

Case Study of Online Fraud Prevention among Higher Vocational College Students and Construction of an Action Framework

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Abstract

Due to their limited social experience, students in higher vocational colleges are particularly vulnerable to online fraud. Counselors (class advisors) should therefore deeply integrate online fraud prevention into the entire process of student education. Taking a typical case of a vocational college student who fell victim to a fake ticket scam driven by fan culture, this paper systematically reviews the incident, analyzes the mechanisms of the fraud and the students' psychological vulnerabilities, and summarizes a closed-loop intervention pathway of "timely reporting - emotional counseling - home-school coordination - class-wide education". It further constructs a four-pronged prevention system featuring "daily monitoring, literacy enhancement, psychological support, and police-school collaboration", realizing the organic embedding of anti-fraud education into the whole process of moral education. This study offers a replicable and scalable working paradigm for counselors (class advisors) in higher vocational colleges, so as to effectively safeguard students' property security and physical and mental well-being.

Keywords

Higher Vocational Colleges, Online Fraud Prevention, Closed-Loop Intervention, Four-Pronged Prevention System

1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that good ideological and political work should be like salt: one cannot simply eat salt by itself; the best way is to dissolve it into various foods so that it is naturally absorbed. Currently, online

fraud tactics keep emerging in endless variations. Because higher vocational students have shallow social experience, they are highly prone to becoming targets of scammers. As the guides of students' ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, counselors (class advisors) must make online fraud prevention a key priority in the whole process of student development. Online fraud not only causes direct economic losses to students, but also exerts a negative influence on their moral outlook—leading some students to abandon integrity, chase profit at the expense of principle, and eventually fall deeper into cyber fraud traps (Xu, 2019).

This case is drawn from the authors' professional practice as student counselors and was selected through purposive typical-case sampling, focusing on a high-incidence online ticket fraud scenario linked to the fan economy among higher vocational college students. It therefore carries both representativeness and practical value. The data are derived from primary sources, including the counselor's official case log, face-to-face interview records, the student's self-report, chat history and bank-transfer receipts, police report documentation, and home-school communication records. The student is referred to by the pseudonym "Xiao Lin", and all identifying details—such as the institutional name, specific concert information, and scammer account details—have been anonymized. Informed written consent was obtained from the student, with parental awareness secured through the home-school coordination process, authorizing the use of this case for practitioner research and academic publication.

2. Case Overview

Xiao Lin, a 2022-enrolled student from the School of Nursing, is a devoted fan of Hlai Amu, a Chinese mainland singer. She became extremely anxious after failing to secure a ticket for the "Better Meet You" Chengdu concert scheduled during the Dragon Boat Festival holiday. On Weibo, she noticed a user self-identified as "Ticketing Agent (Manager Zhang)" posting that he had access to tickets through "internal channels" at a reasonable price. After Xiao Lin contacted him via private message, the other party sent multiple forged "work certificates", a fake "business license", and screenshots of previous successful transactions, thereby gaining her initial trust. The fraudster urged her to switch to WeChat for detailed communication. Under the pretext of "high platform transaction fees" and "need for direct access to the financial system", the fraudster induced Xiao Lin to leave the second-hand trading platform and make private transfers, promising to issue tickets immediately upon payment. Eager to get the tickets, Xiao Lin transferred 1,200 yuan via mobile banking to the personal account provided by the scammer. After the transfer, the fraudster claimed there was a "system order block" requiring "activation", and demanded an additional 2,000 yuan, saying that the refund and tickets would be processed together afterwards. It was then that Xiao Lin suspected she had been defrauded. She demanded an immediate refund, only to find herself blocked by the suspect, whose Weibo account had also vanished. In the end, Xiao

Lin obtained no concert tickets and suffered financial losses.

3. Key Issues

1. How to properly comfort the student, stabilize her emotions, assist her in filing a police report and cooperating with investigations, and maximize the recovery of losses.
2. How to guide the student to view this incident rationally, recognize the underlying logic and mechanism of the scam, and build up awareness of risk prevention.
3. How to carry out anti-fraud education for students in the class. Within the “fan economy”, some students lack rational thinking and awareness of rules, making them highly susceptible to inducement and fraud.

4. Solutions and Implementation Measures

4.1. The Counselor (in Coordination with the Student): File a Police Report Immediately and Report Upward without Delay

Upon receiving news of the fraud, the counselor immediately obtained details from the student, affirmed her decision to call the police promptly, and preserved electronic evidence including chat logs, transfer records, and the recipient’s account information. They went to the local police station to file a report, submitting as much evidence as possible to increase the chance of freezing the suspect’s account. The fraudulent accounts were also reported on relevant social media platforms and apps to prevent further victimization.

4.2. The Counselor (with Referral to the Psychological Center If Needed): Provide Emotional Comfort and Psychological Counseling

The counselor closely monitored the student’s emotional changes and tracked her psychological state, carefully analyzing the patterns of her mood swings. Targeted guidance was offered to help her draw lessons from the experience and raise self-protection awareness, so as to avoid falling victim again. The student was encouraged to vent her emotions appropriately, preventing excessive suppression of distress. Distraction strategies were adopted to dilute the negative impact of the fraud, thereby minimizing disruption to her normal studies and daily life.

4.3. The Counselor and the Student’s Parents: Facilitate Home-School Communication and Build Collaborative Educational Synergy

The counselor proactively contacted the student’s parents to explain how the fraud occurred. In doing so, particular emphasis was placed on the role parents play in their children’s anti-fraud education. Rather than focusing on blame, parents were encouraged to shift their attention toward guiding their children in acquiring fraud prevention knowledge. Both school and family share the joint re-

sponsibility of safeguarding students' safety. Only by working hand in hand can we create a safer environment for the young to grow up in.

4.4. The Counselor and the Whole Class: Conduct Case Review and Deliver Targeted Anti-Fraud Education to the Class

This incident also served as a vivid lesson for the counselor (class advisor): anti-fraud publicity must be intensified. Students mostly fall victim due to weak prevention awareness and a limited understanding of the wide variety of scam tactics. The counselor took the opportunity to remind students to stay alert to job-hunting scams and ticketing traps before and after major events such as concerts. Continuous effort is made to improve students' ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. Students are also guided to adopt the principle of "early detection, prompt reporting, and targeted handling" when facing suspicious situations (Zhao et al., 2025).

5. Outcomes

5.1. Student Transformation

After receiving ideological education, rule-of-law education, and psychological counseling, Xiao Lin gradually walked out of the shadow cast by the fraud. She corrected her previous misconceptions about ticketing agents and developed sound consumption values and a stronger sense of legal awareness. In her subsequent study and daily life, she has not only been able to consciously identify false information online, but also actively shares her own experience and prevention tips with her classmates. She now strives to serve as a "young anti-fraud ambassador" on campus.

5.2. Direct Outcomes

With the assistance of the counselor and relevant departments, Xiao Lin reported the case to the public security organ in a timely manner. Although part of her financial loss could not be recovered, her report provided useful leads for the police in their subsequent crackdown on telecom and online fraud. Taking this incident as an entry point, the college launched targeted anti-fraud campaigns across the whole class. To assess the impact of this intervention, a follow-up questionnaire was administered to the entire class two weeks later. All 42 students completed the survey (100% response rate). The instrument combined scenario-based knowledge tests and behavioral intention items. Results showed that 95.2% of respondents correctly identified ticketing scams, and 92.9% explicitly endorsed the principle of avoiding off-platform transactions. This demonstrates that a properly handled individual case can be translated into measurable gains in collective fraud resilience.

6. Experience and Implications

When online fraud occurs, counselors (class advisors) should intervene promptly

and properly, offering immediate psychological reassurance to ensure that students' legitimate rights and interests are protected.

6.1. Daily Monitoring: Attend to Students' Daily Dynamics to Prevent Problems before They Arise

Counselors need to truly walk into students' lives and stay close to them. Solid groundwork laid in ordinary times makes all the difference at critical moments. As students' understanding of the world is still evolving and they often face various pressures, counselors should put themselves in students' shoes, lend support during pivotal stages of growth, and help them withstand stress on their path to maturity. It is essential to guide students in forming rational consumption values. Regular theme class meetings should be used as a platform for anti-fraud education, steering students toward healthy spending habits and keeping them away from online traps. Special emphasis must be placed on introducing and repeatedly reinforcing those scams most commonly targeting college students, including: illegal campus loans, fake part-time job scams, online romance fraud.

6.2. Literacy Enhancement: Strengthen Prevention Awareness and Build Students' Self-Defense Capacity

As fraud tactics continue to evolve, preventive education is of paramount importance. The counselor adopts a "case-based warning" approach—using real incidents to illustrate disciplinary rules and legal red lines—so that students grasp the seriousness of scams. Students are encouraged to take part in anti-fraud advocacy themselves, which further sharpens their ability to recognize fraudulent information. Regular safety education sessions, supplemented by vivid and relatable cases, are consistently delivered to enhance students' self-protection awareness and practical prevention skills.

6.3. Psychological Support: Strengthen Psychological Counseling and Safeguard Students' Mental Health

Falling victim to fraud often imposes a heavy psychological burden, which can significantly undermine students' mental well-being and adversely affect their normal daily life. Therefore, it is essential to provide timely psychological counseling and emotional guidance to help victims walk out of the shadow of the incident and resume their academic and personal routines. Colleges should establish a robust psychological support system to ensure that all students have access to timely, professional, and appropriate mental health services (Hua et al., 2025). Such support not only helps students regain self-confidence and restore a sense of normalcy, but also fosters greater resilience, enabling them to move forward with perseverance when facing future challenges.

6.4. Police-School Collaboration: Promote Police-School Collaboration to Jointly Safeguard Campus Safety

Given that higher vocational students are relatively new to social life, with limited

social experience and underdeveloped discernment, colleges can incorporate cybersecurity education into formal curricula to mainstream safety knowledge across the student body (Wang, 2023). In addition, thematic initiatives such as a “Cybersecurity Education Month” and “Anti-Online-Fraud Knowledge Competition” should be organized. By diversifying publicity formats, these activities embed anti-fraud awareness deeply into students’ minds and daily habits (Zheng, 2022).

7. Case Summary

The handling of Xiao Lin’s fake ticket purchase case provides valuable practical experience for future student affairs work. Moving forward, counselors (class advisors) should ground their practice in ideological guidance, integrating real fraud cases into daily conversations and theme class meetings to steer students toward rational consumption values and a strong sense of the rule of law. At the same time, through anti-fraud knowledge dissemination and simulated scam scenario drills, prevention awareness should be embedded into students’ cognitive framework. This approach not only safeguards the safety of young students during their formative years, but also reinforces the frontline of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges. Ultimately, anti-fraud work is not merely about protecting property, but about nurturing a generation of students who are clear-eyed, resilient, and morally grounded.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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