

The Cultivation of Legal Literacy Among College Students in the Context of Online Platforms

Jiahui Han

Lutai College of Textile and Apparel, Shandong University of Technology, Zibo 255000, Shandong, China

Abstract: *Online platforms have become an important avenue for legal education among college students. The legal information provided by online platforms is characterized by timeliness, comprehensiveness, and interactivity. By updating legal news in real-time, these platforms help students stay informed about the latest legal changes and high-profile cases, thus enhancing their legal awareness and sensitivity. Online platforms offer diverse content formats, such as legal text interpretations, case analyses, and online courses, providing students with abundant learning resources. Interactive learning features, such as online discussions and mock court activities, further enhance students' legal reasoning and practical abilities. However, challenges such as the accuracy and authority of information, disparities in legal literacy, and information overload remain significant issues. In conclusion, online platforms offer flexible, diverse, and interactive learning opportunities, helping to improve students' legal literacy and promote the integration of theory and practice.*

Keywords: Online platforms, College students, Legal literacy, Legal awareness.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF LEGAL INFORMATION ON ONLINE PLATFORMS

1.1 Advantages of Timeliness in Legal Information

One of the most prominent features of legal information on online platforms is its timeliness, particularly in terms of the speed and accuracy of information dissemination. Compared to traditional teaching methods, online platforms offer significant advantages by enabling college students to quickly access updates on legal provisions, judicial interpretations, and developments in high-profile cases. For instance, following the enactment of the *Civil Code* in 2020, major legal information platforms promptly released explanatory articles, expert lecture videos, and case studies on legal applications, helping students grasp the new regulations and their societal significance. Through these real-time updates, students not only stay informed about legal changes but also develop a deeper understanding of their multifaceted impacts on society, the economy, and culture.

The timeliness of online platforms is particularly crucial in the field of judicial affairs. Legal provisions and judicial interpretations are frequently updated to adapt to societal changes. If college students can promptly access newly issued legal content, they will be better equipped to navigate the evolving legal landscape. For example, after the emergence of high-profile cases, online platforms often provide comprehensive content, ranging from case interpretations to verdict analyses. This helps students understand the legal context and application of such cases while enhancing their sensitivity to legal developments and stimulating their interest in legal research. Consequently, students are better prepared to handle potential legal issues in real-life situations.

The real-time updates available on online platforms enable students to quickly obtain relevant legal opinions and guidance when faced with legal challenges, preventing them from missing crucial opportunities due to outdated information. For instance, in areas such as consumer rights protection and labor law disputes, online platforms frequently publish legal provisions and typical case studies, equipping college students with the necessary knowledge to assert their rights within the legal framework. This, in turn, enhances their ability to address real-world legal issues effectively.

1.2 Broad Coverage and Diversity of Legal Information

The legal information provided by online platforms covers an exceptionally wide range of topics, spanning nearly all areas of law. From foundational fields such as constitutional law, civil law, and criminal law, to more specialized areas like labor law, environmental law, and international law, students can find relevant informational resources. This extensive legal information is particularly beneficial for students who are not majoring in law, as it

effectively addresses gaps in their legal knowledge and understanding.

The content on these platforms is also highly diverse, encompassing original legal texts, case analyses, thematic lectures, legal commentaries, and interpretations of current events. This variety of learning formats not only enhances the enjoyment of learning but also fosters a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of legal principles. For instance, many platforms offer video content that explains legal texts alongside case studies, allowing students to understand the practical application of law and the underlying logic behind it. Additionally, some platforms host specialized lectures featuring academic experts or experienced lawyers, providing students with deeper insights into specific areas of law, such as environmental law or international trade law.

This broad coverage caters not only to the needs of law students but also offers interdisciplinary legal knowledge to those studying other fields, thereby promoting a well-rounded legal literacy. Interdisciplinary legal education enables students to analyze complex issues involving multiple domains from a legal perspective. For example, when studying environmental protection courses, students can not only learn the basic provisions of environmental law but also stay updated on the latest trends, typical cases, and practical applications of environmental law through the platform's diverse resources. This enhances their ability to solve cross-disciplinary issues effectively.

The platform's broad coverage also extends to global legal information. Many platforms provide content not only on domestic law but also on international law, comparative law, and other global legal frameworks, helping students understand and address legal issues within a globalized context. With the increasing presence of multinational corporations and international organizations, the study of international law has become an essential component of legal education for college students. These platforms allow students to not only learn about their own country's legal system but also gain insight into the legal systems and development trends of other nations. This prepares students for future careers in international legal affairs or as legal advisors for multinational corporations, laying a solid foundation for their professional growth.

1.3 Interactivity in Enhancing Legal Learning and Practice

Interactivity is another significant advantage of online legal platforms, providing college students with opportunities to directly engage with legal experts, instructors, and fellow learners. This interactive approach not only deepens students' understanding of legal knowledge but also effectively enhances their legal reasoning and communication skills.

Through online platforms, students can engage in real-time interactions with experts, instructors, or peers via comment sections, live Q&A sessions, and discussion forums. Such interactions help students address doubts encountered during their studies and develop a more profound comprehension of legal concepts and provisions. For example, many online legal education platforms allow students to ask questions at any time during a course, with instructors providing prompt responses. This immediate feedback significantly improves learning efficiency. Additionally, legal discussions on social media platforms stimulate students' interest, encouraging them to debate high-profile cases and legal issues, thereby exposing them to diverse legal perspectives and refining their critical thinking and legal articulation skills.

Interactivity is also evident in online practical activities such as mock trials and legal debates. Many platforms and social media channels host virtual courtroom simulations and debate competitions, where students can assume roles such as judges, prosecutors, or defense attorneys, actively participating in judicial proceedings. This experiential learning approach enables students to grasp legal principles from a practical perspective while enhancing their ability to apply legal knowledge. In mock trials, students must prepare case materials, engage in debates, and conduct legal analyses—an experience that not only reinforces their theoretical understanding but also hones their problem-solving skills in real-world legal scenarios.

Furthermore, interactive features facilitate communication between students, legal professionals, and the broader public. Through such exchanges, students can broaden their legal perspectives, gain exposure to different schools of legal thought, and even discover particular areas of law that interest them for further study. This student-driven legal exploration process not only fosters academic progress but also cultivates habits of independent learning and inquiry.

The interactive nature of online platforms provides a multidimensional and comprehensive legal learning environment. Students not only acquire legal knowledge but also develop critical thinking, communication, and

practical legal skills through engagement with others. This interactive learning model plays a crucial role in fostering well-rounded legal literacy, preparing students to become modern legal professionals with a solid theoretical foundation, extensive practical experience, and strong analytical abilities.

2. DIVERSITY IN THE DISSEMINATION OF LEGAL KNOWLEDGE ON ONLINE PLATFORMS

2.1 The Rise of Online Course Platforms

With the rapid development of online learning platforms, legal education is no longer confined to traditional classroom instruction. These platforms break the barriers of time and location, making legal courses accessible to a broader range of college students. In addition to offering a wealth of course resources, they provide flexible learning modes and diverse learning pathways. For instance, platforms such as China University MOOC and XuetangX host numerous courses taught by renowned law professors, covering various fields, from jurisprudence and constitutional law to civil law and criminal law. Taking China University MOOC as an example, the Jurisprudence course, through clear and accessible explanations, helps students grasp fundamental legal theories and frameworks, enabling them to understand the underlying concepts and principles of law. Moreover, many platforms offer classic case analyses and judicial practice lectures, allowing students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application and enhance their legal proficiency.

The widespread adoption of online course platforms has also facilitated the development of interdisciplinary legal education. Many students from non-law disciplines can access legal knowledge relevant to their fields, such as commercial law and intellectual property law. This interdisciplinary legal education helps students integrate legal knowledge with expertise from other fields, better preparing them for future career challenges. Additionally, interactive discussion forums and assessment systems on these platforms provide real-time feedback, further reinforcing students' learning outcomes.

2.2 Social Media and the Dissemination of Legal Knowledge

The evolution of social media has created new opportunities and challenges for legal knowledge dissemination. Platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Bilibili have become significant channels for legal education. For example, the Bilibili account Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law explains complex criminal law concepts in a humorous and creative manner, making them engaging and accessible to young audiences. By analyzing real-life cases, Luo Xiang not only helps students master fundamental criminal law principles but also fosters their interest in legal studies through an entertaining and relaxed approach, encouraging them to actively explore and discuss legal issues.

The primary advantages of social media platforms lie in their high level of interactivity and rapid information dissemination. Students can participate in discussions on legal topics, engage with other learners, and interact with legal experts. This interactive environment provides students with diverse learning perspectives and encourages them to think more critically. Moreover, legal dissemination on social media is not limited to passive information transfer; rather, it involves discussions, debates, and engagement, cultivating students' critical thinking and legal analysis skills. For instance, legal discussions and case analyses on Weibo frequently spark widespread public debate, allowing students to gain exposure to different legal viewpoints and practical applications by actively participating in these discussions.

2.3 The Popularization of Short Video and Visual Content Platforms

The growing popularity of short video and visual content platforms has emerged as a new medium for the dissemination of legal knowledge. Legal experts and lawyers on platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and Weibo use concise short videos and visual explanations to introduce legal concepts to college students. These videos often address common legal issues encountered in daily life, such as contract disputes, consumer rights protection, and labor law enforcement, helping students better understand the practical application of legal principles. The advantage of short videos lies in their rapid and intuitive information delivery, allowing students to quickly grasp the core content of legal provisions and relevant case studies in a short period.

Furthermore, the interactive nature of short video platforms enables students to ask questions and receive answers conveniently. Many legal experts respond to audience queries in the comment sections of their videos, assisting

students in resolving legal uncertainties they encounter during their studies. Additionally, legal content on visual platforms often includes clear infographics and practical case studies, making it easier for students to comprehend the application of legal provisions and regulations. This highly efficient and accessible form of dissemination allows students to rapidly acquire extensive legal knowledge and flexibly apply it to real-world problems.

Moreover, the widespread adoption of short video platforms has democratized the dissemination of legal knowledge, no longer restricting it to legal professionals. The general public can now create and share legal content, contributing to a broader public understanding of legal concepts. This grassroots approach to legal education not only raises public legal awareness but also promotes the widespread dissemination of legal knowledge. In regions with limited legal education resources, short video and visual content platforms provide students with a convenient means to access legal knowledge, bridging educational gaps and fostering a more legally informed society.

3. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN THE DISSEMINATION OF LEGAL INFORMATION ON ONLINE PLATFORMS

As online platforms provide university students with abundant legal information, the dissemination of legal knowledge has become more convenient. However, this convenience also presents challenges related to information quality and learning effectiveness, particularly concerning accuracy, disparities in legal literacy, and information overload.

3.1 Issues of Accuracy and Authority

Although online platforms offer diverse sources of legal information, significantly expanding students' access to legal knowledge, they also contain a substantial amount of low-quality content. Some self-media accounts and non-professional websites provide legal interpretations that lack expertise, often resulting in bias, oversimplification, or even misinformation. Certain legal explanations are overly simplistic or one-sided, failing to fully capture the complexity and depth of the law, which may lead to misunderstandings among students. For instance, some simplified legal case analyses may overlook critical details or the specific scope of application of certain legal provisions, causing students to mistakenly perceive them as universally applicable legal principles. Such misconceptions not only hinder a comprehensive understanding of the law but may also lead to erroneous judgments in real-life legal situations.

Moreover, many online platforms lack effective mechanisms to verify the credibility of information sources. Legal content is not always produced by authoritative legal experts or scholars, making it challenging for students to discern which sources are reliable and accurate. This difficulty in filtering information affects their learning outcomes and correct understanding of legal principles. The absence of rigorous quality control further exacerbates the risk of misinformation, underscoring the need for students to critically evaluate the credibility of legal resources on these platforms.

3.2 Disparities in Legal Literacy

Significant differences exist in university students' legal literacy when engaging with online legal information. Some students possess a strong legal awareness, enabling them to comply with laws, respect others' rights, and make sound legal judgments in their daily lives. However, a considerable portion of students have a limited understanding of fundamental legal concepts, provisions, and applications. This issue is particularly prominent among non-law majors, whose exposure to legal education is minimal. They often perceive legal knowledge acquired from online platforms as isolated pieces of information rather than part of a coherent legal framework. This superficial understanding may lead to flawed legal reasoning and decision-making.

For example, some students may unintentionally infringe on intellectual property rights, make inappropriate public statements, or spread false information due to a lack of legal awareness. Additionally, when confronted with legal issues, they may lack the knowledge or awareness necessary to protect their rights effectively. Insufficient legal literacy and ambiguous ethical standards are reflected not only in misinterpretations of legal texts but also in inappropriate behaviors, particularly in the online environment. A weak sense of legal responsibility makes students more susceptible to engaging in actions that violate both legal and ethical norms. Therefore, enhancing students' legal literacy—particularly through systematic and continuous online legal education—is crucial to fostering responsible and law-abiding individuals.

3.3 Information Overload and Fragmented Learning

In the era of information explosion, university students are inundated with vast amounts of data. Online platforms provide extensive legal information covering nearly all areas of law, seemingly facilitating legal education. However, this convenience also contributes to the problem of information overload. Without a structured learning framework and in-depth comprehension, many students may feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of legal information, which negatively impacts their learning outcomes.

The fragmented nature of online legal content, while effective in capturing students' short-term attention, often lacks a coherent and systematic approach to legal education. Students may acquire superficial knowledge of specific legal topics but fail to grasp the interconnections between different legal fields. Furthermore, fragmented learning encourages students to rely on quick-fix solutions from short videos, brief articles, or Q&A posts rather than engaging in deeper analysis and application. Given that law is a discipline requiring rigorous reasoning and in-depth analysis, this superficial approach to learning may have detrimental effects.

Information overload and fragmented learning hinder students from developing a comprehensive and systematic understanding of legal principles, ultimately limiting their ability to apply legal knowledge effectively in real-world scenarios. Addressing these challenges requires a more structured approach to online legal education, emphasizing depth, critical thinking, and the integration of knowledge across different legal domains.

4. THE ROLE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS IN PROMOTING LEGAL EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

With the advancement of technology and the development of the internet, online platforms have become an important channel for university students to study law. These platforms not only provide more flexible learning opportunities but also help students improve their legal literacy by offering interactive learning formats and practical case studies, facilitating the integration of theory and practice.

4.1 Flexible Learning Opportunities Provided by Online Platforms

Online platforms offer university students unprecedented flexibility in their learning. Through online courses, legal information websites, and legal learning applications, students are no longer constrained by the time and spatial limitations of traditional classroom settings and can engage in self-directed learning according to their interests and needs. This flexibility not only supplements classroom learning but also allows students to adjust their learning pace based on their own progress. For instance, platforms such as China University MOOC and XuetangX enable students to freely select legal courses of interest and study them anytime and anywhere, ensuring continuity even during busy academic terms. Additionally, legal learning apps like "Houda Law Exam" provide question banks, mock exams, and video explanations, helping students efficiently use their spare time for studying, thus enhancing learning productivity. This convenient learning mode is particularly suitable for busy university students, providing more learning opportunities within their daily lives.

4.2 Integration of Online Courses and Practical Case Studies

Modern legal education increasingly emphasizes the integration of legal theory with practical case studies, and online platforms offer opportunities to merge these aspects. In traditional classrooms, students often learn abstract legal provisions and may struggle to understand the complexity and real-world application of the law. However, legal courses on online platforms frequently incorporate actual case studies, helping students relate abstract legal concepts to real-world examples and strengthening their understanding and application of the law. For instance, in case analysis provided by these platforms, students not only learn about the relevant legal provisions but also observe how these provisions are applied in real cases, affecting the outcomes of trials and the rights of parties involved. Moreover, some platforms offer virtual moot court activities, where students can assume roles such as judges, prosecutors, or defense attorneys, experiencing legal procedures, judicial reasoning, and the use of evidence. This interactive learning approach not only helps students better understand the practical application of law but also enhances their legal practice skills, bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application.

4.3 Interactive Learning and Its Role in Enhancing Legal Literacy

The interactivity of online platforms provides university students with broader learning spaces. Beyond traditional classroom settings, many online platforms promote in-depth exchanges and critical thinking through discussions, Q&A sessions, and debates with instructors, peers, and legal experts. For example, legal learning platforms and social media often host online discussion forums where students can ask questions, participate in debates on legal topics, or exchange views with other learners and experts. This interactive learning format not only deepens students' understanding of legal provisions but also sharpens their critical thinking and logical analysis abilities. By discussing various legal issues with others, students can view problems from multiple perspectives, fostering a more comprehensive and profound understanding of law. Furthermore, legal debates have become an essential method for enhancing students' legal literacy. Through debates, students can improve their oral communication skills, acquire more effective legal argumentation techniques, and strengthen their legal reasoning abilities in practice. This interactive approach not only helps students resolve doubts but also stimulates their interest in learning, ultimately enhancing their legal literacy.

5. CONCLUSION

With the rapid development of online platforms, university students now have more diverse channels to access legal knowledge. The unique advantages of online platforms—such as timeliness, broad coverage, and interactivity—have significantly contributed to the modernization of legal education. These platforms offer university students a wealth of legal resources, enabling them to access the latest legal developments, gain a deeper understanding of different legal fields, and enhance their legal literacy through interactive learning and practical case studies.

However, this convenience also presents challenges, including varying information quality, disparities in legal literacy, and information overload. Therefore, students must be equipped with the ability to assess the accuracy of information and select reliable resources while strengthening their understanding of fundamental legal knowledge.

Through flexible learning modes and interactive educational approaches, university students can not only acquire theoretical knowledge of law but also apply it in practice, improving their ability to solve real-world legal problems. Overall, online platforms provide university students with a comprehensive, in-depth, and diverse learning environment, enabling them to better tackle complex legal issues and laying a solid foundation for their future careers in law.

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