established model for fostering a legal culture in today's educational environment that educational institutions adhere to. This is explained by the fact that the development of legal consciousness as an element of legal culture is closely linked to legal ideology, in the formation of which the state plays a key role. At the same time, efforts must be made to develop an appropriate model, not only by the state, but also by educational institutions and social institutions of society. The legal culture of students is defined as a complex phenomenon aimed at fostering proper legal behavior among students of higher education institutions, as well as developing a deep understanding of a sense of responsibility and the ability for self-analysis and self-criticism. A direct correlation has been established between the quality of legal education that students receive in educational institutions and the level of development of their legal culture.

Discussion and Conclusion. The modern higher education system currently has enormous potential to positively influence students: fostering personal qualities, developing public speaking skills, and so on. To effectively enhance students' legal literacy, faculty members at law schools employ a comprehensive approach, utilizing both traditional and specialized teaching methods. However, regarding non-law schools, it is worth noting the positive experience of engaging practicing lawyers to conduct thematic lectures.

Keywords: legal culture, legal awareness, legal education, educational institutions, social norms, students, the Constitution of the Russian Federation, legal ideology

For Citation. Kazantseva O.G., Sementsova I.A. Formation of a Legal Culture Through a Modern Education System. *Science Almanac of Black Sea Region Countries*. 2026;12(2):42–46. <https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-2-42-46>

Формирование правовой культуры через современную систему образования

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Аннотация

Введение. В наши дни вопросы формирования правового сознания у отдельной личности и в обществе в целом обретают особую значимость и вызывают немало дискуссий. Право пронизывает все аспекты человеческой деятельности, и умение ориентироваться в законодательстве становится неотъемлемым навыком. Не только будущие юристы должны разбираться в правовых нюансах, владение основами законодательства будет полезным и для тех, кто выберет иной профессиональный путь. Цель исследования – рассмотреть содержание применяемых в настоящее время подходов для формирования правовой культуры, конечной целью которых является развитие у студентов понимания и уважения к правовым нормам и принципам.

Материалы и методы. В качестве методологической базы выступают широко распространённые в научной среде исследовательские методы. Их использование предполагает применение комплексного набора подходов – системного, деятельностного, функционального и междисциплинарного – для детального анализа рассматриваемого вопроса.

Результаты исследования. Анализ научной литературы в области культурологии, педагогики и права позволил выявить тот факт, что на сегодняшний день не существует готовой модели формирования правовой культуры в современных условиях образовательной среды, которой бы придерживались учебные заведения. Это объясняется тем, что становление правосознания как элемента правовой культуры тесно связано с правовой идеологией, ключевую роль в формировании которой играет государство. Вместе с тем необходимо прикладывать усилия для разработки соответствующей модели не только со стороны государства, но и образовательных учреждений, а также социальных институтов общества. Правовая культура студентов определена как комплексное явление, преследующее своей целью формирование у учащихся высших учебных заведений надлежащего правового поведения, развитие глубинного понимания чувства ответственности, способности к самоанализу и самокритике. Установлена прямая зависимость между качеством правового образования, которое студенты получают в учебных заведениях, и уровнем сформированности их правовой культуры.

Обсуждение и заключение. Современная система получения высшего образования в настоящее время имеет огромный потенциал воздействия на студентов в положительном контексте: раскрытие личностных качеств, развитие навыков ораторского искусства и пр. В целях эффективного повышения правовой культуры учащихся преподаватели в юридических вузах используют комплексный подход, то есть используют как классические методы обучения, так и специальные. Однако относительно неюридических учебных заведений стоит отметить положительный опыт привлечения практикующих юристов к проведению тематических лекционных занятий.

Ключевые слова: правовая культура, правосознание, правовое воспитание, образовательные учреждения, социальные нормы, студенты, Конституция Российской Федерации, правовая идеология

Для цитирования. Казанцева О.Г., Семенцова И.А. Формирование правовой культуры через современную систему образования. *Научный альманах стран Причерноморья*. 2026;12(2):42–46. <https://doi.org/10.23947/2414-1143-2026-12-2-42-46>

Introduction. Today, legal culture is firmly woven into the fabric of universal human culture. Within the framework of modern educational reforms, a key outcome of education is considered to be the development – including among high school graduates – of the ability and willingness to take responsibility not only for one’s own life but also for the state of society as a whole. The educational process is aimed at helping students develop a conscious attitude toward legal norms, cultivate skills in understanding and applying legislation, foster respect for the laws of the state, and acquire the ability to defend their own rights in various life situations. The need to foster a legal culture from the fact that “a high level of legal culture is a factor in achieving real guarantees of human rights and freedoms as the highest value” [1, p. 228].

The development of a legal culture is a comprehensive process based on three key elements: cognitive, value-emotional, and practical [2, p. 282]. Legal culture is a set of ideas, competencies, and value orientations related to the functioning of the legal system in society, as well as the ability to competently apply and defend legal norms. Fostering a

high level of legal awareness among students will enable them to understand their legal rights and obligations, effectively defend them, and prevent the commission of unlawful acts.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how legal culture is formed among students within the framework of the continuing education system at universities. To achieve this goal, the following tasks must be addressed: to examine the relevance and effectiveness of contemporary theoretical concepts regarding the influence of legal culture on the formation of civil society as a whole; to examine both external and internal factors that influence the development of legal culture among university students.

Materials and Methods. The authors chose a comprehensive approach as the methodological foundation for their study, combining a universal method with a wide range of general scientific tools (synthesis and generalization) as well as specialized methods (sociological, statistical, and psychological). Particular emphasis is placed on an interdisciplinary approach. Among the discipline-specific methods, the psychological method plays a leading role, which is indirectly reflected in the focus on a specific group – students of higher education institutions.

Results. Currently, the approach to education and upbringing in higher education institutions is focused on the comprehensive development of students' personalities, including the cultivation of their professional qualities, as well as their awareness of and acceptance of legal norms and values. To achieve these goals, large-scale efforts should be undertaken to broaden the legal horizons and enhance the cultural literacy not only of students but also of faculty members and students' parents [3, p. 279].

A review of literature in the fields of education, law, cultural studies, and psychology, as well as an analysis of current legal norms and documents, did not reveal a ready-made model for fostering a legal culture among students in today's educational environment. No comprehensive solution has been found that would simultaneously provide a set of methods for influencing students' legal consciousness and worldview and enable the assessment of the degree to which their legal culture has been formed.

Today's universities offer students unprecedented opportunities to actively participate in their professional development, self-organization, and the realization of their creative potential. It is the educational environment of the institution that plays a paramount role in fostering a culture of legal awareness among students from the very first days of their studies. After all, it is precisely thanks to well-organized educational and developmental work that a university becomes a space where first-year students can successfully adapt to their studies and integrate into the student community [4, p. 207].

Legal culture is inextricably linked to a well-developed understanding of the law – that is, to the extent to which an individual has internalized and embraced legal values. This is reflected in their way of thinking – that is, in how they perceive the law – as well as in their experience and practical activities within the legal sphere. Thus, legal culture is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses various aspects of legal life: relationships governed by law, compliance with laws, the maintenance of law and order, and society's awareness of legal norms.

Discussion and Conclusion. After examining a variety of theoretical approaches, it becomes clear that, regardless of differences in perspective, experts in this field are unanimous in their view that society and the state play a key role in the formation and development of legal culture. In this context, legal culture is generally understood as a body of legal knowledge, a certain attitude toward legislation, and compliance with laws in one's conduct [5, p. 188].

It should be noted that the level of legal knowledge among students in law and other departments often varies significantly. The process of training future lawyers has specific characteristics, including the need to master a substantial amount of legal information. Consequently, even at the initial stage of higher education, first-year law students possess a certain foundation of legal knowledge, although the level of their understanding and retention can vary significantly among students. Therefore, in the process of higher education, it is extremely important to systematically work on developing and deepening legal literacy among students [5, pp. 191–192].

In literary discourse, considerable attention is paid to the development of one of the cornerstones of legal culture: respect for the Constitution of the Russian Federation [6]. The fundamentals of constitutional law form the foundation upon which all other areas of jurisprudence are built. In this regard, it is of the utmost importance, in the process of fostering a legal culture, to pay due attention to instilling in the younger generation a deep understanding and awareness of the significance of constitutional norms. Understanding the fundamentals of constitutional law will help every student realize their role and place in Russian society, develop respect for the country's historical heritage, and feel a personal responsibility for its future. In modern society, patriotic education has come to the forefront, and the development of constitutional legal consciousness will become an effective tool for integrating patriotic ideals into the value system of the younger generation [7, p. 83].

Today, society faces a serious problem: the spread of legal nihilism and infantilism. Many minors demonstrate an insufficient understanding of legal norms and even a dismissive attitude toward the law, which leads to an increase in the number of offenses and crimes in this age group. In this regard, there is an urgent need to intensify efforts to develop legal awareness and culture among young people. Although the school curriculum includes the study of legal aspects, it often

remains confined to theory. Legal culture is primarily formed in school through the “Social Studies” course [8, p. 142]. As a result, graduates are unable to effectively use the knowledge they have acquired in real life and apply it in practice.

The development of a legal culture among students is impossible without the cultivation of legal consciousness, which encompasses legal ideology and legal psychology. The emergence of legal ideology is by no means an instantaneous process. In the modern world, ideology represents a complex interweaving of various ideological currents, associations, and parties. The state, acting as a key ideological institution, plays an important role in shaping ideology through legislative activity. The question of how to instill legal ideology in students has no single answer. Ideology is an integral element of young people’s spiritual life and a significant part of the general culture. A prerequisite for the emergence of a mature and stable ideology is the state’s willingness to support a diversity of views. It is necessary not only to reinforce generally accepted ideological attitudes but also to create conditions for the development of less widespread ideas and concepts.

Legal education is a multifaceted and highly complex process that requires coordinated efforts from various institutions and organizations. One of the main objectives of legal education is generally considered to be enhancing citizens’ awareness of their rights and responsibilities, as well as fostering a respectful attitude toward the law at the level of each individual, various civic organizations, and society as a whole [9, p. 112]. Key participants in this process include the family, educational institutions, qualified professionals and specialized organizations in the field of law, as well as government institutions. Only by establishing a continuous and consistent system for instilling legal knowledge and values, spanning a long period of time, can we speak of achieving a high level of legal education for the individual.

Legal culture is a dynamic system that is constantly evolving in response to shifts in public sentiment and the value system. The degree of its development determines which social norms and value orientations will dominate in society. In communities with rich cultural traditions, awareness of the legal aspects of life is significantly deeper and more comprehensive, which, in turn, facilitates the understanding and application of legal norms. The educational level of the population has a significant impact on the formation of legal consciousness. In societies where due attention is paid to legal literacy and legal education, awareness of the importance of law and the rule of law reaches a higher level, which fosters a respectful attitude toward legislation and legal institutions [10, p. 41].

A review of current practices in higher education reveals that instructors consistently employ a comprehensive approach to effectively enhance students’ legal literacy. They seamlessly integrate traditional teaching methods and academic assignments with a variety of extracurricular activities. The arsenal of pedagogical tools includes interactive activities: mock trials, role-playing games, and debates. In addition, inviting practicing lawyers to give lectures plays a significant role.

Thus, the level of legal literacy serves as an indicator of the health of a country’s legal system. The focus of educational institutions on fostering legal literacy among students should be one of the key priorities for the coming decades.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: the authors declare no conflict of interest.

All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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Конфликт интересов: авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Все авторы прочитали и одобрили окончательный вариант рукописи.

Received / Поступила в редакцию 22.04.2026

Reviewed / Поступила после рецензирования 07.05.2026

Accepted / Принята к публикации 08.05.2026