



A New Concept of Specialized Standards to Improve the Quality of Higher Legal Education

Sholpan Tlepina ¹, Marat Sarsembayev ^{1*}, Yerbol Abaideldinov ¹,
Venera Balmagambetova ², Zhanerke Zukay ¹

¹ L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan.

² Baishev University, Kazakhstan.

Abstract

This study analyzes specialized national and international legal acts and standards that enjoy national and international recognition and are relevant to ensuring the appropriate quality of higher legal education in Kazakhstan. Applying methods of logical and legal analysis, a global approach to comparing the practices of legal education within the country and abroad, the authors offer specific recommendations for improving specific standards of Kazakh legislation on education, namely, the adoption of the draft law “On Higher Education” in the republic; the introduction of the Socratic method in the lecture and educational process, creative vacations as a special type of professional development at law faculties of universities; the use of digital artificial intelligence tools at all stages of law students’ education; providing more practical training; and significant restructuring of the knowledge verification system in exams. It is concluded that improving the quality of legal education is necessary for training highly qualified lawyers for legal practice, and lawyers with an anti-corruption legal consciousness. The novelty of this study is determined by its unique thematic focus, since it concerns an unexplored domain of specialized legal norms in the legal education sector of Kazakhstan. In addition, this study is novel as it is the first study in the history of the Republic in terms of improving higher legal education with the help of legislative and international legal norms. The practical significance of this study lies in the regulations and practices proposed for implementation.

Keywords:

Higher Legal Education;
Law Regulations;
Specialized Standards;
Legislative Standards;
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1- Introduction

To state the problem, we note the fact of limited research into pedagogical problems at law faculties among scientists and professors of the legal field. This happens because law students do not study pedagogy, psychology, or teaching methods. Graduates of these faculties formed teaching staff for academic subjects at law faculties. Not being professional teachers, they became such and learned pedagogical, educational, and methodological sciences through trial and error. Moreover, they believed that the legal disciplines they had studied were sufficient for teaching at the law faculty. This misconception has recently begun to be corrected by introducing training in many pedagogical disciplines in the master’s programs of law faculties. The choice of topic regarding the need to improve the quality of legal education was primarily determined by this circumstance as well as by the available gaps in scientific studies on legal education due to the small number of publications in the world on this topic. Gaps in legal research in terms of

* **CONTACT:** marat.a.sarsembayev@gmail.com

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educational and methodological peculiarities, lack of conceptual foundations for teaching legal subjects, lack of legal courses “On instituting administrative and criminal actions against law enforcement and judicial officials”, “On educating law enforcement and judicial employees in the spirit of respect for human rights”, “Legal anti-corruption consciousness in the legal environment” became the basis for choosing this topic for scientific research. In other words, a justification is required for the advisability of educating law students in the spirit of unconditional respect and upholding human rights and freedoms in their future activities on the basis of specialized norms of international covenants on human rights, and in the spirit of the need to firmly consolidate the anti-corruption legal consciousness in the minds and souls of law students.

New ways to improve the quality of higher legal education (Kazakh and international legal regulatory means of improving the quality of legal education, strengthening training during practical classes, new methods of taking exams, digitalization of the educational process, introduction of artificial intelligence technologies into teaching) have given the topic special relevance and became the motivating reasons for choosing this topic for research analysis.

A rule-of-law state where the law is supreme and all citizens, without exception, are equal can only be established through high-quality legal education. Setting objectives for the development and strengthening of the nation’s market economy, ensuring the resolution of governmental tasks in the struggle against crime and corruption, and forming the legal consciousness of the country’s population are all made feasible by legal education. It should be emphasized that improving the quality of modern higher legal education standards in any nation, including Kazakhstan, is unattainable without the creative use of cutting-edge information and digital technologies [1].

The Republic of Kazakhstan participated in the development and adoption of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century (October 9, 1998). Article 11 of this Declaration describes quality in higher education as a multidimensional concept, covering all functions and activities of the university: “teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community, and the academic environment” [2]. This article shows the international aspects of the quality of higher education: “Quality also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of lecturers and students, and international research projects, while considering the national cultural values and circumstances” [2].

It is necessary to consider how legal scholars from different countries managed to logically connect the concepts of higher education pedagogy and jurisprudence. Representatives of Kazakh legal science Turetsky [3], Oleinik & Amanzholova [4] have paid some attention to the problems of higher legal education in Kazakhstan. These scientific publications by Kazakhstani legal scholars are mainly devoted to solving the organizational and legal problems of legal education in the Republic.

In Russian scientific literature, the problems of higher legal education also come under scrutiny by legal scholars [5, 6]. The cited scientific publications of Russian legal scholars deal with innovations in the model of legal education and its place in the global world [5, 6]; however, they do not contain an analysis of the problems of the quality of legal education.

The Western literature contains many primary sources on issues of higher education [7]. and among them there are some studies on legal education [7]. Notably, a scholarly publication by Professor Katcher of the University of Wisconsin (USA) states that the case method in teaching law “seems to be entrenched in most law schools” and that teaching through the Socratic method is valued as an important component of legal education [8]. Al Faruque [9] writes that the basis of higher legal education in the UK is the common law system, developed by a body of judicial decisions and customary law that have been formed over the centuries [9].

Based on the above, it can be summarized: the relevance and scientific and theoretical novelty of the topic of this study lies in the fact that issues of the quality of higher legal education have not previously been considered or studied from the Kazakh legislative, comparative, and international legal viewpoints. The practical novelty of the analyzed research topic is determined by the fact that previously, none of the scientists and practitioners had developed recommendations on improving specialized norms on ensuring the higher quality of higher legal education before the Kazakh legislator, and on improving the specialized norms of international conventions before specialized international organizations, the world community, on improving the quality of higher legal education.

Figure 1 shows the critical components that comprise the quality of higher legal education in the Republic.

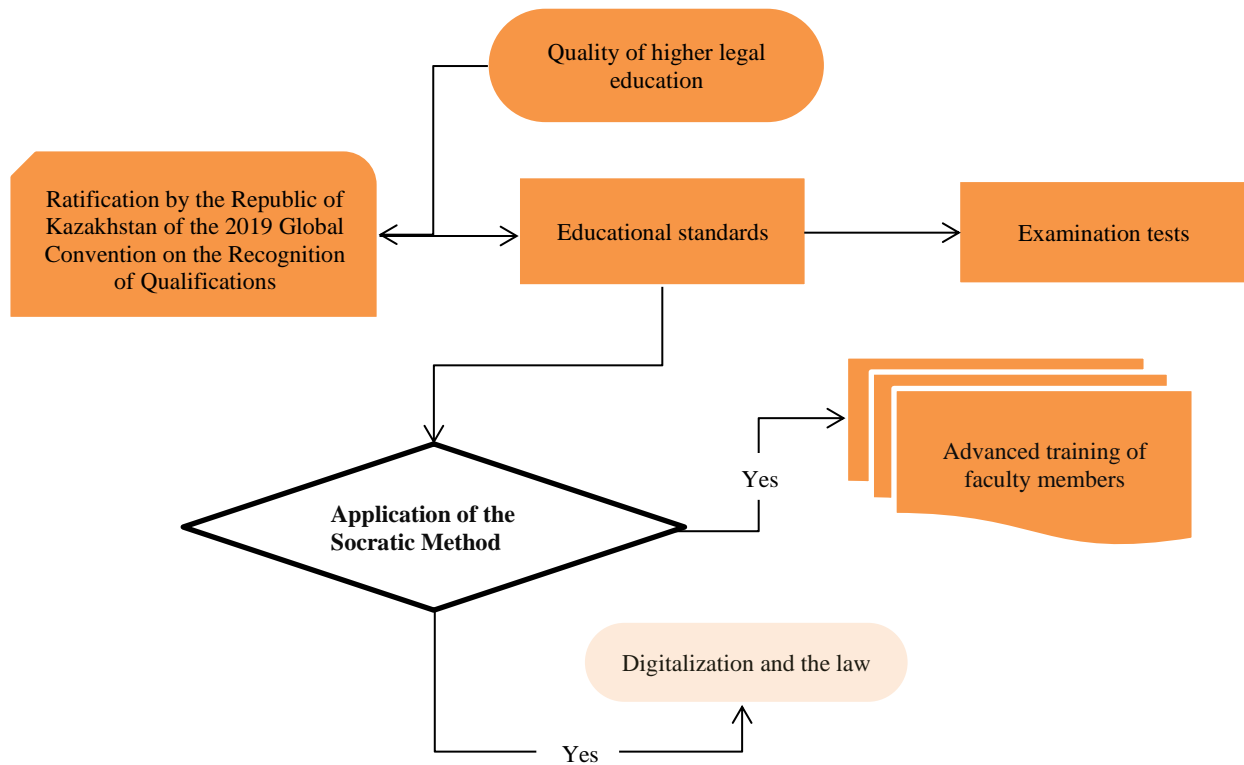


Figure 1. Components of the quality of higher legal education

The study of the topic of the article on legal norms for ensuring the quality of higher legal education in a structural form is presented as follows: Introduction, Literature Review, Conventional Norms, Research Methodology, Results (legislative norms, in finding a reasonable balance between theory and practice in teaching is the essence of improving the quality of law students, accreditation, Socratic and other methods in the educational process of a law school, examination tests, sabbatical, and new technologies—digital technologies, artificial intelligence tools as innovative means of improving the educational process, the difference between this article and previous studies and its value), Discussion, and Conclusion.

Conventional Norms: In developing the ideas of the World Declaration, the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted on November 25, 2019, with Article II containing specialized regulations related to higher education that enjoy international recognition: “Building on and enhancing the coordination, revisions and achievements of the regional recognition conventions, the objectives of this Convention are to promote a culture of quality assurance in higher-education institutions and systems, and develop the capacity necessary for ensuring reliability, consistency and complementarity in quality assurance, in qualifications frameworks and in the recognition of qualifications in order to support international mobility” [10]. *Kazakhstan must ratify this Convention because on its basis it will be possible to ensure a higher quality of higher education, specifically, legal education.* In pursuance of this Convention, Kazakhstan could adopt a law “*On creating conditions for improving the quality level of qualifications in the legal education system.*” In this regard, we recommend that Article 15 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 23, 2015 “*On the Civil Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan*” [11] be supplemented with the following rules: *the holder of a bachelor’s degree qualification (law) shall have the right to occupy entry-level positions, the holder of a master’s degree (legal sciences) shall have the right to occupy leading positions, and the holder of a PhD diploma (law) shall be entitled to occupy the highest positions in their industry.* The potential of the above two laws could really contribute to the implementation of the Convention on Qualifications in the territory of Kazakhstan.

As enshrined in subclause 3.1 of the appendix of the document *The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan (Armenia) on May 15, 2015 [12], “quality assurance agencies” for higher education, including legal education, are institutions that do not have a serious legal basis for such activities. It is necessary to thoroughly refine the legal status of these agencies in this segment of the document.

2- Literature Review

There are no scientific studies in Kazakhstan devoted to the analysis of the quality of higher legal education from the perspective of the norms of international law. In this article, we examine the quality of higher legal education in the Republic of Kazakhstan and propose to make it better by improving the norms of Kazakh legislation.

There are several scientific articles on the need to improve the educational process of law faculties in terms of organizational and methodological approaches [6, 7].

Russian analyst Gorbunov concludes that when teaching the theory of state and law, it is necessary to “consider the balance between the dogmatic and innovative components” of this discipline, which will become “the key to professional success of the future lawyer” [13]. Proceeding from the fact that the term “dogmatics” has a negative connotation, it seems advisable to replace it with the term “fundamental”.

There are numerous primary sources on higher education in Western literature, but several scientific studies deal with this subject. However, these publications are devoted to improving the model and traditions of legal education in the UK and the USA rather than providing a thorough examination of legal education quality issues. In the United Kingdom, legal scholars and other interested parties participate in the debate on the training of future lawyers. Oxford University researcher refers to students’ “engagement in disciplinary knowledge, and in activities and relations beyond the classroom” as the core features of students’ self-formation characteristic of higher (legal) education [14]. This is followed by his definition of this concept: Student self-formation is both a norm to be achieved, with lifelong learning potential, and a descriptor of existing practices [14]. Law schools in Kazakhstan have the concept of “student’s independent work”, but a clearer legal normalization of this important activity of a law student is needed.

British scientists Macleod et al. examined all the problems of postgraduate (legal) education in the UK and proposed, in particular, to perform the educational process in this sector of education using machine learning [15]. For higher legal education in Kazakhstan, such a methodological approach to teaching is necessary. Continuing the analysis of this area of university activities, let us turn to the Spanish scientists Heredia-Carroza & Stoica [16], who set out to study the process of introducing and applying the latest technologies in the educational process of higher education institutions, including law schools [16]. The law faculties of universities in Kazakhstan have already begun to introduce digital technologies into their educational process, which needs to be significantly accelerated.

Stuckey [17] proposed changes so that law schools (university law faculties), approved by the American Bar Association, taught each student so thoroughly that they could perform legal analysis, develop arguments, conduct legal research, solve professional problems, communicate verbally, and compose letters in a legal context. They must also have other professional skills. Such skills should be understood as the ability to protect the interests of clients in judicial and appellate instances, the ability to possess alternative dispute resolution methods, as well as the ability to advise, interview, negotiate, solve current problems, competently investigate facts, and in general be able to organize and manage the legal work surrounding him. The United States requires law schools (faculties) to teach students the ability to communicate with live clients and protect their legitimate rights and interests [17].

Researchers from Russia, India, and Brazil noted that education makes great positive changes in public consciousness and in the direction of society’s activities. By joining forces to uncover the problems of legal education in their countries, they emphasize that the law has been instilled in them and many other countries [18]. They urge that legal education should be improved because it makes members of society more professional and civilized. Legal education plays an important role in establishing fair legal relations and contributes to the restoration of violated human rights in society. In their opinion, there are many problems in the education system in almost all countries: therefore, they must be carefully studied to ensure the proper development of society. For example, in India, a legal norm prohibits combining practical work with teaching at a university, including the Faculty of Law. Brazilian legislation also contains some restrictions that prevent employees from lecturing at public higher education establishments. Meanwhile, Russian legislation does not contain such provisions. Moreover, in this country, a combination of theory and practice of law is encouraged [18].

On the basis of the above, we conclude that the relevance and scientific and theoretical novelty of the subject of this research stem from the fact that issues concerning the quality of higher legal education have not previously been considered or studied from the Kazakh legislative and international legal perspectives. The practical novelty of the analyzed issue under study is because none of the scientists or practitioners had previously proposed to the Kazakh legislator to improve specialized legal norms to improve the quality content of higher legal education. They also did not address the issue of upgrading the specialized standards of international conventions before specialized international organizations or the global society to improve the quality of higher education, specifically, legal education.

3- Research Methodology

In the first stage of the study, based on the empirical analysis, the authors studied selected scientific monographs, scientific articles of specialized journals, reports of scientific and practical conferences, and voluminous articles of country-scale newspapers on the general topics of education and higher legal education, published in Kazakhstan and abroad. They were interested in the opinions of their university colleagues in the format of conversations and interviews. In the second stage, materials (legislative and convention documents) were selected on the basis of the specialized norms available in them that were designed to help improve the quality of higher legal education. At the third stage, all collected

materials were subjected to scrupulous study using logical and legal analysis. Guided by this method, the authors carefully examined Kazakh legislative acts, acts of foreign countries, and norms of international legal acts that contribute to improving the quality of higher (legal) education. The fourth stage was devoted to a comparative legal analysis of Kazakhstan's laws and foreign countries and international conventions on legal education. At the final fifth stage, when developing new specialized norms of Kazakh legislation that help improve the quality of higher legal education, we used a scientific-forecasting method, which, along with the “brainstorming” of all members of the author’s team, made it possible to identify gaps in Kazakhstan’s higher legal education and, accordingly, determine the vector for developing more advanced legal norms to improve higher legal education in Kazakhstan.

Figure 2 shows the research process flowchart, including individual proposals for the introduction of new practices in higher legal education in Kazakhstan.

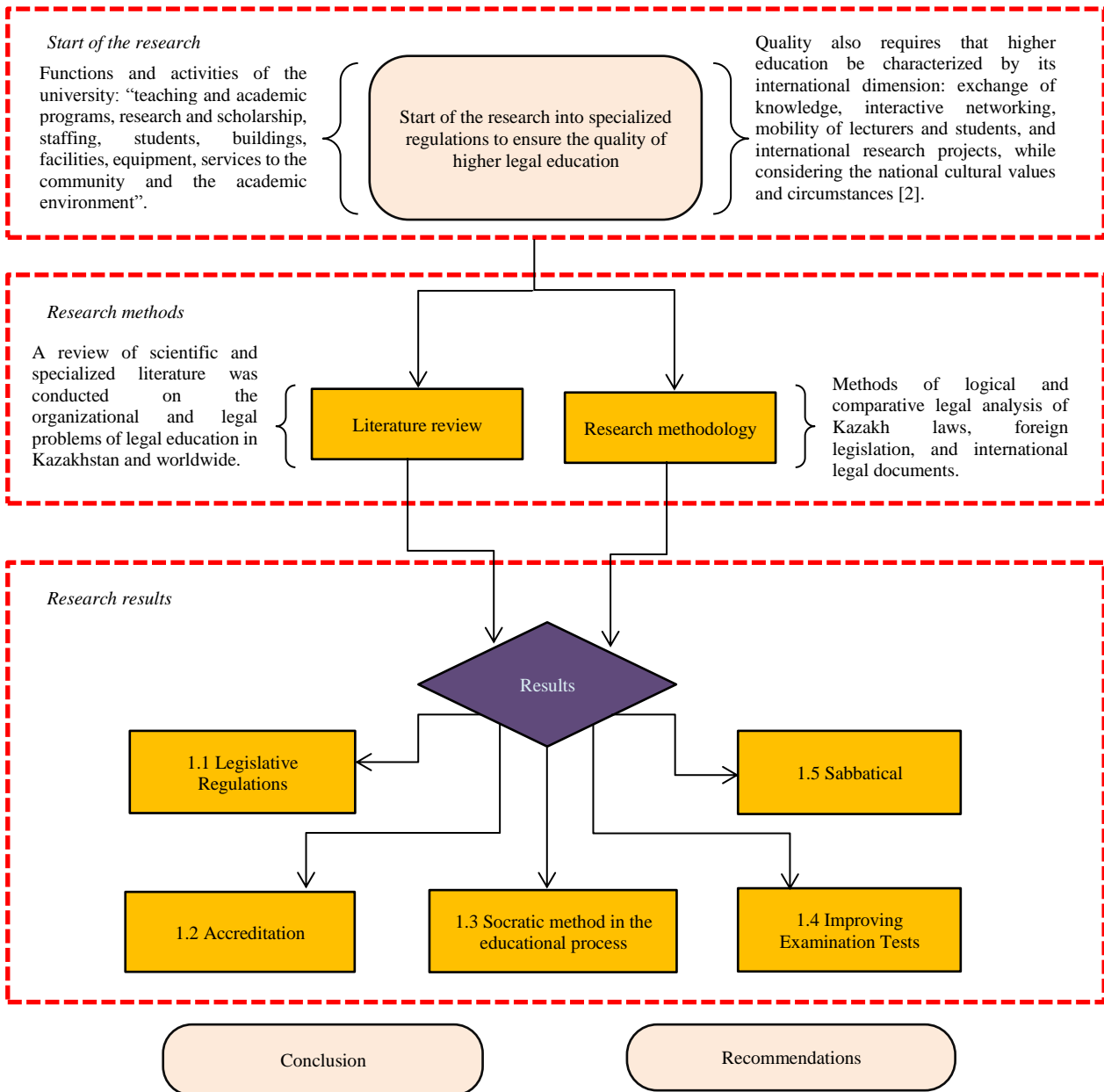


Figure 2. Research flowchart

4- Results

4-1-Legislative Regulations

The quality of higher legal education in Kazakhstan, as in any other country, is ensured by organizational measures during the admission of applicants, during the training of bachelors, masters, and doctoral students in legal academic disciplines, and during the organization and conduct of examination tests. Head of State, Mr. President K.-J. Tokayev, with his Decree “On Approval of the Concept of Legal Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030” (October 15, 2021 No. 674), emphasized the necessity to modernize the legal education system [19]. Of the 116 Kazakhstani

universities (as of the start of the 2022/2023 academic year), approximately 70 universities and academies in the country train legal personnel. This set of law faculties and universities constitutes Kazakhstan's higher legal education system, which, in conformity with global trends, is advancing toward autonomy and independence in educational and financial activities [20].

We analyzed specialized legislation governing the quality of higher legal education exemplified by higher legal education systems in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and the Republic of Kazakhstan. We chose the first three countries because they have the most and second-most Nobel laureates in the world. Germany holds the third place in the world University Rankings (QS World University Rankings). In addition, of the 5 million international students studying outside their home nations, these three countries account for 1 million 800 thousand foreign students or 36% of the total [21-23]. As can be seen, these countries deserve profound respect in terms of education and research, and their experience in this area is vitally necessary for the dynamic development and mobility of Kazakhstan's higher legal education system.

From 1862 until 2022, 124 different acts (laws) and some by-laws on education issues were enacted in the United States, containing higher education provisions and criteria. However, they have practically no specialized standards for managing higher education quality. In the United States, there is a functioning Act (Law) on Higher Education (November 8, 1965) [24], which provides specialized rules on higher education, including legal education, known as Lecturer Quality Enhancement and Lecturer Quality Partnership Grants (Section II of the Act) [24]. Section VII of the same Act specifies guidelines for regulating special educational programs for students with disabilities [24]. Article 1 of the Law of Kazakhstan "On Education" (27 July 2007) [25] contains provisions governing the accreditation agency and its functions, which can also be found in the text of the order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On approval of the requirements for the accreditation body in higher and postgraduate education and the rules for recognition of accreditation bodies in higher and postgraduate education, including foreign bodies" (November 19, 2016) [26]. However, it would be advisable *to supplement the Law of Kazakhstan "On Education" (2007) with a new section titled "On special educational programs for persons with disabilities and the creation of appropriate learning conditions for these persons."*

Legislative norms can and should be linked to scientific research approaches. Romanian analysts, Roman & Bulat [27], proposed to analyze such links and believe that such a connection affects the quality of education [27]. Supporting the viewpoint of these authors, we would like to clarify that legal approaches are valuable in that the adopted laws create appropriate conditions for ensuring the quality of education, including legal education. The value of academic approaches is rooted in the fact that research studies rather deeply analyze the quality content of training, enabling us to develop conclusions about new methods and means that develop the quality of legal education and higher education in general than consider "organizational elements".

4-2- The Essence of Improving the Quality of Trained Law Students is to Find a Reasonable Balance Between Theory and Practice in Teaching

According to the American professor Katcher [8], in the USA, there are voices that university law schools should train lawyers not only as advisors (problem solvers) but also as advocate (litigator) that are able to act as advisors to their clients. In other words, establishing a greater bias in favor of theory could bring additional benefits to American legal practitioners and their clients. Until recently, in Kazakhstan's legal education, there was another extreme: a passion for theory at the expense of practical exercises. We have sharply increased the volume of practical classes and trainings.

As stated by Al Faruque [9], one of the features of British legal education is the clinical work of law students under the guidance of teachers with real clients. We believe that the head of a student clinic should be a mentor as a staff member who has relevant practical experience in the bar, internal affairs bodies, and other practical legal institutions rather than a theoretical teacher. This form of educational activity contributes to the inculcation of professional skills that students will use in their future practical legal work. The student clinic functions well in the law faculties of universities in Kazakhstan. Since today we attach particular importance to the practical training of future lawyers, we would like to periodically send groups of Kazakhstani law students to British clinics at law faculties to gain additional practical experience. Students also need a mentor when they undergo educational practice and when graduates enter the legal profession.

Professor Bennett (USA, Nebraska) agrees that in American law schools, during the first year of study, students are "exposed to basic subjects and taught fundamental methods of legal analysis and research" [28], but he is convinced that upon completion of training, the third-year curriculum should be reformulated "to focus more on transition into the profession" [28]. The authors of this article, supporting the position of Professor Bennett, propose that law faculties in their country should train students in specific legal professions during the last two years of study (in Kazakhstan, bachelor's degree program lasts for four years). In addition, as noted above, we propose to use master's and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Law as a means of filling middle- and higher-level legal positions, respectively: without studying

at the master's and doctoral degree programs, a bachelor's degree cannot qualify for these categories of positions. Finding a balance between theory and practice in teaching at law faculties could become the core of the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On measures for the conceptual improvement of higher legal education in the 21st century."

4-3- Accreditation

The UK Law (Act) (April 27, 2017) [29] devotes specific attention to criteria that assure the proper quality of higher education, including legal education. It is no coincidence that clause 23 of this Law is titled "Quality and standards" [29]. This clause establishes specialized regulations under which the government's Office for Students "may assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of the quality and of the standards applied to, higher education provided by English higher education providers" (universities – authors' note). This Department establishes a Quality Assessment Committee (clause 24 of the Law) [29]. The state as a whole, through the departments and committees it establishes, delivers higher education of "adequate quality" based on a preliminary assessment of the "quality of higher education and standards" (in more detail – clauses 46 and 83 of the examined Law) [29]. A systematic analysis of the above laws (acts) of Western countries shows that the legislation of the US is noteworthy in that it contains norms on the recognition of agencies for accreditation and provisions about the criteria according to which responsible persons determine the degree of reliability of the agencies for accreditation in properly assessing the higher education quality [30]. *It would be preferable to develop a system of points linking quality and educational standards*, as the British legislator has done. The specialized regulations of the laws of these developed countries highlight the concentrated quality of the higher education system. Therefore, *researching and adopting such approaches would improve the quality of higher education, specifically legal education, in Kazakhstan.*

The Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education was established by clause 1 of the Regulations on the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as approved by Decree No. 580 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (August 19, 2022) [31]. The Regulations on the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education, approved by order No. 43 of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (September 13, 2022) [32], stipulate a specialized provision on the Committee's function of state control over the implementation of the legislation of Kazakhstan and regulatory legal acts in the sphere of higher and (or) postgraduate education, state mandatory standards of higher and (or) postgraduate education, regardless of the form of property and departmental subordination (clause 15-4 of the Regulation) [32]. It makes sense to consider the feasibility of giving the Committee under consideration the status of an accreditation body, as enshrined in the US legislation concerning a similar agency.

The specialized regulations of German and British educational legislation often provide quality standards as a means of maintaining the high quality of higher education, including legal education. Furthermore, the German legislator has a bias toward the accreditation of programs, degrees, and other issues within the framework of higher education [33].

Australian educational technology experts, McInnes et al. [34], offer 75 electronic tools for checking the quality of transformed traditional tutorial programs into online courses. In this regard, online educational course programs in criminal law, civil law, labor law, international law, criminology, and other subjects of higher legal education in Kazakhstan can become high-quality because of total control, and on their basis, it is possible to achieve high-quality teaching in all academic subjects at law faculties of the country.

Russian specialist in accreditation issues in legal education Azizova [35] placed the topic of the need for domestic professional and public accreditation of law faculties in her country at the center of her research. It seems that this type of accreditation is hardly advisable. In some other countries, including Kazakhstan, only international accreditation of law and other university faculties is conducted. We believe that such a mechanism for maintaining the quality of legal education is more objective and useful in terms of enrichment with international experience in the educational field.

As stated above, Kazakhstan also pays sufficient attention to accreditation issues (Articles 1, 2, 3, 5, 9-1, 39, 58 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education" of July 27, 2007) [25]. According to Article 1-16 of this Law, the concept of "accreditation" as a tool of improving of the education quality is defined as follows: accreditation of educational organizations is the procedure for recognizing by the accreditation body the compliance of educational services with established accreditation standards (regulations) for the aim of providing objective information about their quality and confirming the presence of effective mechanisms for increasing it" [25].

In the United States, over the entire period of the existence of this state, several laws (acts) were adopted to regulate various facets of the higher education: the Higher Education Act (1965) [24], the Middle-Income Student Assistance Act (1978) [36], Education of the Deaf Act (1986) [37], Scientific and Advanced Technology Act (1992) [38], Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act (2003) [39], and Student Loans Act (2008) [40]. The following laws are in force in the UK: The Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998) [41] and the Higher Education Act (2004) [42]. The effective German laws include the Federal Framework Law on Higher Education (2024) [43], the Federal Training Assistance Act (2012) [44], and 16 regional laws (see Table 1).

Table 1. Educational legislation of leading OECD countries

United States	United Kingdom	Germany
Higher Education Act (1965)	Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)	Federal Framework Law on Higher Education (1998)
Middle Income Student Assistance Act (1978)	Higher Education Act (2004)	Federal Training Assistance Act (2001)
Education of the Deaf Act (1986)	Higher Education and Research Act (2017)	16 regional laws
Scientific and Advanced Technology Act (1992)	-	-
Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act (2003)	-	-
Student Loans Act (2008)	-	-

Proceeding from the legislative experience of these advanced countries in the field of managing higher education quality, including legal education, the Republic of Kazakhstan could develop and adopt new Kazakhstan laws: “*On Higher Education*”, “*On the Characteristics of Research Universities*”, “*On Methods and Means of Consistent Improvement of the Higher Education Quality in the Country*” and new government resolutions “*On Improving the Quality of Higher Legal Education in the Republic*.” To substantiate the above acts, we propose the laws “*On Higher Education*” and “*On the Characteristics of Research Universities*” because in Kazakhstan, as a result of the division of the Ministry of Education and Science existing before to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, both components of the new ministry need a separate and profound regulation of both science and higher education in the country. Methods and means of improving the quality of higher legal education may include a combination of teaching students legal disciplines and educating future lawyers as honest, fair, and principled persons; generalization of the activities of law enforcement and judicial authorities through the systematic use of local practice in classes, indicating shortcomings in their activities; and invitation of practical workers to a student audience—well-known heads of law enforcement and judicial authorities—for events in the form of questions and answers, problematic tasks, debates, and moot courts [45, 46].

4-4- The Socratic Method in the Educational Process

It would be preferable if as many practitioners with academic degrees in the legal sciences as possible could give lectures in student classes. Furthermore, it would be advisable to provide these and other professors in the Republic with the most effective teaching methods that are used in American law schools and universities accredited by the American Bar Association. Thus, in the second year, students in US university law schools are taught using the world-famous Socratic approach. This teaching method is only employed in the law schools of American universities in its full and pure form. This system, which has gained global recognition, attracts students from all over the world.

The idea behind this method is to provide students with real cases to analyze and then ask legal questions about them. At the same time, lecturers practically do not explain anything about these cases because students are assigned a task in advance to delve deeply into the essence of the relevant criminal, civil, labor, environmental, and international legal issues. The lecturer describes challenging questions for the student to respond to, engages in discourse with this student, disputes against if necessary, and involves other students in resolving the dispute [47]. *We need to thoroughly investigate the essence of this Socratic method and make it accessible to all law faculties and universities in Kazakhstan. This is crucial for improved student training because this method allows students to develop critical legal thinking, legal logic associated with formal logic, and the ability to construct their own strategies for collecting evidence based on the nature of the cases they study. Students gain personal experience by deciding the line of accusation or defense in a case.*

We offer new interactive teaching methods: a) intellectual didactic games for the purposes of mobilizing knowledge, demonstrating resourcefulness when making decisions, and achieving victory in competitions; b) brainstorming of members of the training court of appeal to find shortcomings in the decision (sentence) of the real court of first instance in a civil or criminal case; c) an educational legislative session of the country’s parliament on a draft law (on legal education) with the participation of opposing party factions; d) educational administrative-legal proceedings of a citizen’s application in a government agency; e) an AI method (artificial intelligence method) in teaching disciplines at all stages of training students for future legal professions.

Next, a law graduate should undertake a one- or two-year comprehensive daily internship under the supervision of experienced mentor colleagues. This is precisely what is stipulated by the Concept of Legal Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 (2021) [19], which emphasizes the necessity of introducing mechanisms for compulsory practical internships for graduates in the chosen profile for further work after completing the educational training course [19].

4-5-Improving Examination Tests

Exams in each academic discipline can help improve the quality of legal education and training for future lawyers. However, when the exam is taken by the same lecturer who teaches and/or conducts seminars (practical classes), the quality of legal personnel training suffers.

Therefore, we propose that an examination administration body that is not administratively subordinate to either the faculty or the university should administer exams to the Faculty of Law students. Holders of diplomas with honors who receive excellent grades on all exams on such an objective basis should have a preferential right in employment on a competitive and other basis, in promotion: such a benefit must be prescribed by law. On the basis of positive group examination outcomes, lecturers at the Faculty of Law can be awarded medals, orders, state prizes, and other incentives provided for in paragraph 43 of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (November 11, 1997). In the event of unfavorable outcomes, they should be punished up to and including dismissal for inaptitude (paragraph 50 of the mentioned UNESCO Recommendation) [48]. These proposals should become specialized regulations in Kazakhstani legislation on education.

Moreover, we propose to develop and adopt a government decree “On examination tests”, which can be used when conducting examinations in any field. With this approach, each lecturer will study with each student every day on each issue of the academic subject they teach, applying the latest and most innovative teaching methods. This means that by the time each student obtains their diploma, they will be excellent specialists and highly qualified lawyers. The examination process in the United Kingdom provides a detailed example of this strategy. In this country, all written examination answers are transmitted anonymously to examiners. In this case, the check is performed twice: first by a university examiner and then by an external examiner. In Germany, not only university lecturers but also legal practitioners can be appointed as examiners: prosecutors, judges, senior government officials, and notable lawyers (see Figure 3).

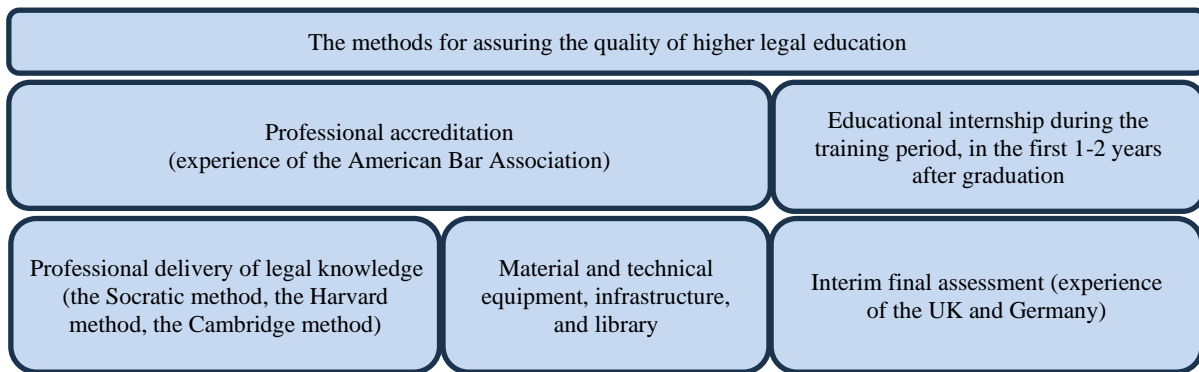


Figure 3. The methods for assuring the quality of higher legal education

This approach would be one of the responses to the requirements of the Concept of Legal Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, which emphasizes “the need to introduce an objective system for assessing knowledge” [19]; in this connection, it is proposed to enshrine in law measures for widespread implementation of an academic integrity system in legal higher educational institutions and law faculties [19].

Law professors and lecturers should teach students during the semester and shortly before examinations how to prepare for exams in their subjects. Today, we need to teach them the procedures for passing and accepting exams using digital technologies and artificial intelligence mechanisms [49, 50].

Figure 3 summarizes the methods used to ensure higher legal education quality in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Figure 4 illustrates the shortcomings in Kazakhstan’s legal education system that prevent law faculties and universities from achieving a high level of quality.

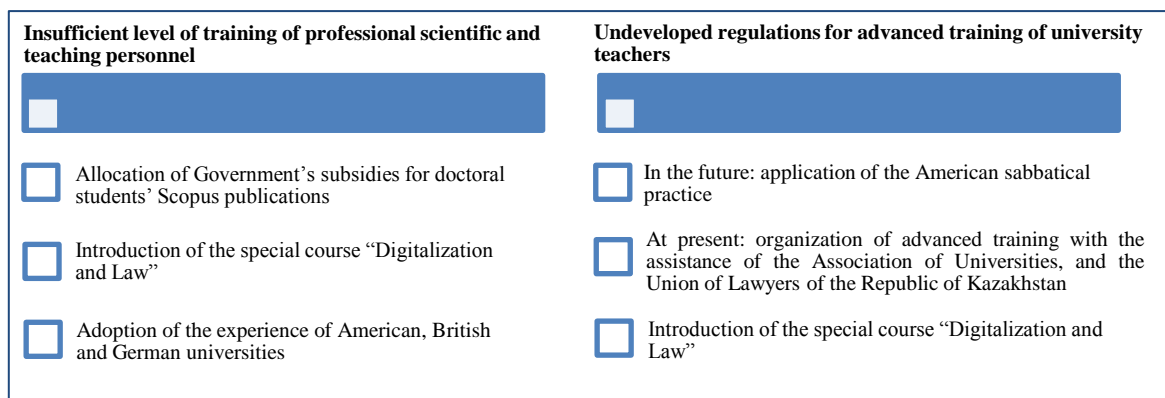


Figure 4. Shortcomings in Kazakhstan’s higher legal education system and ways to eliminate them

Doctors and candidates of science are currently being replaced with PhDs and master's degrees in legal sciences (international law). In the Republic, applicants for this academic degree are required to publish in a journal that is recorded in the Scopus database. To publish in such a journal, scholars must meet two key conditions: 1) high-level disclosure of the theme of the proposed scientific publication; 2) relatively expensive costs for the services of such a journal, paid directly or through intermediaries. Fulfilling the second criteria is often unaffordable for our dissertation applicants across the country, not only in higher legal education. In this regard, it would be advisable for the relevant ministries, departments, and universities that require publishing of Scopus articles to annually allocate subsidies for their publication to dissertation authors and lecturers based on the principle "if you claim implementation, pay the financial charges." *This regulation should be included in Kazakhstan's laws "On Education" (2007) [25] and "On Science" (2011) [51], and only in this case the Republic's Ministry of Finance will allocate the appropriate funds.*

4-6- Sabbatical as a Special Form of Advanced Training

How do professors and lecturers in law faculties at international universities increase their qualifications? Thus, legal discipline lecturers in American university law schools take a so-called *sabbatical* every seventh year as part of their scholarly and teaching activities. During the subsequent seventh calendar year (sabbatical), lecturers are completely liberated from their educational and pedagogical responsibilities with salary retention. However, they have to participate in the activities of the ministry, department, or enterprise in accordance with their scientific and educational interests. They can stay up to date on current practical issues, write the content for the related textbook and (or) monograph, and attend advanced training courses at the institute for several weeks or months. This practice was known as sabbatical leave and grew popular among universities and other institutional employers of lecturers, scholars, and doctors [52].

The Kazakh higher legal education system could organize something similar in the future, when the Republic is financially and economically capable of doing so. Currently, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Association of Universities, and the Union of Lawyers would be able *to improve the qualifications of law faculty and university lecturers every 5-6 years through one semester of advanced training courses at capital universities. Moreover, lecturers of legal disciplines should be trained not only in the most recent scientific concepts and achievements of the legal sciences but also in the fundamentals of pedagogy and teaching methodology, as close as possible to the needs of law.*

4-7- Latest Technologies as Means of Improving the Educational Process

Digitalization and artificial intelligence technologies are gradually and consistently being integrated into all sectors of state and public life, including practical jurisprudence and higher legal education [53]. Students should be taught how to digitally codify and systematize Kazakhstani and foreign legislation and regulations of international conventions. It is also crucial to teach students how to instantly find the required statute or article in the law in the relevant digital databases. Students must understand the fundamentals of artificial intelligence law, LegalTech (Legal Technology). They must be able to direct the activities of inputting legislative acts, law enforcement, and other information into artificial intelligence mechanisms and fulfill certain functions of an investigator, judge, and legal adviser. In the foreseeable future, artificial intelligence mechanisms and robots will handle various tasks [54], including routine legal labor. This will lead to an increase in highly specialized legal institutions and organizations with professional-human and artificial-intellectual expanding participation [55].

To address all these issues, law faculties must incorporate a special course titled "Digitalization and Law" into their educational programs. And here the state, represented by its legislative body—the Government and the specialized Kazakhstan's Ministry—should not stand aside. They must accept a resolution and regulatory order entitled "On introducing of digital technologies to the educational process of law faculties of Kazakhstan's universities." The provisions governing the use of the following digital tools could form the basis of these necessary legal acts: the Internet of things in education, big data, artificial intelligence, and virtual and augmented reality robotics. Students should benefit from these tools not only in gaining in-depth knowledge but also in developing the skills and abilities, brought to automaticity, required in the legal professions: investigator, interviewer, prosecutor, judge, lawyer, legal consultant, and legal institution manager. This area of activity is and will continue to be an essential contribution to ensuring a higher quality of Kazakhstan's higher legal education. As a result, the legal specialists trained by us will function highly professionally in law enforcement and judicial establishments in Kazakhstan and abroad (see Figure 3).

4-8- Difference Between this Article and Previous Studies, Analysis and Value of this Article

The difference between this research and previous studies is quite significant. In none of the previous scientific publications on the topic of legal education did their authors make recommendations, proposals, come to conclusions, or achieve scientific results of the following nature, which are made in this article:

- 1) We recommended new Kazakhstan laws that transform legal education into a new qualitative state for development and adoption ("On higher education", including higher legal education, "On creating conditions for increasing the

quality level of qualifications in the legal education system”, “On the peculiarities of research universities” with a distinction between the functions of teachers and researchers, including in law faculties, “On methods and means for consistent improvement of the quality of higher education in the country,” including quality improvement in law schools. The authors of this article did not find any recommendations from their authors in any previous studies on using the legislation of their country to improve the education system, and the system of higher legal education in particular.

- 2) We proposed to develop and adopt a Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On measures for the conceptual high-quality development of higher legal education in the 21st century” (the key ideas of the proposed government resolution could be establishing a balance of academic hours of theoretical legal disciplines and practical training, creating conditions for gender equality in filling senior positions in legal education). The substantive provisions of government regulations proposed in this article “On the introduction of digital technologies and artificial intelligence mechanisms in the educational process of law faculties of Kazakhstan universities and law schools”, and “On examination tests” could be included in the main government resolution. The authors of this article did not find such recommendations in previous publications on similar topics.
- 3) We developed ways to improve the quality level of higher legal education regarding our proposed new norms of Kazakhstan’s legislation, comparative law, and international law (proposals for improving legal education in Kazakhstan were to a certain extent made on the basis of studying the legislative experience of a number of foreign countries and international experience). All authors on the subject of previous studies on legal education almost did not resort to comparative analysis, mistakenly believing that legal education is only a domestic matter of each country).
- 4) We proposed to develop a teaching methodology for each legal discipline, considering its characteristics (proceeding from the fact that legal disciplines are of a constitutional, theoretical, historical, criminological, civil, procedural nature and differ quite significantly from each other, a proposal to develop a teaching methodology for each discipline becomes obvious). There are some general teaching methods, but they do not completely solve the problem. It was proposed to systematically conduct moot trials in cases of criminal, civil, and labor law, as well as moot arbitration court trials in cases within the framework of private international law.
- 5) We recommended and justified the need to introduce digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools into the educational process of law faculties: on this basis, it was proposed to create a department of artificial intelligence law at each law faculty (the use of artificial intelligence in the educational process of law faculties for Kazakhstan and many other countries has become completely new proposal, a novel scientific result).
- 6) We proposed formulating a specialized norm on the inclusion of the profession of “mentor” in the staffing table of every law school and every legal institution in the country (this scientific finding was made as a result of many years of work and observation of law students during their internship).
- 7) We justified the feasibility of educating law students as professionals who defend human rights in all areas of their future activities, guided by the norms of international covenants on human rights (this scientific result was obtained by us during the work of the authors of this article in the highest government bodies of the Republic, and in international structures: OSCE, the UN Human Rights Committee).
- 8) We put forward a requirement on the need to educate law students about anti-corruption legal consciousness (this scientific result was obtained on the basis of acquiring solid work experience of one of the authors in the investigative department of the prosecutor’s office of the Republic);
- 9) We recommended taking exams and tests in written form by specialized institutions and persons independent of the law faculty and the university on the basis of the government regulations we proposed (in our professional teaching activities, we observed that taking exams for students by the teacher who read to them lectures, essentially reduced to the teacher assessing himself: he could afford to give lectures of weak content and give students fairly high grades, and this became a knockout blow to the quality of higher legal education).
- 10) We proposed to grant the right to fill legal positions at the middle and higher level only upon completion of master’s and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Law, with preferential rights being given to holders of diplomas with honors (we proceed from the fact that bachelors’ top managers should be people who have successfully completed master’s and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Law, where they could not only improve their professional and service qualifications, but also be taught all the intricacies of management, taught how to properly select personnel, conduct events at a high organizational level, unite and inspire teams of companies and enterprises to perform highly profitable activities, taught the psychology of communicating with their teams, the ability to defuse scandalous relationships in the teams, promptly stop corruption tendencies and manifestations among their deputies and assistants, communicate with people, find convincing answers when raising socially pressing issues during rallies, and involve the population in the process of implementing assigned tasks, together resolving vital issues with them).

These scientific results, recommendations, and proposals were not found in previous studies on similar topics. Taken together, these outcomes fill the scientific gaps in previous studies and determine the scientific value of this article.

Research scientific community of the Faculty of Law of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University unites not only learned lawyers but also lecturers from the same university working at the Faculty of Information Technologies. Recently, they discussed the role of artificial intelligence in the educational process. In addition, on the initiative of lawyers and IT specialists, a scientific article was jointly written on the topic of improving the quality of higher legal education based on artificial intelligence tools. This article on methods of high-quality training of law students can be considered a contribution to the activities of this research community and the university as a whole.

5- Discussion

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education” dated July 27, 2007 [25] and the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Science” dated February 18, 2011 [51] are specialized regulatory legal acts of the country regulating all levels of education in the country, including science and higher legal education. This means that these Laws regulate the legal relations that develop between all subjects performing their functions in the field of higher education and science [25, 51]. In the system of higher legal education, such subjects are students of law faculties of universities or cadets of law schools of the country in the form of a law university, the Academy of Justice at the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Academy of law enforcement agencies, including the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, academies of various profiles of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, professors and teachers, the dean and their deputies, the staff, the university management represented by the rector (president), vice-rectors, the leadership of the ministries (departments) in charge of universities, and the corresponding academy (law school). The legal relations of the educational and methodological orientation between them are built in the order of hierarchical subordination from bottom to top, regardless of the status of the university or law school (state, autonomous, private).

Although these academies are under the relevant specialized ministries and departments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the educational and methodological aspects of the activities of all these specialized law schools are conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. We consider this approach to be correct because the educational process at any academy is a special type of professional and pedagogical activity and therefore should be under constant systematic control by a specialized ministry. Moreover, the Ministry not only provides control over the educational and methodological activities of academies but also provides them with the necessary educational and methodological documentation.

Therefore, all 70 law faculties of universities and higher legal educational institutions of the republic are guided in their pedagogical, scientific, educational, and methodical activities not only by the above-mentioned laws of the republic but also by normative acts (resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan), (orders) of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The concept document “The Concept of development of higher education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029”, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 28, 2023 [56]. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan has adopted at least 23 regulatory orders on higher education and science, which in one way or another regulate the functioning of law faculties and universities throughout the country.

The higher legal education of Kazakhstan dates back to the European-continental, Romano-German legal family (through Russia in about the XVIII–XIX centuries, when Kazakhstan was part of the Russian Empire). Therefore, Kazakh higher legal education considers the law as the basis for the settlement of legal relations, and not court decisions. There is no case law in the country, which is inherent in the Anglo-Saxon legal family. At the bachelor’s course (4 years), master’s course (1-2 years), and doctoral course (3 years) of law faculties of the Kazakhstan universities, through about 80 academic legal disciplines, students examine: The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (30 August 1995) [57], 85 constitutional laws, 3 decrees having the force of a constitutional law, 50 codes, 3,258 laws, 4023 decrees. In addition, they, and future international lawyers, are studying 452 agreements of universal, regional, and bilateral nature [58]. It is necessary to ensure that students understand the laws. But that’s not enough. They must comprehend the legal values and principles. They must understand the essence of law enforcement practice and be able to apply laws in relation to specific facts of violation of the rule of law. And most importantly, at the Faculty of Law, students need to be taught thinking skills to put a way of thinking into them [59]. This means that their way of thinking should become legally both abstract and concrete, and systematic, logical, skillfully polemical, and consistent. This will allow our graduates to competently and professionally apply all these legal sources of Kazakh and international legal orientation to one degree or another in practice as investigators, prosecutors, judges, bailiffs, lawyers, legal advisers, and notaries both domestically and internationally.

The novelty of this research is characterized by the fact that neither in Kazakhstan science nor in the science of many countries, including developed ones, additional legal norms have been proposed for improving the existing laws on education and science, including the segment on higher legal education. Only this article compares legislative acts on

higher education (legal education) of Kazakhstan and a number of foreign countries, which made it possible to provide recommendations for improving Kazakh legal norms on higher legal education. Only this scientific article describes proposals for improving higher legal education based on specialized international legal norms and international legal remedies. Thus, this article covers the scientific gap on this issue. This study can be called significant for higher legal education because: 1) it offers recommendations for creating appropriate structures that will improve the quality of training for law students; 2) additional appropriate conditions are created for faculty members, which allow for better preparation for training sessions; 3) artificial intelligence technologies are introduced into the educational process of law faculties, which, by taking on part of the teaching functions, allow freeing up academic time during which teachers could engage in scientific research, which would bring the lectures and seminars they prepare to a higher quality level.

This study on the quality of higher legal education is crucial for the industry—law enforcement and judicial authorities of the country—because it needs highly qualified legal specialists who possess the skills and abilities of professional activity, have acquired in-depth legal knowledge, and the psychological traits of courage, determination, efficiency, and unselfishness, enabling graduates of law faculties to successfully fight against crime, corruption, delinquency, restore the rule of law, legal order, and violated human rights and freedoms.

This article is original in several ways. The comparative research method made it possible to compare higher legal education in Kazakhstan and other foreign countries and identify the positive aspects of this type of higher education. A study of the state of scientific research on higher legal education in some foreign countries (USA, UK, Germany, for example) showed that scientists in these countries paid insufficient attention to higher legal education. In Kazakhstan and Russia, higher legal education is under study, but scientists in these countries consider it from pedagogical, sociological, organizational, and legal perspectives. We analyze the qualitative diversity of higher legal education on the basis of national legislative, comparative, and international law. The authors of this article proposed new teaching methods for law faculties. We could identify more advanced legal norms for the future to improve the quality of higher legal education in Kazakhstan.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, an applicant has the right to enter the Faculty of Law, a law university, immediately after graduating from high school. They receive higher university and postgraduate education for 9 years. In the USA, for example, legal education is quite unique from an organizational point of view. You can enter the law faculty (law school) of the university only after completing a bachelor's degree in any specialty. This has its positive features: 1) most young people become lawyers at a fairly mature age; 2) they often become lawyers in the field that they have studied well during their undergraduate studies. In the USA, one of the features of studying at the University school of law is a narrow specialization. This allows the lawyer to have a deep knowledge of the subject in which they narrowly specialize. The model of legal education in Germany and France is of interest, the essence of which is that a student gets access to the legal profession when they complete a theoretical university course and a mandatory practical internship within the limits of their chosen legal profession. In Kazakhstan, we also strive for highly specialized training of our law students, but due to the relatively small population (20 million people) [60], we cannot always ensure the narrow specialization of our future lawyers. We will study the experience of Germany and France thoroughly: for us, the most interesting procedures are practical internships within the relevant legal profession.

In Kazakhstan, we strive to train our students to be not only soundly qualified professionals but also honest and fair servants of its Majesty the Law.

6- Conclusions

This study focuses on enhancing the quality of higher legal education, training lawyers for Kazakh institutions, international lawyers for international structures to protect the vital interests of the Kazakh state, and improving the activities of law faculties and universities of Kazakhstan, considering international experience and the experience of leading states.

The theoretical novelty of this study stems from its innovative thematic approach: the examination of legislative norms in a specific field of legal education has not previously been covered in scientific publications. This study may also serve as a support for future research on related themes in Kazakhstan and other countries.

The limitations of this study include a lack of relevant legal and international legal scientific primary sources on the regulation of Kazakhstan's higher legal education. We have formulated scientific results, proposals, and specific recommendations for improving legal higher education in the Republic in general forms:

- We recommended proposals for the development and adoption of new Kazakhstan laws, which are designed to bring the quality content of legal education to a high level; it was proposed to develop and adopt a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On measures for the conceptual qualitative development of higher legal education in the 21st century”; scientific development was performed to improve the quality of higher legal education based on the proposed new norms of Kazakhstan's legislation, comparative law, and international law.

- We proposed developing teaching methods for each legal discipline, about their characteristics. In addition to the traditional methods, new teaching methods were recommended: intellectual didactic games, brainstorming of the preference of evidence in decisions of courts at different levels, an educational legislative session of the Mazhilis, the chamber of the country's Parliament, an educational administrative and legal hearing of a citizen's application in a government body; the educational process of the arbitration court in a case within the framework of private international law. We substantiated the expediency of educating and training law students to defend the rights and freedoms of each person on the basis of the norms of international covenants on human rights in all areas of their future professional activities. We put forward a demand for the need to educate law students about anti-corruption legal consciousness.
- We recommended and justified the need to introduce digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools into the educational process of law faculties: on this basis, we proposed the creation of an artificial intelligence law department at each law faculty;
- We proposed to include the profession of "mentor" in the staffing table of every law school and legal institution in the country.
- We recommended administering examinations and tests by specialized institutions and persons that would be independent of the Faculty of Law and the University;
- We proposed to grant the right to occupy legal positions at middle and higher levels only upon completion of master's and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Law, with preferential rights given to holders of diplomas with honors.

7- Declarations

7-1- Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.S. and V.B.; methodology, M.S. and S.T.; software, Y.A.; validation, Y.A., V.B., and Z.Z.; formal analysis, S.T.; investigation, S.T. and Y.A.; resources, Z.Z.; data curation, M.S.; writing—original draft preparation, S.T., Z.Z., and Y.A.; writing—review and editing, M.S. and V.B.; visualization, Y.A.; supervision, M.S.; project administration, M.S.; funding acquisition, M.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

7-2- Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available in the article.

7-3- Funding

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7-4- Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

7-5- Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

7-6- Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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