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<https://doi.org/10.61796/ejlhss.v1i7.792>**FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH LEGAL CULTURE:
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES****Shodiyev Marufjon Mirsalimovich**Researcher of the Navoi State Pedagogical Institute
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Abstract: This research work explores the foundational theories and methodological frameworks that underpin the study of youth legal culture. It provides a comprehensive examination of how legal culture is conceptualized within the context of youth, focusing on both theoretical perspectives and research methodologies. The study begins by detailing the key theoretical perspectives that inform our understanding of youth legal culture. It reviews major theories such as legal socialization theory, which explains how individuals acquire legal norms and values, and cultural transmission theory, which addresses how legal attitudes and behaviors are passed down through generations. The research highlights how these theories can be applied to analyze the ways in which young people interact with and perceive legal systems and norms

Keywords: democracy, development, human rights, society, freedom, spirituality, physiology, psychology, sociology, social activism, culture, ideology

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license**Introduction**

In the present day, special attention is being paid to enhancing legal culture in the construction of a new, open civil society, where citizens' legal consciousness and culture are elevated, based on high democratic values, and where constitutional rights and freedoms are guaranteed.

It is known that in the early years of independence, our state set the goal of establishing a legal state, raising legal consciousness and legal culture among the youth, and implementing effective mechanisms to develop a mature individual. This goal has risen to the level of state policy, becoming a priority direction and primary criterion.

Legal culture has gained significant importance throughout historical periods, evolving uniquely in relation to legal relations and legal perspectives. In the history of humanity, enhancing legal culture and legal consciousness has also become a critical aspect of state administration

Methods

The concept of youth legal culture encompasses the beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices young individuals develop regarding law and justice. Understanding the foundations of this legal culture requires delving into various theoretical perspectives and employing suitable methodological approaches. This article explores these foundational aspects, aiming to shed light on how young people perceive and interact with the legal system.

Social Learning Theory: According to this perspective, youth legal culture is shaped through observation and imitation of legal behaviors modeled by significant others, such as parents, peers, and media influences. This theory suggests that exposure to these models influences youths' attitudes towards law and justice.

Legal Socialization Theory: This theory focuses on the process through which individuals, particularly during adolescence, acquire their understanding of legal norms and values. It emphasizes the role of social institutions such as family, schools, and communities in transmitting legal knowledge and fostering legal attitudes among youth.

Critical Legal Studies: Taking a critical perspective, this theoretical framework examines how legal culture reflects and reinforces power dynamics and inequalities within society. It encourages an analysis of how youth legal culture might perpetuate or challenge existing legal and social norms

Result and Discussion

In particular, the level of legal consciousness among the population is reflected in their interactions with the rules and norms found in various legal systems, such as “Sharia” in Islamic countries, “Yasa” during the reign of Genghis Khan, “The code of Timur” during the reign of Timur, and “Русская Правда” in the ancient Russian states.

It is no exaggeration to say that the historical development of human rights can be traced back to the “Avesta”. This ancient text has significantly contributed to the evolution of human rights over time.

The “Avesta” expresses the idea of human dignity and serves as a foundational source defining human rights, containing numerous rules related to these rights. Initially, it was in this text that legal issues concerning individuals and the rights of members of society were addressed [1; 37-b].

Jurist N. Safo-Isfihani stated, “The concept of law has been a crucial component of Zoroastrianism from its early stages. A significant portion of the Zoroastrian sacred texts is concerned with legal matters in various contexts and areas. The purpose of the Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrians, which encompasses “Practical Laws”, was to “establish an organized, prosperous society in which harmony is achieved in all aspects and relationships” [2; 2-b].

For several centuries, the formation of legal culture, issues related to legal relations, and human rights have attracted the attention of great thinkers and scholars engaged in state administration matters, and these issues are reflected in their viewpoints.

History shows that in the works of our great thinkers – such as Abu Nasr al-Farabi’s “The Virtuous City”, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni’s “India”, Abu Ali Ibn Sina’s “Treatise on Ethics”, Imam at-Tirmidhi’s “Dastur al-Mulk”, Burhan al-Din Marginani’s “Hidaya”, and Amir Timur’s “The code of Timur” some elements and characteristics of legal culture are distinctly evident.

It is clear that it would not be incorrect to say that many manifestations of moral and legal culture can be found in the views of Central Asian thinkers.

Therefore, the ideas of these thinkers about legal culture served as the foundation for developing a unique methodology for its research in the new era.

It can be said that in the early years of independence, significant attention was given at the state level to protecting the interests of young people, with a focus on national and universal values, and the embodiment of spiritual qualities.

In particular, on August 29, 1997, the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Decision No. 166-1, titled “National Program for Improving Legal Culture in Society”, aimed at shaping the legal consciousness of the population [3].

This national program focuses on fundamentally changing the worldview of individuals, especially the youth, who are immersed in the ideology of the outdated Soviet system and have lost their sense of value. It aims to enhance the legal culture and social activism of young people in the interactions between society and the state, improve citizens’ legal education and legal

upbringing, develop national legislation in accordance with international standards, increase the legal literacy of government bodies, officials, and citizens, prepare and improve the qualifications of legal professionals, and apply scientific principles for raising legal culture. These issues have been clarified and given broad attention.

“Legal culture is an integral part of general culture. It should be firmly established in people’s minds that only individuals who possess legal knowledge and can apply it in practice can be considered cultured and knowledgeable”, as emphasized in the national program [4; 227-m].

Unfortunately, due to both objective and subjective reasons, our country did not have the opportunity to fully implement this program in the past years.

Despite this, as a result of the in-depth study of legal culture by legal scholars in our country, the field of “Theory of Legal Culture” was established. The subject, methods, methodology, purpose, tasks, and categories of this theory were developed [5; 11-b].

In this regard, esteemed legal scholars Sh. Orazhev, U. Tadzhikhanov, A. Saidov, and X. Odilkoriev have made significant contributions.

As a result, the issue of legal culture has been thoroughly studied by legal scholars in our country, and various approaches have been proposed.

Professor X. Odilkoriev, a distinguished Uzbek legal scholar, defines “legal culture” as “the educational level of the legal system prevailing in society, the public’s awareness of this legal system, respect for the law by citizens, the enforcement of legal norms, intolerance towards lawbreakers, and the degree of compliance with the law”, thus elucidating its important aspects [6; 56-57 b].

Therefore, legal culture plays a crucial role in shaping people’s overall development, spiritual and cultural level, and their views on society.

Modern researchers have offered various scientific perspectives on the emergence, formation, and development of legal culture.

For example, V.I. Kaminsky and A.R. Ratinov identified the following factors as related to the emergence of elements associated with legal culture:

- a) System of norms reflecting state directives;
- b) System of social relations regulated by law;
- c) Legal institutions and organizations, including state and public bodies, that oversee, manage, and enforce the law;
- d) Legal ethics;
- e) Legal awareness, which includes a system of ethical reflection on legal activities [7; 64-b].

It is evident that the characteristics of legal culture are systematized, clarifying its role in social relations, its close connection with the activities of democratic institutions present in society, and the importance of legal communication in the interactions between individuals and society.

Therefore, an individual’s legal socialization reflects their active involvement in the legal life and practices of society.

Experts note that the composition of legal culture includes not only legal consciousness but also the level of its development:

“The content of legal culture encompasses not only legality and legal consciousness but also their level of development. Additionally, the high level of the population’s legal consciousness, meaning the extent to which people are aware of the law, the degree to which they have internalized legal values, the level of development of legal activities, and the perfection of legal documents that safeguard the rights of society members, all belong to the content of legal culture. Among these, state legislation holds particularly significant importance” [8; 9-b].

Our country’s scholars A. Saidov and U. Tadjikhanov define legal culture as follows:

“...as a form of social culture, it reflects the understanding of legal norms and their practical application in actions. Legal culture is expressed in knowing all legal norms, adhering

to them without deviation, successfully implementing them in life, showing respect for the rights and freedoms of other citizens, and displaying an uncompromising attitude towards lawbreakers. It represents a manifestation of an individual's overall culture" [9; 11-b].

The following opinion was expressed about the essence and importance of legal culture:

"The current changes, including those in our Constitution, are intended for people with a certain level of legal awareness. However, neither legal literacy nor legal culture develops on its own. It is necessary to cultivate these from the school level, meaning that the organization of legal education in schools, vocational colleges, lyceums, and other educational institutions is essential. Therefore, legal culture is reflected in the development of the growing generation's legal beliefs, a positive attitude towards the law, legal events, and the continuous expansion and deepening of legal knowledge" [10; 579-b].

Therefore, the development and effectiveness of legal culture depends on its formation by instilling it into the mind of a person from a young age.

Legal scholars who have studied the formation of legal culture among young people from a scientific and theoretical perspective provide the following definition:

"The legal culture of young people involves not only acquiring legal knowledge but also applying it in practical activities aimed at promoting legal awareness and upholding legality. ...Therefore, the presence of a genuine legal culture is reflected in the increased social and legal engagement of young people" [11; 18-b].

Logically, this view cannot be considered incorrect. However, it lacks a clear definition of the age range for young people, as it is presented in a vague and general manner.

If the age range of young people were analyzed more precisely, the research would be more effective.

Regarding the legal culture of young people, it has been defined as follows:

"...The legal culture of young people encompasses their legal knowledge, the level of legal literacy, their respect for laws, the degree of adherence to legal norms, their ability to apply them in practice, their intolerance towards lawbreakers, compliance with laws, as well as their level of activity and initiative..." [12; 52-b].

Here, the legal culture of young people is analyzed narrowly, focusing only on legal aspects. However, legal culture extends beyond the formal legal framework. The legal culture of young people is complex and multifaceted, similar to legal culture in general. It should be noted that merely addressing legal events is insufficient for improving the legal culture of young people.

Therefore, in our view, focusing on the physical, physiological, psychological, biological, and sociological characteristics of each youth group in the scientific analysis and research of their legal culture will yield positive scientific results. As legal culture is a subjective phenomenon, the legal culture of young people also requires an individual approach in certain cases.

Results

Studying the legal culture of young people and identifying its unique aspects has become one of the pressing issues of today, particularly when considering the need to examine social strata in society separately. The concept of the legal culture of young people stands out for its complexity as a legal category.

For this reason, any definition of the legal culture of young people fails to fully reveal its content from a specific historical perspective. Understanding the legal culture of young people in a particular historical context often replicates the subjective content of the concept, and far from excluding, it even necessitates considering the legal culture of young people as one of the forms of social consciousness [13].

However, we cannot currently say that the young people who are members of our society are knowledgeable, highly capable, spiritually and morally mature, with fully developed political and legal culture attributes.

From this perspective, there is a need to scientifically and theoretically study the existing problems in enhancing the legal culture of adolescents based on a sociological approach.

Therefore, improving the legal awareness and legal culture among the growing youth is one of the important issues facing our country.

For this reason, taking into account the relevance of this issue, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued a Decree on January 9, 2019, titled “On the Fundamental Improvement of the System for Enhancing Legal Awareness and Legal Culture in Society”, and based on this legal document, the “Concept for Enhancing Legal Culture in Society” was approved [14].

The Decree outlines a number of tasks to improve the effectiveness of efforts to enhance legal awareness and legal culture, including implementing modern methods to increase citizens’ legal knowledge in line with socio-political changes, and establishing a strong legal immunity to protect the population, especially young people, from harmful information.

Therefore, the legal culture of young people is particularly important during adolescence. At this stage, various changes related to maturation occur in young people. Adolescents demand attention to themselves and strive for independent activities. During this time, they acquire friends from different social groups, begin to critically assess things that were previously told to them, become more independent and develop their own viewpoints compared to their earlier school years. They may become dissatisfied with parental advice, strictness, and constant supervision, and their desire for independent thinking and decision-making grows stronger.

Conclusion

In conclusion, young people are required to enhance their legal knowledge not only through state laws but also by independently reading books, manuals, treatises, newspapers, and magazines, as well as by using radio, teletext, and internet resources. Today’s intellectual youth cannot fall behind the times. It is essential for every young person in our country to possess strong legal knowledge.

The future of our nation, its development, and the success of ongoing reforms largely depend on the level of legal literacy and legal culture of our people. This will serve as a crucial factor in modernizing the country and transitioning from a strong state to a strong civil society.

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