

YOUTH LEGAL LITERACY IN UZBEKISTAN: CURRENT CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *This article examines youth legal literacy in Uzbekistan as an important component of legal culture and responsible citizenship. It analyzes current approaches to legal education, including institutional, practical and digital mechanisms, and identifies key challenges such as the gap between legal knowledge and its practical application and the accessibility of reliable legal information. The study argues that strengthening youth legal literacy requires interactive education, targeted legal support and accessible digital resources that enable young people to understand and effectively exercise their rights and responsibilities.*

Keywords: *youth, legal literacy, legal awareness, legal culture, legal education, Uzbekistan, civic responsibility, digital education.*

Introduction

A legally informed and responsible younger generation is essential for the development of a law-based society. For young people, legal literacy is important not only because it provides knowledge of laws but also because it enables them to understand their rights, fulfill their responsibilities and make informed decisions in everyday life.

In Uzbekistan, this issue has gained importance within the broader process of legal reform and the development of civil society [1]. The Presidential Decree

PF-5618 of 9 January 2019 established an important policy framework for improving legal consciousness and legal culture in society. Within this process, educational institutions, justice bodies, youth organizations and local communities have increasingly participated in legal-awareness activities.

Recent studies emphasize different aspects of this process. Yoʻldashev examines mechanisms for increasing the legal literacy of young people and the relationship between legal consciousness and legal culture [2]. Kulakhmetov focuses on improving legal education for youth in Uzbekistan [3], while Khakimova examines the formation and structure of youth legal consciousness [4]. Other studies connect legal education with civic participation and the prevention of problematic and unlawful behaviour among young people.

However, an important issue remains: **legal knowledge does not automatically result in practical legal competence**. A young person may know that a particular right exists but still not know how to exercise it, where to obtain reliable information or which institution can provide assistance [5]. Therefore, contemporary approaches should focus not only on providing information but also on developing the ability to apply it.

The study uses qualitative analysis, comparison and synthesis of academic publications addressing youth legal literacy, legal awareness, legal culture and legal education in Uzbekistan [6]. The analysis also considers official information concerning current government initiatives aimed at improving legal awareness among young people.

The main analytical dimensions are the relationship between legal knowledge and behaviour, the role of educational institutions, the contribution of social and governmental institutions, and the growing importance of digital legal education [7].

The analysis demonstrates that legal literacy, legal awareness and legal culture are interconnected but should not be treated as identical concepts. Legal literacy primarily concerns knowledge and understanding of legal information, whereas legal awareness reflects an individual's perception of law and legal values.

Legal culture is expressed more broadly through attitudes and behaviour toward legal norms.

This distinction has practical importance [8]. Effective legal education should enable young people not only to remember legal provisions but also to analyze real-life situations, identify relevant legal norms and select appropriate ways of protecting their legitimate interests. Therefore, practical cases, discussions, simulations, legal consultations and problem-based tasks can be more effective than purely theoretical instruction.

Educational institutions remain one of the most important environments for developing youth legal culture [9]. Schools and universities can provide systematic legal education while connecting it with issues directly relevant to students, including educational rights, employment, contracts, digital safety and civic responsibilities. The Ministry of Justice reported that legal-awareness activities, including “Law Classes,” were organized extensively in educational institutions and mahallas during 2025.

Digitalization offers further opportunities. In 2024, the Ministry of Justice launched the “**School of Law**” mobile application, providing young people with accessible legal materials, including information on children's rights, legal terminology and educational resources. Digital platforms can make legal information faster and easier to access, particularly for young people who rely heavily on smartphones and social media [10].

At the same time, digitalization creates a new challenge: the abundance of information does not guarantee its reliability. Young people may encounter incomplete or inaccurate interpretations of legislation online. Consequently, modern legal literacy should also include the ability to distinguish official and trustworthy legal sources from unreliable information.

The analysis therefore identifies four major challenges: the **gap between legal knowledge and practical application**, the **complexity of legal language**, insufficient **coordination among institutions**, and the problem of **reliable legal information in the digital environment**. Addressing these challenges requires a

more integrated approach to legal education.

Prospects for Development

Further development of youth legal literacy in Uzbekistan should focus on transforming legal education from an information-based model into a competency-based model. Young people should learn not only what the law provides but also how to use legal information in practical situations.

First, legal education should become more interactive through case studies, debates, simulations and practical problem-solving. Second, educational content should correspond to young people's age and actual needs. Third, digital resources should be expanded while ensuring that their content is based on reliable and regularly updated legal sources. Finally, cooperation among schools, universities, justice bodies, mahallas, youth organizations and civil society should be strengthened.

Evaluation should also move beyond counting seminars and participants. The effectiveness of legal education can be measured by young people's ability to identify legal problems, find authoritative information, understand their rights and choose lawful mechanisms for resolving disputes.

Conclusion

Youth legal literacy is a multidimensional process that combines legal knowledge, legal awareness, legal culture and practical competence. The existing literature and current institutional initiatives in Uzbekistan demonstrate significant attention to this area, but important challenges remain.

The central task is to transform legal information into practical competence. For this reason, future legal-education programs should combine systematic education, practical activities, targeted legal assistance and accessible digital resources. A legally literate young generation is not simply one that knows legal rules; it is one capable of understanding its rights and responsibilities, critically evaluating legal information and acting lawfully and responsibly in society.

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