

# Common Illegal Behaviors among College Students and Effective Prevention Strategies

**Xu Han**

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Hainan Haikou 571126

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**Abstract:** This article examines the increasing prevalence of illegal behaviors among university students, driven by factors such as weak legal awareness, immature psychological development, distorted values, and a lack of resilience. The study identifies common illegal activities, including theft, intentional injury, cybercrime, academic misconduct, and involvement in drug-related crimes, gambling, and prostitution. These behaviors pose significant threats to personal growth, university reputations, and social stability. The article further proposes effective prevention strategies, emphasizing the need to strengthen legal education, prioritize mental health education, build a comprehensive safety net, and improve mental health counseling services. By addressing these issues, universities can foster a supportive environment that helps students navigate challenges with a positive and healthy attitude, ultimately reducing the incidence of illegal behaviors.

**Keywords:** college students, illegal behaviors, prevention strategies

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## Introduction

College students are the backbone of a nation's future. However, in recent years, various illegal behaviors among students have become increasingly prevalent, largely due to a lack of legal awareness. This not only impacts personal growth and university reputations but also undermines social harmony and stability. Therefore, analyzing common illegal behaviors and proposing effective prevention strategies is crucial for reducing criminal activities in this demographic.

### 1. Types of common illegal behaviors

#### 1.1 Theft

Students from diverse economic backgrounds often find themselves in shared living environments, where economic pressures, peer influence, or opportunism can lead to theft. This typically manifests in three forms: opportunistic theft, breaking and entering, and collusion with outsiders. Opportunistic theft involves seizing unattended belongings in public spaces, while breaking and entering occurs when students steal from dormitories left unlocked. Collusion with outsiders involves working with non-university individuals to target fellow students' belongings or public property.

#### 1.2 Intentional injury

Conflicts stemming from trivial matters, romantic entanglements, or impulsive behavior often lead to physical harm. Crimes of passion, reflecting emotional instability and poor self-control, are prevalent among today's college students. Emotional immaturity frequently leads to impulsive actions, particularly in romantic disputes, jealousy, and emotional outbursts, which can result in severe consequences, as seen in cases like the poisoning at Fudan University and the Yunnan University dormitory murder<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **1.3 Cybercrime**

The rise of digital platforms has led to an increase in cybercrimes, particularly online fraud and cyberbullying. University students, often in search of part-time jobs, may fall victim to scams disguised as job offers, inadvertently becoming involved in fraud operations. Cyberbullying, involving the spread of online rumors or doxxing, has also become a significant issue, inflicting psychological trauma on victims and sometimes leading to real-world violence.

### **1.4 Campus bullying**

Bullying within and outside school premises remains a serious concern, with male students more likely to engage in physical violence and female students more prone to social exclusion and verbal attacks. The severity of campus bullying is highlighted by incidents like the viral video from Jilin Judicial Police Vocational College, showcasing the need for increased awareness and intervention<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **1.5 Group fighting**

Group fights, often rooted in notions of loyalty and brotherhood, arise from romantic entanglements rather than economic disputes. Impulsiveness and a lack of experience in managing relationship issues often lead to violent confrontations, as seen in cases like the duel in Sichuan Province and the group fight at Jiangxi University of Technology.

### **1.6 Drug-related crimes**

Drug-related crimes among university students are becoming increasingly covert. Students may be recruited as drug mules or sellers through deceptive job advertisements offering high salaries and benefits. High-profile cases, such as the student sentenced for selling "head rush e-cigarettes," underscore the importance of vigilance and awareness among students.

### **1.7 Academic misconduct**

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and copyright infringement, undermines the integrity of scholarly research. Driven by the desire for quick success, some students opt for shortcuts like plagiarism, as evidenced by high-profile cases like the Zhai Tianlin academic scandal. Strengthening academic standards and promoting the value of authentic research is essential to combat this issue.

### **1.8 Gambling behavior**

Gambling among university students is a growing concern, exacerbated by the proliferation of online gambling platforms. Participation in gambling can lead to financial difficulties, bad debts, and criminal activities. The ease of access to online casinos has drawn students into a dangerous cycle of addiction, as seen in the case of the student who lost 200,000 yuan in an online casino.

### **1.9 Prostitution**

The involvement of university students in prostitution is a serious issue driven by economic pressures and materialistic values. The rise of internet forums and social media has facilitated the connection between student sex workers and clients, making it difficult to regulate. Addressing the underlying social and economic factors is crucial for preventing students from falling into this illegal industry.

## **2. Causes of illegal and criminal behavior among university students**

### **2.1 Weak legal awareness**

The primary cause of illegal behaviors among students is weak legal awareness. The current legal education system often emphasizes theory over practical application, leaving students ill-equipped to handle real-life legal issues. Many students are unaware of the legal consequences of their actions, leading to uninformed decisions that result in criminal behavior.

## **2.2 Immature psychological development**

The transition from a rigid exam-oriented education system to the more autonomous university environment can lead to significant emotional fluctuations and poor self-control among students. Emotional immaturity often results in impulsive actions, particularly in stressful situations or when dealing with personal conflicts.

## **2.3 Distorted values**

The influence of modern ideologies, combined with rapid economic development, has contributed to the distortion of values among university students. Individualism, consumerism, and extremism have infiltrated students' thoughts, leading to behaviors that prioritize personal gain over ethical considerations. These distorted values often manifest in illegal activities, as students seek to fulfill their desires without regard for the consequences.

## **2.4 Lack of resilience**

The lack of resilience training in the current education system leaves students ill-prepared to face setbacks, resulting in feelings of helplessness and frustration. This lack of coping mechanisms can lead to extreme behaviors when students are confronted with challenges they are not equipped to handle.

## **3. Effective prevention strategies**

### **3.1 Strengthening legal education**

To address these issues, it is essential to strengthen legal education by enriching curricula, innovating teaching methods, and promoting legal practice activities. Universities should integrate legal education into their broader educational framework, combining it with ideological and political education to cultivate a deeper understanding of the law [3].

### **3.2 Prioritizing mental health education**

Mental health education must also be prioritized, with universities creating a supportive campus environment that promotes psychological well-being. This includes building a comprehensive safety net to detect and address potential psychological issues early on, as well as improving mental health counseling services to provide students with the necessary support.

### **3.3 Building a safety net**

Building a safety net involves regular mental health surveys, daily observations, and individual counseling to identify and address psychological safety risks. Universities should also explore the use of big data and AI to analyze students' behavior and provide timely interventions.

### **3.4 Improving mental health counseling services**

Improving mental health counseling services is crucial to support students in managing their psychological well-being. Universities should enhance the professional skills of mental health counselors and offer a variety of counseling options to meet diverse student needs.

## **4. Conclusion**

Addressing illegal behaviors among university students requires coordinated efforts from educational institutions, families, society, and the students themselves. This article highlights key factors such as weak legal awareness, emotional immaturity, distorted values, and insufficient resilience, which contribute to various illegal activities like theft, intentional injury, cybercrime, and academic misconduct. To mitigate these behaviors, it is crucial to strengthen legal education, prioritize mental health support, and develop effective coping mechanisms for students. Additionally, creating a comprehensive safety net and enhancing counseling services can provide timely intervention for those at risk. By implementing these strategies, universities can create a supportive environment that fosters responsible behavior, reduces

illegal activities, and promotes a safer, more harmonious campus community.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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