

# Legal Culture as A Basic Component of Professional Training in Vocational Education



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**Abstract:** *Introduction: Improving the legal literacy and legal awareness of citizens is an integral part of building a democratic state. One of the ways to this improvement is the development of legal culture as an integrated nationwide program, covering all segments of the population, especially youth and students of all education levels.*

**Methods:** *In the new conditions of the Russian Federation's state system, the foreground task is to form a general legal culture, as well as to develop practical skills of students in vocational education institutions. Legal culture is a universal, basic component of professional training in any field.*

**Results:** *Legal education and training are intended to solve the problem of forming a legal culture of students. The content of legal culture should not only be reflected in the Law course and other educational subjects comprising elements of legislation studies, but it should also develop opinions and attitudes of students to the law implementation in general. In the process of legal education in vocational education institutions, consideration of age and individual characteristics requires not just passive adaptation of the material and methods to the characteristics of students, but their active development in accordance with the general goal of forming legal awareness.*

**Discussion:** *To be involved in efficient legal education, students must know the requirements of civil society for every individual and their own capacities, see their negative and positive traits, objectively evaluate them, avoid underestimating or overestimating their abilities and capacities, level of aspirations.*

**Conclusion:** *The development of vocational education in modern conditions provides opportunities for increasing the importance and relevance of legal culture. The high level of legal culture has a positive influence on the development of personality and professional activities of graduates and on the harmonization of interrelations in society.*

**Keywords :** *rule-of-law state, legal literacy, legal culture, legal education, vocational school.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

At present, in the conditions of the formation and development of Russia as a democratic rule-of-law state, the concept of law, its functions, social value and significance are of particular relevance. A rule-of-law state in a democratic society can be built only on the grounds of fundamental, qualitative changes in people's legal thinking and legal awareness.

The idea of the rule-of-law state is associated with two fundamental principles: the order in the state and protection of citizens. In this case, each person has the right to rely on predictability, consistency and reliability of the decisions made, knows his/her rights and obligations, clearly defined by law. Such a formulation of the question was embodied in political democracy and its most important institutions, built on the principles of political and ideological pluralism, the election of officials, etc. These principles are reflected in the law system, which is intended to consolidate the foundations of civil society. The rules of law must, first of all, give the possibility of resolving mutual claims and obligations arising from conflicting parts in spontaneously formed relations. Naturally, the state is competent to regulate, control and, if necessary, correct these relations, but only to a certain extent.

The reforms taking place in Russia reflect the realities of today connected with the country's transition to a new model of economic, political, spiritual, social and legal development. The authority and influence of law in society is an important factor in the further development of humane democratic state with a market economy. The reforms carried out in the country deeply affected all spheres of social life and all sectors of the national economy. However, their further and high-quality implementation is impossible without studying legal issues that are the main grounds for the implementation of these reforms.

As a result of fundamental changes in all spheres of Russian society, numerous social institutions, social processes, new concepts constantly arise and develop. They include rapid development of private property, corporatization, privatization, entrepreneurship, business, commerce, securities market, mortgages and many others. These phenomena could be considered real signs of the market economy formation, in conditions of which vocational education graduates will have to live and work [1].

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Therefore, knowledge of the law foundations in modern conditions becomes necessary for every citizen, including students and graduates of vocational education institutions. The success of people in any sphere of their life activities largely depends on this knowledge: in private entrepreneurship, when working in hired enterprises or in state-financed organizations, in conditions of everyday life and leisure, medical care, retirement and other types of social security, exercising consumer rights, protecting rights and legitimate interests in the field of economics, ecology, civil, administrative, criminal, family, labor and other branches of law.

Education is becoming a significant factor in the country's economic development [2]. Therefore, considering the prospects and challenges of 21st-century education, it is necessary to emphasize the important role of legal culture

## II. METHODS

In modern conditions, when training a specialist, the emphasis should be placed not only on knowledge, because it is now rapidly aging, especially in the legal sphere, but to a great extent on competencies and skills, including communication skills. Therefore, in the current economic and socio-political context, the task is primarily to develop a general legal culture, to develop the practical skills of students in vocational education institutions.

The society puts forward the following tasks before graduates:

- to become worthy citizens of their country, understand their role, opportunities and responsibilities in society, know their rights and obligations;

- to obtain the legal knowledge necessary for professional activities;

- to understand the laws and legal norms and use them properly;

- to be able to prepare a contract, write a statement, power of attorney, statement of claim to the court, another document that everyone needs in everyday life, to know which legal bodies and issues should be addressed in different situations.

In the implementation of these tasks, an important role is played by the high-quality training of Law teachers. The tasks can be achieved if the educational needs of the following categories are satisfied [3]:

- the need of citizen for the basic knowledge about the Russian legal system, the most important laws, the rights and freedoms, the Constitution of the Russian Federation;

- the need of society for legally literate and law-abiding members, respecting the rights and freedoms of individual and possessing high conscience and morality;

- the need of the state for well-educated young generation respecting the law;

- the need of the economy to provide trained and highly qualified personnel having strong legal knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful functioning and development of the national economy in modern conditions;

- the need of the education system for effective researchers, guaranteeing the development of a regulatory framework for the implementation of legal education.

This requires a revision of the conceptual pedagogical

system on the legal education of students, including the following measures:

- development and implementation of updated legal education, taking into account the levels of professional educational (vocational or higher education);

- determination of the content and organization of legal education in vocational schools and colleges;

- creation of a set of forms and methods for the legal training of students;

- development of a system of comprehensive methodological support for legal education.

Objective assessment of the pace and direction of democratic reforms in the Russian Federation allows noting that the high rate of changes has generated and revealed many serious challenges in society, including the targeted formation of a legal culture of students. Negative tendencies have appeared in the social environment lately: social maladjustment is aggravated, the number of crimes and offences among children and young people grows, the possibilities for a full-fledged start of their independent life activity are reduced, the state does not guarantee general and vocational education, the possibility of being included in social and professional activities, etc. Such negative tendencies do not contribute to fostering respect for the law, for the rules of behavior in society [4].

Nowadays, the need to prepare young people, including students of vocational education institutions, for the successful start of their career in a developing democratic society is actualized. Graduates of vocational education institutions gain deep knowledge, skills and abilities to manage mechanisms, complex equipment, production processes, but at the same time have a poor understanding of the methods and forms of interpersonal communication.

Current level of legal culture still does not meet the objectives of legal, social and educational policy in the country. The scientific basis for the formation of legal culture is still poorly developed. Attention should be paid to the vagueness and insufficiency of positions in the most important documents on the basis of which legal education is carried out (state educational standards, qualification characteristics, profессиograms of various professional categories), as well as in the existing approaches to professional diagnostics, in the principles of personnel selection, in law teacher training [5].

New educational priorities are associated with the development of a democratic state of law, with the strengthening of the country's human resource and the identity of citizens. An important place is occupied by the forming a legal culture, which G.A. Firsov considered a universal component of professional training of any specialist. The mastery of legal knowledge and skills positively affect the professional development and harmonization of relations in society [6].

The research revealed that the notion of legal culture in the scientific literature is defined both in the narrow and in the broad sense of the word.

Legal culture in the narrow sense of the word is defined as a general state of legislation, the work of law-making and law-enforcement bodies, legal awareness of citizens and the population of the whole country, expressing the level of development of law, its place and role in the social life. Legal culture in its broad sense is not only an appropriate level of legal awareness. As one of the leading Russian theorists of jurisprudence S.S. Alekseev emphasized, “the most important thing in legal culture is the place of law and justice in the life of society, the exercise of its supremacy and corresponding state of affairs in the entire legal system of the country (training and status of juridical personnel, the role of legal services in all branches of state system, position of the advocacy, development of scientific institutions in the field of law exercising and law-making, etc.)”. However, these definitions proceed from a purely theoretical approach to the concept of legal culture [7].

Under the legal culture, following the definition of G.A. Firsov [3], we understand a complex of knowledge, competencies and attitudes formed through legal education, including conscious attitude to rights, freedoms and duties, responsibility to society and the state, respect for and observance of current laws and regulations. This definition allows us to consider legal culture as a universal and obligatory component of the educational process and training of professional personnel. The legal culture development is carried out through the legal knowledge, beliefs, awareness of the rights and freedoms, the moral and humanistic value of the law and its general nature, motives, needs and socially active and responsible behavior. Thus, the development of a students’ legal culture is influenced by such factors as the nature of the dominant production relations that contribute to the economic development, the need for social and legal protection, and the adaptation in society. Therefore, the minimum goals of the legal culture will contribute to the formation of students’ respect for the current Russian laws, rules of conduct and legal norms established by society. The maximum goals will guarantee the education of the young generation in a spirit of respect for the law. Graduates of vocational education institutions should possess sustainable legal knowledge and skills, high legal awareness and morality, respect the rights and freedoms of an individual in democratic rule of law state.

Consistency in achieving the goals of forming a legal culture allows developing knowledge of the law, legal convictions, readiness for lawful social behavior. Legal culture should be one of the most effective means developing social activity of an individual. As a result of this approach, students will have the need (habit) to correlate their actions with generally accepted legal norms in society.

### III. RESULTS

Legal education is intended to directly solve the problem of forming the legal culture of students. Therefore, legal education should be carried out not only by means of the theoretical law course and other subjects containing elements of legal knowledge. It should also use life experience, practical activities and attitudes. It seems impossible to establish a strict sequence in the legal education according to

the years of study. For example, in the 1st course, legal education teachers should teach legal awareness, in the 2nd course – law-abiding, in the 3rd course – lawful behavior in society, etc. Indeed, in real life, all these qualities are inextricably linked, and because of this, legal education requires a holistic approach and solution. This does not mean that age and other features, like a different level of educational preparation, do not have own specifics. This does not mean that teachers do not need a program (syllabus) of legal education [6].

Legal education in a vocational education institution should have a special program (syllabus), clearly defining the tasks and content, basic pedagogical requirements for the forms and methods of instruction. The main task of such a program is to answer the question “What to teach?”. The answer depends on the needs of social development, the transformations that are taking place in Russia. Of course, the program of legal education should not be absolutely the same for all types and levels of vocational education institutions. It should be flexible, it should allow the teacher to select from the recommended material what is most appropriate and necessary in these specific conditions.

Observations show that the existing forms and methods of legal education in vocational education institutions are extremely diverse. According to their organization, they can be divided into the following types:

- mass events, when a particular activity covers all students or part of the courses;
- group work, when a group of students participate (educational group or its part, members of students’ research societies, sections, etc.);
- individual, when legal education is conducted with an individual student.

Analysis of the relevant literature has shown that in pedagogy, various and diverse principles of training and education are applied, depending on the type and level of the educational institution and personal characteristics of students. The process of legal education is based on the generally accepted pedagogical principles, which could be considered the starting points in the practice of educational work. In our study, we mainly relied on the following principles:

- principle of an integrated approach to education;
- principle of unity of educational process;
- principle of taking into account age and individual characteristics;
- principle of reliance on the positive qualities of a person;
- principle of unity of word and deed;
- principle of education in the team and through the group work (according to S.Y. Batsyshev).

Taking into consideration the listed pedagogical principles, we analyzed pedagogical experience and revealed specific features of legal education.

In the process of legal education, consideration of age and individual characteristics requires not only passive adaptation to the characteristics of the student, but their active development in accordance with the general goal of forming legal culture.

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Students of vocational schools and colleges, as well as students of other educational institutions, are primarily young citizens of the state. Compared with the rest of the youth, students have certain features that allow distinguishing them into a special social group.

These features of students as a social group, their characteristics derive from the social situation, from real conditions of life and study of students. Considering the youth as a social group, T.V. Ischenko emphasized the social functions of students. The distinctive features of students as a social group, according to T.V. Ischenko, are primarily features of students' activities, which are as follows: systematic accumulation, assimilation, mastery of knowledge. The social roles of students are determined by their status of the future intelligentsia and their belonging to the country's younger generation [4].

## IV. DISCUSSION

Basing on psychological, pedagogical and legal literature on the problem under study and available practical experience, it was suggested that in order to realize the right for education, including legal education, students should know the requirements of civil society for individual, their own capabilities, see their negative and positive qualities and evaluate them, not allowing underestimation or overestimation of their abilities and capacities. Depending on the degree of self-criticism, objective self-assessment, attitudes towards their own shortcomings, understanding of the need to work at self-improvement, it is possible to classify students into the following groups:

- 1) students with adequate self-assessment, aware of their shortcomings, seeking to eliminate them, knowing ways to overcome and able to overcome the identified shortcomings;
- 2) students with adequate self-assessment, aware of their shortcomings, seeking to eliminate them, but not knowing how to do it;
- 3) students with adequate self-assessment, aware of their shortcomings, but not seeking to eliminate them;
- 4) students with inadequate, often inflated self-assessment. Such students mistakenly consider their shortcomings to be their merits, and hence they do not see the need to eliminate them;
- 5) students with low self-assessment, tending to introspection, but do not take measures to eliminate their shortcomings;
- 6) students who are able to assess their positive qualities and shortcomings, but are indifferent to self-improvement;
- 7) students with adequate self-assessment, who know their virtues, but who cannot fully realize them.

Identified characteristic features of students of vocational education institutions are determined by a set of essential factors that distinguish them from schoolchildren and adolescents. These characteristics must be considered both in the theory and practice of vocational education of students, aimed at personal development and formation of legal culture. The main difference is that the students of vocational education institutions are to a certain extent socially mature, generally formed persons who already have the potential status of an employee, a competent citizen and

active member of various social relations. Therefore, they must possess certain personal qualities, professional knowledge and skills for their responsible and competent participation in various activities, in which learning activities are ultimately focused on the successful accomplishment of tasks and the resolution of problems that they face in everyday life situations.

When setting goals for vocational education, including legal education, shaping its content and choosing the best teaching technologies, it is important to consider three groups of characteristics:

- a) social characteristics, that is, the status of students, their involvement in the everyday life of society, professional, economic, political and other interests;
- b) socio-psychological characteristics, that is, already established views on life, value orientations, habits, motives of behavior, tendency to perceive various manifestations of life, taking into account their social experience;
- c) psychological characteristics, which include generally formed psychological mechanisms of perception, attention, memory, thinking.

We also came to the conclusion that for successful legal education it is necessary to study the characteristics of a student's personality associated with society and peer group. Attention should be paid to shaping the interests and needs of students of different ages, professional and value orientations and abilities, aspirations, moral experience, available legal knowledge and civil appearance in general. Analysis of the problem allowed us to determine the most important factors of successful legal education:

- organization of the educational process, providing for various forms and methods, focused on the development of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills;
- formation of interpersonal relationships and communication skills required for professional activities;
- awareness of the legal status of a student and graduate in the period of training and subsequent adaptation in the work team, etc.

Thus, in the process of legal education of students, the personality traits associated with society, professional activities and the work collective should be taken into account.

## V. CONCLUSION

The development of vocational education in present conditions is closely connected with the importance and relevance of legal culture in vocational school. The high level of legal culture has a positive influence on the professional competencies development and on harmonization of relations in society.

The study showed that knowledge of the law foundations becomes necessary for every citizen, including students of vocational education institutions. Legal culture conduces to the success of people in any field of their activities: in business entrepreneurship, when working in private enterprises or in state-financed organizations, in conditions of living and recreation,

medical care, retirement and other types of social security, exercising consumer rights, protecting their rights and legal interests in the field of economics, ecology, civil, administrative, criminal, family, labor and other branches of law. However, the modern process of legal education is distinguished by insufficient continuity of law courses in vocational education institutions, a critically small number of academic hours devoted to the study of law courses, unsatisfactory qualifications of the law teachers, lack of comprehensive educational literature and normative documentation.

Analysis of the problem allowed us to determine the peculiarities of the legal culture formation:

the need to develop knowledge of legislative norms related to the future professional activities of graduates;

the use in the educational process of forms and methods focused on the development of theoretical and practical legal knowledge and skills.

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