

# Legal education of physical education university students: areas of modernization

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to survey legal literacy and need for legal education in a physical education university student community.

**Methods and structure of the study.** We sampled for the questionnaire survey the 1-3-year students (n=124, including 1-, 2- and 3-year groups of 42, 44 and 38 people, respectively) majoring in physical education at Yekaterinburg Institute of Physical Culture.

**Results and conclusion.** The efforts to develop legal literacy in young communities are recommended to prioritize the legal education models geared to gradually build up the group legal cultures with a special emphasis not only on the formal laws but also on the most sensitive and relevant legal issues, rights, values and priorities. One of key benefits of legal education service in the academic educational system is the graduates' awareness of the legal mechanisms offered by the legal system and their preparedness and willingness to effectively defend their own and other people's rights in constructive cooperation with every group.

**Keywords:** *legal education, rule-of-law state, civil society, legal literacy.*

**Background.** Modern challenges of the national government system with its evolution trends including the local/ regional government subsystems urge the national research community to undertake systemic and well designed and managed theoretical and practical studies of the legal education service for the young population on the whole and youth sports communities in particular, since the national athletes competing on the global arenas have to be basically literate in many legal matters. In this situation, the national physical education and sport sector realizes the need for special legal education service for a wide variety of home sporting communities.

Objective of the study was to survey legal literacy and need for legal education in the physical education university student community.

**Methods and structure of the study.** We sampled for the questionnaire survey the 1-3-year students (n=124, including 1-, 2- and 3-year groups of 42, 44 and 38 people, respectively) majoring in physical education at Yekaterinburg Institute of Physical Culture.

**Results and discussion.** The first question was "What rights do you know?" The sample was found mostly aware of the right for education as reported by 67% and 40% of the 1- and 2-year groups, respectively, and a fair proportion of the 3-year group. We were surprised to find only 44%, 31% and 8% of the 1-, 2- and 3-year groups (respectively) reporting awareness of the top priority human right for life. Many in the sample (26%, 28% and 35% in the 1-, 2- and 3-year groups, respectively) acknowledged being "unaware of own rights" in fact.



Ranked third by the legal literacy survey was the freedom of speech and expression – probably for the reason that it is widely discussed by the popular mass media and everyone knows it. And ranked fourth was the freedom of choice reported by 12%, 6% and 6% of the 1-, 2- and 3-year groups, respectively. Furthermore, only the 1-year group demonstrated some awareness (8%) of the right to personal inviolability. The right for food was reportedly known by 11% and 11% of the 2- and 3-year groups. Only 6% of 1-year students showed awareness of the consumer rights; whilst the property protection right and right for legal service was found known by 2% and 5% in the 3-year group, respectively. On the whole, responses to question 1 showed a sad situation: the sample was virtually unaware of own basic rights. Could it be that some of them were just unable or unwilling to clearly articulate their knowledge and feelings?

It should be mentioned that outcomes of such surveys are virtually never predictable enough and are normally of special interest for the group priorities ranking purposes – our university groups in the case. What are the group understandings of the rule-of-law state? On the whole, they want to see it honest and fair. The national leaders including President, has repeatedly stated that our goal is to build up a rule-of-law state that is a multiannual mission for at least our generation. This goal implies the modern legal education for the key population groups, with a special attention to the young people's legal literacy. As demonstrated by our questionnaire survey, the university students still show rather poor legal literacy.

And the key question of the survey was "Do we need a legal literacy and what way should it come?" The question was responded positively by 40%, 40 and 62% of the 1-, 2- and 3-year groups, respectively. However, virtually every second (49%) in the sample reported "feeling no need for legal education at university" – despite the fact that their legal literacy is doubtful to say the least. They seem to perceive the world and government system established on some "concepts" rather than laws.

**Conclusion.** The efforts to develop legal literacy in young communities are recommended to prioritize the legal education models geared to gradually build up the group legal cultures with a special emphasis not only on the formal laws but also on the most sensi-

tive and relevant legal issues, rights, values and priorities. One of key benefits of legal education service in the academic educational system is the graduates' awareness of the legal mechanisms offered by the legal system and their preparedness and willingness to effectively defend their own and other people's rights in constructive cooperation with every group.

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