

Significances and Suggestions of Fostering Legal Literacy among University Students

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Abstract: In modern society, legal literacy is an important part of citizens' comprehensive literacy, and citizens' legal literacy is closely related to the civilization of society. The university stage is the transition stage for students from minors to adults, and university students will enter the society after graduation and become a part of the society, give full play to their professional advantages and talents, and undertake the mission of national builders and successors. Therefore, the legal literacy of university students reflects the overall level of citizens' legal literacy, the level of their legal literacy is related to their own growth and success, also related to the quality of talent training in higher education, the development of the country's various industry sectors, and the smooth promotion of the comprehensive rule of law. This paper defines the connotation and elements of "legal literacy" scientifically by sorting out the research results of scholars, and analyzes the significance of cultivating university students' legal literacy from the three aspects of making up for the lack of rule of law literacy, realizing the goal of talent cultivation in universities, and constructing a society under the rule of law on the basis of which the importance of cultivating university students' legal literacy is analyzed. Finally, it puts forward suggestions for cultivating the legal literacy of university students from the perspectives of society, university and students.

Keywords: University Students; Citizens; Cultivation; Legal Literacy

1. Introduction

Scholars have a long history about law-related research, they have achieved more research results. In China, the research on legal literacy started earlier, especially from 2014 when it became the focus of extensive attention of

scholars. From 2014 to 2020, the research on legal literacy mainly focuses on the leaders and managers of organizations, because the specificity of the nature and content of the work for this group, they need to have a higher standard and requirements for legal literacy, so they have a higher standard of legal literacy in terms of legal knowledge learning, respect and application of legal knowledge, they have urgent needs and more stringent requirements for them. Research on legal literacy of university students is a new subject after leaders and managers. To deeply analyze the legal literacy of university students, it is necessary to clarify "what is legal literacy" in the first place. Scholars have already analyzed and defined the concept and connotation of "legal literacy". Based on the structure of the word, "legal literacy" is composed of "law" and "literacy", "law" for modify and qualify[1], "literacy" is the core of the word, and the subject of the act is the citizen. Zhang[2] believes that legal literacy refers to the formation of legal awareness based on people's learning and understanding of legal knowledge, and learning is about protecting their rights and interests, solve problems encountered in practice. Legal literacy covers the acquisition of legal knowledge, the enhancement of legal concepts, the firmness of legal beliefs, and the practice of legal ability[3]. Legal awareness, legal thinking, legal manner, and legal spirit are important components of legal literacy[4]. Comprehensive courses at the higher education, teachers also refer to legal literacy, and course instructors suggest that legal literacy refers to the quality, cultivation, and ability of people to safeguard their rights and fulfill their obligations in accordance with the law by learning about the law, understanding the nature of the law, and applying legal thinking. Comparing the research results of scholars, it is found that legal literacy is a rich, three-dimensional and multidimensional concept, and researcher's analysis of legal

literacy focuses on four core elements, law respect, law learning, law obeying, law using, and the measurement of the level of legal literacy also takes the above four elements. From this, it can be seen that citizens' legal literacy is not only reflected in learning legal knowledge and establishing law-abiding awareness, but also in internalizing legal knowledge and awareness and applying them in life practice. Scholars' analyses of legal literacy inform the research in this paper, university students legal literacy has both the commonality of the legal literacy of citizens, but also have their own distinguishing characteristics.

2. Significances of Enhancing the Legal Literacy among University Students

The university stage is a transition stage for students from minors to adults, a stage for young people to continue to acquire knowledge and receive higher education, and important period in life, after graduation, university students will enter the society, give full play to their professional advantages, and participate in the construction and development of the country by combining what they have learned. The level of university students' legal literacy is related to their prospects and future, the quality of talent training in universities, concerned with the development of national endeavors, and also related to the process and realization of a strong State governed by the rule of law. Comprehensively speaking, improving the legal literacy of university students were mainly manifested in the following three aspects.

2.1 Enhancing Legal Literacy is an Intrinsic Need to Make up for the Lack of Legal Literacy among University Students

For individuals, learning systematic legal knowledge is the prerequisite and foundation for strengthening legal thinking, participating in the practice of the rule of law, developing law-abiding habits. In recent years, the legal education activities in primary schools, secondary schools and universities have been rich in content and diverse forms, and the overall level of legal literacy of students at the higher education level is higher, and the legal knowledge they have mastered is far more than before, but the speed of social

development is faster than before, especially the fast and wide development of the Internet, so there is still a gap between the level of legal literacy of university students and the expectations and requirements of society for outstanding talents. Illegal and criminal behavior due to weak legal awareness is common among university students which makes the disappointment of the society and families grow gradually. From the development trend, the cyberspace and the crimes relying on or by means of the Internet have gradually become the main types of crimes committed by the youths, the fundamental reason is still the insufficiency of the youths' own legal literacy. Therefore, improving legal literacy is a key measure to make up for the weak legal awareness and lack of legal beliefs of university students, to reduce the rate of youth crime. Through a variety of ways and means to enhance the legal literacy of university students, to establish the belief that the law is supreme, to develop a good habit of law respecting, law learning, law obeying, law using, to strengthen the subjective consciousness and sense of responsibility of university students in the practice of the rule of law.

2.2 Cultivating the Legal Literacy of University Students is the Key to Achieving the Objectives of Talent Training in Universities

Commonly understood, "talent cultivation goals" is what kind of people the university wants to cultivate students into. Talent cultivation goal is the flag and direction of higher education activities. From the analysis of specificity, different levels, different advantages of the university has different personnel training objectives, the same university has different professional personnel training objectives, but from the analysis of commonality, no matter what type of university, talent training have a shared goal: to cultivate professional talents with high moral quality, which is the central link and the essential requirements of higher education. If universities want to successfully achieve this goal of talent training, to train students into skilled professional knowledge or skills of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic all-round development of talents, to be the nation's builders and successors, to take

on the important responsibility of the national development, they must have a good quality of law, which is the embodiment of the noble moral qualities of the university students, and it is more an important part of the excellent comprehensive quality. Through the systematic study and practice in the higher education stage, students are able to respect law, learn law, obey law, use law, consciously abide by the rules of the workplace in the future duty, enjoy their rights and fulfil their obligations according to the law, and in life, strictly demand themselves to better show the spirit of the law when encountering difficulties and problems, cope with difficulties and problems with the legal mindset and way of dealing with the law, and learn to protect themselves, to reduce unnecessary trouble, less detour, also can set an example for the citizens, play a leading role in demonstration, make more and more contributions to the construction of society based on the rule of law.

2.3 Enhancing the Legal Literacy of University Students is a Practical Necessity for Building a Law Society

Rule of law society is a form of social existence according to the state of social and political civilization, refers to the formation of a permanent relationship between people, people and the environment, all activities are subject to specific rules and order, members of society manage society and govern it according to rules, this order of rules is either spontaneously generated and autonomously established by society or established by the State using its power, requiring every member of society to abide by the rules[5]. With the continuous promotion of the rule of law society, the concept of the rule of law is deeply rooted in people's minds[6], the citizens' desire for fairness and justice and the protection of their rights has become more urgent, and their needs have become more diversified, involving all aspects of their life and work, but the citizens' own legal literacy is not at the same level, and the majority of the citizens do not have the experience of law learning, and do not have the awareness and ability to solve problems with the law. University students are an important part of the citizens, an important force leading the direction of social development, the construction of a legal

society cannot be separated from the leadership and participation of university students. The influence of legal literacy on students' study and work, and on the overall quality of citizenship is subtle and everlasting. If university students have high legal literacy, master the legal knowledge they should have, set up correct legal concepts, consciously abide by the rules stipulated by the law, exercise the rights given by the law, safeguard their legitimate interests, cultivate the good habits of law respecting, law learning, law obeying, law using, it is a good way for them to enter the society and live legally. In addition to respecting and abiding by the law themselves, university students can also play their role in social, bravely assume social responsibility, influence and guide other members of society to consciously abide by laws and regulations, safeguard social justice, and improve ability to solve problems with the law. Only when everyone starts from himself, respects rights of others, fulfills obligations and observes the laws and regulations, atmosphere of respecting and believing in the law and abiding by the law be formed in the whole society, so as to promote the construction of a society based on the rule of law.

3. Suggestions for Fostering Legal Literacy among University Students

Defining legal literacy and analyzing importance is the starting point and foundation for this study, with the focus and purpose of answering question of how to cultivate legal literacy among university students. Cultivating legal literacy among university students is a systematic project and a process from shallow to deep, combining the general law of physical and mental development of human beings, uniting the strengths of society, universities, students and other main bodies, clarifying their respective tasks and responsibilities, and exploring scientific and targeted paths of legal literacy cultivation, so as to improve the quality of the cultivation of legal literacy among university students, and thus to successfully realize the goal of legal literacy cultivation.

3.1 Society Should Create a Favourable Environment for the Rule of Law

The survival and development of individuals

cannot be separated from society, and the cultivation of legal literacy among university students also depends on society to create a favourable environment for the rule of law. First, deepen the reform in the field of rule of law. Social development in the new stage will show new characteristics, the formulation of laws and regulations is not a once-and-for-all thing, along with the development of society, the laws that are not adapted to social life should be adjusted and improved in a timely manner, involving the important areas of social life and the citizens are eagerly looking forward to but has not yet been legislated in the field of legislation should be strengthened, in which special attention should be paid to the Internet area of legislation and supervision and management. Secondly, the publicity of laws should be strengthened. Adjusted laws and new laws enacted need to be widely publicized to citizens in the shortest possible time, so as to achieve the goal that everyone knows about them and consciously abides by them. The classroom is a way for schoolchildren to acquire legal knowledge, and for citizens, participation in rule of law publicity activities can also achieve the purpose of updating and supplementing their legal knowledge. The competent authorities should organize a variety of publicity activities with the help of a variety of publicity tools to create a strong atmosphere for publicizing the rule of law, to mobilize citizens' interest in learning about the law, to improve the efficiency of popularizing the law, and to achieve the purpose of fostering citizens' awareness of the rule of law.

3.2 Schools should Pay Attention to the Role of the Main Channel for Teaching the Curriculum

In higher education, the most direct way for students learning law is to law major, which allows them to learn about the law in systematic[7], and as non-law majors, they can also acquire legal knowledge by participating in classes on legal topics. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of all students to learn legal knowledge and to cultivate students' rule of law literacy, universities should attach great importance to the construction of legal courses. Hire experts or lawyers to form teaching teams together with teachers to undertake the teaching of the courses and to guide the students[8], support teachers to actively

participate in continuing learning and on-the-job training to update the system of legal knowledge, and encourage teachers with the conditions to work part-time in the competent legal department or law firms to enrich the encourage teachers with conditions to work part-time in legal departments or law firms to enrich the practice of legal affairs, promote the close combination of classroom teaching and practice, and improve teachers' teaching ability and operation ability, pay attention to the hierarchy and relevance of the teaching content, focusing on the study of basic knowledge of law in the lower grades, the study of network-related knowledge of law in the middle grades, and the study of knowledge of law that is related to employment or social life in the upper grades. Only by acquiring more legal knowledge can rigorous legal thinking be developed and the ability to solve problems with the law be effectively enhanced.

3.3 Students Need to Develop a Sense of Self-awareness to Improve Their Legal Literacy

University students with high legal literacy are more adaptable to society, more confident in their work, and more likely to have opportunities for development. Enhancing the legal literacy of university students requires the formation of educational synergy by multiple subjects, but in the final analysis, it is necessary to transform the influence of external forces into students' conscious behaviour. Therefore, during the university period, students should cherish and make full use of the educational platform and resources of the school, learn legal knowledge in depth through the class, build a knowledge system, cultivate legal awareness[9], make adjustments through the new media to check whether their words and behaviors are in line with the scope of the law, keep themselves in order, and continuously strengthen their legal knowledge reserves, take the initiative to communicate with teachers, seize key knowledge, relieve the doubts in their minds, study the research results of scholars through library resources, understand the current status and direction of research, participate in practical activities such as rule of law propaganda and rule of law public welfare, accumulate experience, gradually form solid rule of law thinking, and

exercise the ability to safeguard the rights in accordance with the law and rule of law discursive ability in the concrete practice of the rule of law.

4. Conclusion

The construction of a society based on the rule of law requires that all citizens have a high level of legal literacy. The cultivation of rule of law literacy among university students is a process from learning legal knowledge to respecting and believing in the law and then using the law to solve practical problems, that is, from internalizing legal knowledge to externalizing it into behaviour. Through systematic and purposeful legal education activities, university students can enhance their conscientiousness in respecting, learning, abiding and using the law, and cultivate comprehensive talents with good theoretical foundation, high professional quality and strong practical ability, so as to lay a good foundation for them to enter the society in the future, and also to provide a guarantee for the construction of a society based on the rule of law.

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