

Legal culture of a person in the context of digitalization of public relations

Cultura jurídica de uma pessoa no contexto da digitalização das relações públicas

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the formation of legal culture in the context of digital transformation, emphasizing its positive impacts and addressing potential risks. The study aims to highlight how digitalization influences legal awareness, particularly among younger generations.

Methods: The research employs a comprehensive review of literature, policy documents, and case studies. Comparative analysis is used to assess the dual nature of digital transformation in

shaping legal culture, integrating perspectives on LegalTech and digital tools for legal education.

Results: Digitalization offers significant benefits, such as improved access to legal information, enhanced legal awareness, and new mechanisms for protecting rights. However, challenges like the spread of misinformation and over-reliance on technology pose risks to legal consciousness and culture. The study underscores the importance of balancing traditional legal values with innovative digital approaches.

Conclusions: Digital transformation profoundly impacts legal culture, offering opportunities to enhance legal awareness and optimize processes. However, these benefits must be carefully managed to mitigate risks, particularly for younger generations, who are more vulnerable to misinformation and distorted legal perceptions. Educational strategies tailored to the digital age are essential to maximizing the positive effects of digitalization.

Keywords: Personality. Society. Legal culture. Public relations. Digitalization. Digital transformation.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar a formação da cultura jurídica no contexto da transformação digital, destacando seus impactos positivos e abordando riscos potenciais. O estudo busca evidenciar como a digitalização influencia a consciência jurídica, especialmente entre as gerações mais jovens.

Métodos: A pesquisa utiliza uma revisão abrangente de literatura, documentos de políticas públicas e estudos de caso. Uma análise comparativa foi realizada para avaliar a natureza dual da transformação digital na formação da cultura jurídica, integrando perspectivas sobre LegalTech e ferramentas digitais para a educação jurídica.

Resultados: A digitalização oferece benefícios significativos, como maior acesso a informações legais, maior conscientização jurídica e novos mecanismos de proteção de direitos. No entanto, desafios como a disseminação de desinformação e a dependência excessiva da tecnologia representam riscos para a consciência e a cultura jurídica. O estudo destaca a importância de equilibrar valores jurídicos tradicionais com abordagens digitais inovadoras.

Conclusões: A transformação digital impacta profundamente a cultura jurídica, proporcionando oportunidades para aumentar a conscientização jurídica e otimizar processos. No entanto, esses benefícios devem ser gerenciados cuidadosamente para mitigar riscos, particularmente para as gerações mais jovens, mais suscetíveis à desinformação e percepções jurídicas distorcidas. Estratégias educacionais adaptadas à era digital são essenciais para maximizar os efeitos positivos da digitalização.

Palavras-chave: Cultura jurídica. Digitalização. Relações públicas. Consciência jurídica. LegalTech. Transformação digital

INTRODUCTION

Legal culture is one of the most important indicators of a person's readiness to adequately perceive legal norms and exercise their rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests (Golubeva et al., 2023). Legal culture ensures socialization and lawful behavior, representing the qualitative aspect of legal consciousness and the legal life of society (Kirillova et al., 2021).

The last few decades have been marked by large-scale transformations in Russian society, including the economy, politics, and the socio-cultural sphere (Ermakov et. al., 2022). The active implementation of the democratic paradigm in the development of Russian society has been driven by the construction of a legal state. Its key characteristic is a high level of legal culture among the population, particularly young citizens.

According to T.F. Akchurin (Akschurin et al., 2018), establishing a legal state is directly linked to developing the legal culture of its citizens, particularly young people, who are both subjects and objects of social reproduction. The level of legal culture among the youth is one of the most important indicators of their development and a key criterion for the modernization of society.

The significance of this research topic is conditioned by the regulatory mechanisms governing the functioning of society, which is especially relevant today. The social, economic, and political changes in Russian society have led to a crisis of socio-cultural values, particularly among the youth.

Legal culture is a key factor in the socio-cultural development of the Russian Federation. Given the ongoing transformation of social relations, it is impossible to exclude its interaction with the digital environment as the latter gradually permeates all spheres of life within society and the state (Borodina et al., 2023; Sultonova et al., 2023). One can already witness the active formation of digital legal culture in Russian society (Kirillova et al., 2023).

Developing legal culture among the youth is a vital focus of socio-cultural policy in Russia (Kapustina&Goyushova, 2024). This issue is widely reflected in legislative program materials. Addressing this issue is a priority for many socio-cultural institutions, particularly those working with young people.

This research topic is highly promising. Modern socio-cultural institutions are the main source for the successful socialization of young people in a rapidly changing social reality. A priority area in this process is the formation of legal culture.

METHODS

The research employed a comprehensive review of existing literature and policy documents to analyze the influence of digitalization on the formation of legal culture, particularly in Russian society. The study examined academic sources, including textbooks and scientific articles, and legislative frameworks, such as the Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Development of Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness of Citizens approved by the President of the Russian Federation. We used case studies and examples from the implementation of digital legal systems like the Justice State Automated System to demonstrate the practical implications of digitalization on legal culture. We conducted a comparative analysis to explore the potential benefits and risks associated with digital transformation in the legal field, particularly concerning young people's education and legal awareness. The research further investigated the relationship between digitalization and the evolution of e-government, drawing insights from experts in the field. The study emphasized the importance of custom educational methods and digital tools in enhancing legal culture, particularly among younger generations, and the dual nature of digital transformation, encompassing both constructive and destructive aspects.

RESULTS

The weakening of legal culture among the youth has led to numerous offenses. A wide range of factors influences a person's legal culture. These factors are outlined in program documents, including the Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Development of Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness of Citizens. These factors include upbringing and moral climate in the family, the law-abiding behavior of parents, the quality of education, the accessibility of justice, the clarity and effectiveness of legislation, etc. (Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v sfere razvitiya pravovoi gramotnosti i pravosoznaniya grazhdan, 2011).

Digitalization is increasingly influencing social and state spheres. It is appropriate to consider it a factor in forming a person's legal culture. Due to its inherent characteristics, the influence of this process can manifest in both positive and negative ways. Given this, it is important to focus on forming a legal culture within the digital transformation of social relations.

Let us first address an important circumstance. It relates to the emerging use of the concepts of digital legal culture and digital legal consciousness in legal doctrine. R.B. Golovkin,

E.R. Krainova, and V.S. Manokhin (2022, p. 42) define the former as “a set of material and spiritual digital legal values that characterize the development of the information society and are reflected in the digital legal consciousness of its members”. We define the latter as “a form of reflection of digital legal culture” (Golovkin et al., 2022, p. 42). Digitalization transforms social relations and traditional legal categories, giving them a new meaning. Considering the novelty of these concepts, the scientific community has to form a systematic understanding, providing ground for academic research.

Returning to the primary focus of our research, we need to state that digitalization is an inevitable and necessary process. In the context of forming a person’s legal culture, digitalization facilitates easier access to legal information. Today, the functioning and timely updating of legal reference systems allow anyone to familiarize themselves with current legal norms, commentaries, and more. Digitalization provides citizens with new ways to protect their rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests. The Justice State Automated System is one of the most in-demand electronic services with many functions. Using this system, citizens can submit appeals to judicial authorities, track the progress of their submissions, and receive the outcomes of their cases. It provides access to information on legal proceedings in which a person is involved. The openness and transparency of such systems contribute to enhancing a person’s legal culture, increasing their legal awareness, and fostering trust in these innovations.

A.S. Kiselev identifies a direct correlation between the legal culture of individuals and society and the evolution of e-government. Kiselev asserts (2015, p. 173) that “the overall cultural growth of the population is directly proportional to the development of moral and ethical values in society and to the advancement of e-government implementation”. Citizens’ recognition of the importance of innovations in the context of securing and protecting their rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests can elevate e-government to a qualitatively new level. This could allow Russia to achieve a higher ranking on the global E-Government Development Index.

Not all innovations are immediately received positively. A.A. Sirotkin (2023, p. 123) emphasizes that “implementing digital technologies in various spheres of public life is an irreversible process with a dual structure. This process has constructive and destructive directions”. This is exemplified by the organization and conduct of elections, where new technology (remote electronic voting) is now actively used. G.V. Tumanyan rightly comments that “paradoxically, the introduction of electronic public platforms was intended by the authorities as a tool to increase trust in public institutions <...>. However, this tool has had the opposite effect” (2022, p. 307). While some voters responded positively to this innovation and

appreciated its convenience, others expressed skepticism. Their concerns primarily referred to the transparency of the procedure. Collectively, these concerns can negatively impact the legal culture and lead to a desire to disengage from political processes. We believe that, due to the rapid implementation of this technology, many citizens were unprepared to use remote electronic voting and did not fully understand its true purpose.

In the context of developing a person's legal culture, LegalTech deserves special attention. This technology primarily impacts the professional sphere by automating and optimizing processes within legal practice. LegalTech assists in analyzing large data sets, generating standard documents from smart templates, sending notifications, and responding to situations promptly. A pertinent question arises: Is LegalTech a helper or a competitor to modern lawyers? It is crucial to find the golden mean. Artificial intelligence cannot fully replace lawyers, nor should it. It is generally unacceptable for AI to entirely supplant human legal expertise. Lawyers should avoid over-relying on such tools. Their use must be justified and should not compromise the quality of legal assistance provided, nor should it diminish the level of legal culture and professionalism of the practitioners.

The concepts of legal culture and legal consciousness are interconnected. This relationship lies in the fact that legal culture is a qualitative aspect of legal consciousness. Due to the digital transformation of social relations, the deformation of legal consciousness is a negative phenomenon manifesting in many forms, each characterized by specific features. Let us consider the example of legal idealism described by N.I. Matuzov as a "birthmark" of the Russian social consciousness (2009, p. 4). Legal idealism is dangerous because it reflects blind faith in the law, where citizens believe that the law holds the potential to solve all existing problems. The power of law must be assessed adequately and realistically. It is important to acknowledge that modern law does not always adapt to new social developments at the desired pace. Due to their inherent characteristics, certain areas are challenging to regulate legally. This is true regarding AI. Several issues have been pressing for years, ranging from the legal nature of AI to the ownership of intellectual property rights for works created by it. Neural networks, which are a manifestation of artificial intelligence and whose algorithms simulate human brain function, are developing and causing public concern when used in some fields.

The spread of the so-called "fake" information in the information and telecommunications space also represents a negative trend. E.F. Usmanova argues that "the vast amount of fake or distorted information affects the legal consciousness of society and its legal culture" (2022, p. 51). Although intentionally false in content, such information is often skillfully presented to its target audience and is perceived as truthful. According to M.A.

Polivina, O.I. Shkuropii, and V.V. Maiba, “this deforms consciousness and results in illusory ideas” (2020, p. 72).

Creators and disseminators of fake news typically have specific goals, aiming to manipulate the consciousness of particular groups, which can severely impact the everyday level of legal culture limited by the routine experiences of interacting with legal phenomena (Chirkov et al., 2022). While legal professionals resist such provocations, people not involved in the legal field are vulnerable. This vulnerability can significantly distort their understanding of legal norms and processes, potentially leading to misguided perceptions and actions.

Despite the wide variety of digital tools available, the potential of digitalization has not been fully realized yet. This especially concerns legal education for young people to increase their level of legal culture since this demographic is most familiar with and receptive to information technologies (Tolmachev et al., 2022). I.V. Staroverova comments on this topic in the following manner: “The legal culture of the youth is a synthesis of the legal culture inherited from society and innovative elements produced by the youth themselves, and this process is multifaceted with some variations posing certain risks for society” (2010, p. 6). As a result, a primary consideration when working with younger generations is to use formats and methods that meet their needs (Abdullayev et al., 2024). In recent years, activities of youth organizations, such as youth parliaments, governments, electoral commissions, and councils under ombudsmen, have gained popularity among young people. These organizations experiment with innovative formats and methods in the digital space, such as meetups, PechaKucha presentations, science slams, etc (Kapustina&Goyushova, 2024).

It is beneficial to influence the youth in the educational process. In this regard, a positive trend is the introduction of Conversations about Important Things classes in general education institutions and vocational schools (Golubeva et al., 2023). These sessions cover key historical events and prominent figures. They address various aspects of life in modern Russia, including achievements, development prospects, and existing risks. Educators are provided with a comprehensive set of educational and methodological materials, including video lessons and interactive online games. In higher education institutions, the introduction of innovative formats and methods can be effectively achieved through the new and significant discipline Fundamentals of the Russian Statehood. Given its mandatory nature, an optimal solution for teaching this subject is the development of open online courses based on the principles of accessibility, informativeness, and interactivity.

CONCLUSIONS

Digitalization is both inevitable and necessary. This process must unfold safely and systematically to ensure society's adequate understanding and acceptance of these developments. In the context of forming a person's legal culture, digitalization has a significant impact. It facilitates easier access to legal information, opens up new opportunities for citizens to protect their rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests, and helps optimize processes. As people gradually integrate into the digital space, they enhance their level of legal culture, view information technologies positively, and become more progressive. There are also specific risks that need to be addressed. People should not "dissolve" into the digital space. They should view innovations as a tool to assist them, not to replace them. This is particularly relevant for practicing lawyers. Another dangerous trend is the spread of fake information, which can negatively influence a person's level of legal culture and distort their legal consciousness. It is crucial to focus on legal education for the youth who are a vulnerable group with worldviews and legal culture still in the active stages of formation. Carefully selecting appropriate formats and methodologies unlocks the full potential of digitalization.

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