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International Experience in Shaping the Legal Culture of Youth: A Philosophical and Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

The article analyzes the experience of the USA, European Union countries, and Eastern nations in shaping and developing the legal consciousness and legal culture of youth from a socio-philosophical and comparative perspective. The content and distinctive characteristics of legal education models applied in other countries are thoroughly studied. The analysis highlights the necessity of critically and creatively applying international experience to enhance the legal culture of youth in New Uzbekistan and of harmonizing it with the national philosophical worldview and legal reforms. The integration of international and national practices serves to increase the civic engagement of youth and strengthen a democratic society based on the rule of law.

Keywords: legal consciousness, legal culture, international experience, international practice, comparative analysis, national education, cooperation, individual approach

Introduction

In the context of modern societal development, the issue of fostering the legal culture of youth stands as one of the most pressing challenges requiring socio-philosophical analysis. Globalization, digital communications, the growing complexity of legal relations, and transformative processes in social consciousness are fundamentally reshaping young people's attitudes toward law, legislation, and state institutions. Consequently, there arises a necessity to examine this issue not merely from a strictly legal perspective, but within a broader philosophical and logical context.

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The legal culture of youth is not limited merely to an individual's body of legal knowledge; rather, it encompasses their legal values, legal thinking, inherent need for law, and degree of compliance with legal norms in practice. From a philosophical standpoint, it manifests as the moral and legal expression of the relationship between the individual and society. In this sense, a comparative study of the experiences of various countries and an analysis of their philosophical foundations enable the identification of both universal and national models for fostering youth legal culture.

As a philosophical category, the concept of legal culture reflects the interconnection between law, culture, and social consciousness. Ancient thinkers, including Plato and Aristotle, interpreted law in their works as being inextricably linked with justice and morality. In their view, law is not merely an instrument of external coercion, but an institution that serves the spiritual and moral perfection of society.

Review of the Literature

In modern philosophy, I. Kant interprets law as a system of rational norms that ensures human freedom. According to his doctrine, legal culture is directly linked to an individual's moral character and responsibility (Kant, 2007, p. 62). G. Hegel, in turn, views law as the manifestation of "Objective Spirit" and interprets legal culture as a necessary stage in societal development (Rousseau, 2010, p. 45).

- **The Experience of Fostering Youth Legal Culture in European Countries and the USA**

In the social philosophy of contemporary European countries, fostering the legal culture of youth is regarded as an institutional foundation of civil society. In particular, in the theory of "communicative action" by the German philosopher and sociologist J. Habermas, legal norms are interpreted as the outcome of dialogue and mutual agreement (consensus) among members of society (Habermas, 2012, p. 134). This paradigmatic approach reveals the paramount importance of social dialogue, civic participation, and activism in shaping and developing the legal consciousness and culture of youth.

The Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education designates the cultivation of legal consciousness among youth as a priority direction of educational policy (Council of Europe, 2010, p. 15).

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According to this Charter, education for democratic citizenship and human rights serves as a crucial factor in developing democratic values and a culture of human rights, helping to shape learners into individuals capable of understanding, exercising, and defending their rights and responsibilities within society.

In developed countries, the process of fostering the legal culture of youth begins in early childhood and is implemented on the basis of a systematic approach aimed at cultivating legal consciousness at all stages of the education system. Within educational institutions, students are thoroughly taught rules of conduct and legal norms; the acquired legal knowledge subsequently serves as a solid foundation for regulating social relations and consciously internalizing legal standards. Furthermore, legal education fosters respect for the rule of law and public order, establishes stable perceptions of socio-legal order, and contributes to the effective regulation of social relations within society.

Since the mid-20th century, large-scale socio-economic reforms implemented across European states have led to the formation of a single internal market, a common currency, and a unified space in research and education. These integration processes created the necessity for the mutual harmonization of legal systems, requiring the establishment of a unified legal space grounded in common principles and standards.

To this end, various pan-European projects aimed at shaping and elevating the legal consciousness and culture of youth are being developed and implemented. Given the expanding scale of global challenges and the growing global interdependence in addressing both domestic and external societal issues, a clear shift is observed in the development of modern law and legal education: the focus is moving from purely national legal order issues toward a broader orientation encompassing regional, integrative, and global legal regulation (Kashkin, 2020, pp. 152–166). In European countries, fostering and elevating the legal consciousness and culture of youth is not confined solely to national boundaries; rather, it entails a comprehensive approach rooted in pan-European values.

Within European Union member states, joint programs have been developed to advance youth legal consciousness and culture. Specifically, under the framework of the “European Citizenship” concept, comprehensive projects are being carried out to foster legal awareness among young people and engage them in democratic

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processes. This concept does not stop at familiarizing youth with their rights and responsibilities; it aims to strengthen their civic responsibility, respect for the law, and social activism. In particular, through EU programs such as Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens (2014–2020; succeeded by Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values in 2021), and Youth in Action (2007–2013; succeeded by Erasmus+), young people gain firsthand familiarity with the practical mechanisms of human rights, legality, democratic governance, and civic participation. Within these programs, youth participation in non-governmental organizations and engagement in community initiatives at local and international levels are actively encouraged. Consequently, legal knowledge among youth is reinforced not merely theoretically, but through practical experience.

Methodology

One of the widespread movements in European Union countries is the "Advocacy" (lobbying/rights defense) movement, which serves as a mechanism of strategic communication and influence aimed at driving social change within society. The term advocacy derives from the Latin verb advocare ("to call to one's aid") and in English denotes defense and support. Advocacy is directed toward protecting the rights and interests of youth as well as specific social groups, and may simultaneously represent the interests of multiple social cohorts. The primary targets of influence for advocacy associations are state institutions. The objective of such associations is to initiate specific organizational changes within the structure of state bodies, advance new ideas and values that serve the needs and interests of various social groups, propose legislative amendments or the adoption of new laws, and ensure the comprehensive protection of human rights. Furthermore, young people voluntarily assist in resolving the challenges faced by at-risk youth or those experiencing difficult family or personal circumstances before state bodies, public organizations, courts, and law enforcement agencies, while also representing these youth categories within such institutions. Through advocacy, young people temporarily unite to systematically defend and advance their rights and interests before state agencies—primarily parliaments, local governments, ministries, and public organizations—by means of organized campaigns.

Particular emphasis is placed on legal education within the educational systems of European Union member states. This process is distinguished by the broad involvement of state and local government bodies, civil society institutions, and

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educational establishments. In school curricula, legal education is introduced as a distinct subject, taught in an elective format yet on a compulsory basis. Within Western pedagogical concepts, legal education is viewed, on the one hand, as a means of ensuring the generational continuity of the established political and legal culture in society, thereby guaranteeing its sustainable development; on the other hand, it is interpreted as a holistic pedagogical system aimed at raising a young generation characterized by critical thinking, a constructive approach, adherence to the principles of tolerance, independent thought, and a high sense of civic responsibility. The experience of European Union countries in the legal education of youth is comprehensive and systematic in nature and, in terms of effectiveness, is recognized as one of the most successful models in global practice.

In European Union states, legal education and upbringing, along with the technologies associated with their implementation, are grounded in principles enshrined in a number of international instruments. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005), and other instruments aimed at protecting human rights. European countries rely on the principles set forth in these documents and have established an educational system in which social and humanitarian disciplines –aimed at imparting knowledge about the role of the individual in societal life across all tiers of the social system – are taught in depth. Such education aims to form a comprehensive body of legal knowledge among youth, which fosters their legal consciousness and guides them toward compliance with generally accepted societal norms.

Analysis and Results

Currently, the European Union supports a trend toward establishing a common legal education system aimed at shaping a new type of individual—the European citizen. Implementing this task reflects the shared interest of all member states of the European Union and provides timely and adequate responses to ongoing processes in Europe and worldwide.

Under conditions of globalization, such legal education serves to shape a legal mindset that transcends nationalism and is capable of transforming the European citizen into a global citizen. In this regard, the English researcher W. Twining

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emphasizes: "The trend toward forming a new European and global legal theory transcending nationalism, as well as a new legal and constitutional culture, is of particular importance" (Twining, 2000, p. 256). This trend stands out for being directed toward fostering a new type of global citizen.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the processes of shaping youth legal culture are implemented systematically on the basis of the "Law in Action" educational program and the "Politische Bildung" (Political Education) concept. This approach is aimed at ensuring that young people comprehend legal knowledge not merely at a theoretical level, but through real socio-legal situations. Within this system, youth learn about the rule of law, constitutional order, human rights, and core principles of civil society through practical activities alongside theoretical knowledge. German scholars view legal culture not only as compliance with laws and legal norms, but as a process of conscious comprehension, acceptance, and practical implementation of legal values, principles, and democratic ideas by the individual (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2020, p. 55). In practice, educational institutions make extensive use of discussions, mock trials, parliamentary models, and social projects, which allows for harmonizing legal knowledge with practical experience. An essential feature of the German experience is that legal consciousness is viewed not merely as a product of state policy, but as the outcome of society's overall legal culture.

In France, the formation of youth legal culture is carried out through "Éducation morale et civique" (moral and civic education). Within this subject, republican values, equality before the law, respect for human rights, and ideas of social justice are instilled in youth. In the works of the French Enlightenment thinkers J.-J. Rousseau and Montesquieu, law is interpreted as an expression of the general will of the people (Rousseau) and as the necessary relations arising from the nature of things (Montesquieu) (Montesquieu, 2001, pp. 112–118; Rousseau, 1997, pp. 54–57). These philosophical views are reflected in the modern French legal education system. In the French experience, legal culture is developed in connection with national identity and civic identification. Youth are educated in the spirit of respect for state symbols, national history, and democratic values, which serves to integrate legal consciousness with civic consciousness.

In the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland), the formation of youth legal culture is grounded in the values of social equality, trust, and transparency. In these nations, legal culture is linked to a high level of social trust, in which youth perceive

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the law not as external coercion, but as an instrument ensuring societal interest. The Nordic model relies on the philosophy of the welfare state.

In the USA, the practice of shaping youth legal culture has developed in close connection with the philosophy of pragmatism. American philosopher John Dewey substantiated the intrinsic link between education and social experience, emphasizing that a stable legal consciousness is formed when legal knowledge is mastered through practice rather than theory alone. In his view, democracy is not merely a form of government, but a way of life, and every citizen – especially youth – must actively participate in legal relations (Dewey, 2000, pp. 76–78).

In the US educational system, legal education is organized mainly on the basis of "Civic Education" and "Law-related Education" programs, which are recognized as important pedagogical mechanisms for developing civic competencies and shaping legal culture. These programs play a significant role in elevating the legal knowledge, legal thinking, and civic responsibility of the younger generation. Specifically, during the educational process, students acquire knowledge about constitutional rights and liberties, the system of state power, judicial and legal institutions, civic duties, and mechanisms for human rights protection. At the same time, special attention is paid to the practical orientation of legal education, and the teaching process is organized around interactive methods such as case studies, discussions, role-plays, and mock trials. This serves to develop students' skills in analyzing legal situations, making independent decisions, and comprehending legal values.

From a philosophical and legal standpoint, with regard to shaping and developing youth legal consciousness and culture, this model is based on the principle of the mutual harmony of individual freedom and personal responsibility. According to this approach, alongside broad rights and liberties, the individual is also made responsible for using them judiciously, complying with laws, and fulfilling civic duties before society. Therefore, the legal education process focuses not only on mastering legal knowledge, but also on comprehending legal values, developing legal thinking, and cultivating legal behavioral skills. As a result, legal culture rises above the level of formal compliance with legal requirements, becoming an important structural component of an individual's legal conviction and civic stance. According to the doctrine of American legal scholar R. Dworkin, law should serve

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to ensure human dignity (Dworkin, 2004, p. 176). This idea reinforces a value-based approach in shaping legal culture among youth.

Youth Legal Culture in Japan, South Korea, and China: Confucian Tradition and Modern Law

Japan is one of the countries that combine national traditions and modern democratic values in shaping youth legal culture. In the Japanese educational system, legal education is closely intertwined with moral education. Alongside legal knowledge, young people are taught a sense of respect for the collective, responsibility, discipline, and duty. In the Japanese model, legal culture is sustained primarily by inner responsibility rather than external control, demonstrating the integration of legal consciousness with moral consciousness. For this reason, the rate of juvenile delinquency among Japanese youth is relatively low.

The experience of South Korea is also of particular significance in shaping the legal consciousness and culture of youth. In this country, the legal education system is effectively integrated with digital technologies, which serves to ensure the accessibility and openness of legal knowledge. Special educational courses dedicated to human rights, constitutional law, civic responsibility, and democratic values have been organized through e-learning platforms introduced in schools and higher education institutions (South Korea Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 15). Such an approach not only expands learners' opportunities for independent mastery of legal knowledge, but also serves to develop digital legal literacy.

Viewed from a philosophical and legal standpoint, the South Korean model is significant because it is not limited to the transmission of knowledge in shaping legal culture, but is directed toward developing competencies enabling the individual to comprehend legal values and apply them in daily life. This approach manifests as an innovative model for developing legal culture under conditions of an information society, serving to strengthen youth legal consciousness, civic stance, and social responsibility.

In the People's Republic of China, shaping the legal consciousness and culture of youth is one of the priority directions supported at the level of state policy. The country's legal education system is developed in close connection with the strategy of establishing the principle of the "rule of law" and building a law-based state.

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Special educational courses dedicated to the fundamentals of law, the Constitution, civil rights and duties, national legislation, and legal responsibility have been introduced in schools and higher education institutions. Furthermore, legal awareness-raising work is widely carried out through mass media, digital platforms, and public organizations.

A distinct feature of the Chinese experience is the harmonization of legal education with the ideas of collective interests and social stability. Here, legal culture is linked not only to an individual's comprehension of rights and freedoms, but also to their sense of responsibility before society and the state. From this perspective, legal education is viewed as an important instrument for shaping respect for laws, compliance with social order and discipline, and a sense of commitment to state interests among citizens.

Evaluated philosophically and legally, the Chinese model strives to ensure a balance between individual rights and collective interests in developing legal culture. This approach is significant because it aims to reinforce values such as social responsibility, discipline, and obedience to the law alongside the acquisition of legal knowledge in shaping legal consciousness.

Analyses show that certain commonalities exist among the experiences of Germany, France, the USA, Finland, Japan, South Korea, and China. First, legal education is continuous in all of these countries. Second, legal knowledge is harmonized with civic values. Third, practical participation and a democratic environment play an important role in shaping legal consciousness. Fourth, human rights and the rule of law are the core values of all models.

In countries of Islamic civilization, the harmony of law, morality, and religion occupies a priority position in the process of shaping youth legal culture. According to Islamic legal philosophy, law is an instrument for ensuring justice and is closely connected with the spiritual perfection of the individual. This approach serves to strengthen a sense of moral responsibility and duty before society in shaping legal consciousness among youth. In the works of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun, law is interpreted as an instrument ensuring social order and moral equilibrium (Ibn Sina, 1980, pp. 112–118).

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In contemporary Muslim countries, Islamic morality, national traditions, and modern legal norms are being integrated in the formation of youth legal culture. This approach fosters both legal and moral accountability in youth.

In Russia and CIS countries, the process of shaping youth legal culture is linked to post-Soviet transformation processes. In these states, developing legal culture is viewed as an important condition for strengthening democratic institutions. Russian philosopher V.S. Nersesyants interprets law as an institutional form of freedom, considering legal culture to be a high stage of an individual's legal consciousness (Nersesyants, 1997, pp. 102–103).

Philosophical and comparative analysis of international experience shows that each country has a unique model for shaping youth legal culture: while legal culture in Western countries is based on the primacy of individual rights and freedoms, collective responsibility and moral values occupy a leading place in Eastern and Islamic civilizations. These differences are determined by philosophical worldview, historical development, and cultural traditions. Mechanically applying foreign experience to another society is not advisable, since every nation has its own unique path of development. Therefore, utilizing international experience requires an integrative approach that takes national values, historical experience, and social needs into account.

Conclusion

- **Scientific Conclusion and Conceptual Recommendations for Uzbekistan**

Introducing an Integrative Model of Legal Culture. Foreign experience – such as "Law in Action" and "Politische Bildung" in Germany, "Éducation morale et civique" in France, the pragmatist educational philosophy in the USA, and the harmony of morality and law in Islamic civilization – demonstrate that combining theoretical and practical approaches is highly effective in shaping youth legal culture. Therefore, it is essential to teach legal knowledge, civic responsibility, and moral values on an integrative basis in Uzbekistan as well.

Harmonizing Theoretical Knowledge with Practice. The experience of the USA and Germany shows that legal knowledge is better mastered through practical experience, discussions, mock trials, and social projects rather than through theory

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alone. This ensures the stable formation of legal consciousness and an active civic stance among youth.

Developing Personal Youth Responsibility Alongside Moral Values. The ideas of Dewey and Dworkin closely link law and democracy with human dignity, individual freedom, and personal responsibility. This indicates that shaping legal culture goes beyond merely teaching laws; it requires developing civic engagement and moral accountability among youth.

Accounting for Cultural and Religious Context in Fostering Youth Legal Culture. Islamic civilization and national history highlight the importance of synthesizing high values and moral principles with legal culture. This allows legal education in Uzbekistan to be enriched with national values and spiritual traditions.

In conclusion, international experience shows that the success of developing legal consciousness and legal culture is defined not only by raising legal literacy, but by transforming legal values into an individual's inner conviction, ensuring democratic participation, and building civic responsibility. While analyzing the theoretical views and practical experiences accumulated in foreign legal systems, we do not advocate for their mechanical adoption. It is advisable to implement these experiences by considering the national sociocultural environment, features of historical development, and the moral-ethical foundations of society. Furthermore, in the context of New Uzbekistan, critically and creatively utilizing international experience – harmonizing it with the national philosophical worldview and ongoing legal reforms – is of paramount significance. This ultimately serves to elevate youth legal consciousness, enhance civic activism, and build a robust democratic society.

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