

The Role of Legal Education and Legal Clinics in Preventing Crimes in the Field of Information Technology

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Abstract: crime in the field of information technology (IT) is rapidly developing - the number of cyber-attacks, fraud, and theft of personal information is increasing. Legal education and legal clinics are finding their place among the measures against such crimes.

Keywords: information technology, cybercrime, cyber-attacks, legal education, legal clinics.

Introduction.

As the importance of information technologies in our lives increases, the types of crimes occurring in this area are also becoming more complex. Cybercrimes not only cause economic damage, but also threaten personal freedom, the right to privacy, and national security. Along with legal mechanisms, legal education and legal clinics are recognized as important social institutions in combating these crimes. By forming a legal culture, the root of crimes - ignorance and apathy - are eliminated.

Access to justice is a cornerstone of a just society, and it plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law, protecting human rights, and promoting social cohesion [1]. It encompasses individuals' ability to understand and defend their legal rights, challenge injustices, and receive equal protection under the law (United Nations, 2019; OECD, 2020; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2009). However, despite significant developments in the legal and social domains, full and equal access to justice remains a challenge, particularly for vulnerable groups. [2]

Many individuals and communities still face obstacles such as lack of financial resources, legal knowledge, or effective legal assistance, leaving them outside the protection offered by legal systems. [3]

In this context, clinical legal education has emerged as an innovative mechanism to address some of these challenges. Legal clinics, operating within law faculties, are not merely learning spaces for students but also points of contact between universities and society (ENCLE, 2018; Council of Europe Recommendation R (93)1, 1993). These structures enable students to engage in the

practical handling of legal cases and provide legal services to those who cannot afford counseling or representation. By combining theory with practice, legal clinics help students develop practical skills and professional ethics while contributing to improving access to justice for broader communities. [4]

Methodology.

This paper adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the role, challenges, and potential of legal clinics in improving access to justice. The methods employed aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the legal, institutional, and social dimensions associated with clinical legal education. Specifically, the following methods were utilized: [5]

1. **Legal and Policy Analysis:** A thorough review of the legal framework and institutional policies governing free legal aid was conducted, focusing on the role and functions of legal clinics. The analysis included legislation, policy documents, and relevant case law at both national and international levels.
2. **Case Study Analysis:** Selected university-based legal clinics were examined to identify their operational challenges, strengths, and areas for improvement. The selection criteria for case studies were based on type of legal aid provided, and the scale of the clinic's operations. Details about the specific cases and policies analyzed have been included to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings.
3. **Review of International Practices:** An analysis of best practices in clinical legal education globally was conducted to identify adaptable solutions. These practices were selected based on their documented impact on improving the functionality and sustainability of legal clinics in comparable socio-economic and legal contexts.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- What is the conceptual framework of clinical legal education in universities, and why is it significant?
- What challenges do legal clinics face in providing legal aid to vulnerable groups?
- How can legal clinics be better integrated into the broader framework of free legal aid to ensure equitable access to justice?
- What international practices in clinical legal education can be adapted to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of legal clinics?

Access to justice is a broad concept, and its definitions vary depending on the context in which it is applied. In general terms, access to justice encompasses legal protection, information, legal awareness, legal assistance and advice, litigation, enforcement, and oversight by civil society. The United Nations identifies access to justice as a cornerstone for ensuring sustainable peace by providing populations with an alternative to violence for resolving personal and political disputes. Without access to justice, individuals are unable to voice their concerns, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination, or hold decision-makers accountable. [6] Guaranteeing human rights for all remains a challenge for every country to varying degrees (United Nations, 2020). From a social protection perspective, access to justice is defined as "the ability of disadvantaged groups to prevent and overcome human poverty by seeking and receiving services through formal and informal justice systems, adhering to the principles and standards of human rights". [7]

Legal education: concept and advantages.

The concept of legal education is not limited to teaching legal norms. It is a comprehensive pedagogical process aimed at forming citizens' legal awareness, responsibility and culture of legal behavior. Especially in the field of information technologies, citizens' awareness of their rights and obligations is a key tool in preventing cybercrime. [8]

Through legal education.

- ✓ the younger generation becomes committed to information security rules;
- ✓ a culture of responsible use of technologies is formed;
- ✓ a strong social immunity is formed against harmful content and digital threats.

The introduction of legal courses on cybersecurity in schools and higher educational institutions is a modern need. In particular, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-246 dated October 14, 2022 clearly defines the task of increasing information culture among young people.

Results and Discussion.

Legal clinics: practical orientation.

Legal clinics are institutions established under legal educational institutions, which provide students with practical training and provide free legal assistance to citizens. This model does not lose its relevance for the information technology sector. The experience of the "Cybersecurity Legal Clinic" (University of Texas) operating in the USA is a vivid example of this.

In these clinics:

- ✓ students provide cybersecurity advice to small businesses and non-profit organizations;
- ✓ security policies are developed based on real situations;
- ✓ legal and technical risk analyses are conducted;
- ✓ preventive measures are taken on information security in society.

The clinics provide services combining legal and technical knowledge. They protect the rights of citizens and form a high information culture in society. It is advisable to develop such clinics under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the digital sphere.

Legislation and international norms.

The Budapest Convention is the first international legal instrument on cybercrime, adopted by the Council of Europe in 2001. This document strengthens interstate cooperation, ensures speedy investigation and prosecution. Uzbekistan has expressed its intention to join this convention in 2022.

National legislation defines crimes related to information security violations in Article 278-1 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In addition, the digital rights of citizens are protected on the basis of the Law "On Information Security", adopted on September 9, 2020. Today, interactive learning methods (simulation, gamification, analysis of real cases) using modern technologies are widely used in legal education. This, in turn, increases interest and participation in the subject among students and young people. [9]

The effectiveness of clinics is measured by the number of students served, the number of issues considered, and the number of recommendations developed. According to the experience of the University of Michigan in the USA, 187 small businesses were protected from cyberattacks in 2022 with the support of a legal clinic.

Conclusion.

Current problems and proposals.

The field of information technologies is a new front in global security. Not only technical, but also legal approaches are important for preventing crimes in this area. Legal education and legal clinics raise citizens' awareness, strengthen practical protective measures, and teach the younger generation to approach cybersecurity responsibly. Therefore, these two approaches should become an integral institutional part of the modern information society.

Digital law is not sufficiently covered in law faculties;

- ✓ The financial and technical base for clinics is weak;
- ✓ Cooperation between lawyers and IT specialists is weak.
- ✓ Opening special master's programs in digital law;
- ✓ Grant support for clinics;
- ✓ Creating joint projects between law and IT faculties;
- ✓ Disseminating legal education materials to the general public through social networks.

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