Exploring the Current Status, Needs, and Pathways for Mongolian Long-tune Courses in Inner Mongolia Universities*

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Abstract

The objectives of the research are to 1) analyze the current implementation status and teaching needs of Mongolian Long-tune courses in universities in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and 2) construct a systematic development and optimization pathway for these courses. The research subjects were 278 university teachers involved in Mongolian Long-tune instruction, selected through a non-probability sampling method. Research instruments included a structured questionnaire developed from Tyler's curriculum theory—covering curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation—and semi-structured interview outlines. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, including Priority Needs Index (PNI) analysis using SPSS 27.0 to quantify gaps between the current status and needs, complemented by qualitative content analysis of interview data.

The research results were found that: 1) The Mongolian Long-tune curriculum shows a significant and systematic mismatch between current provision and teaching needs across four dimensions. The most critical gaps relate to cultural contextualization, practical training opportunities, and curriculum systematization. Qualitative evidence indicates that this mismatch is rooted in tension between the non-standardized, context-dependent logic of "living transmission" in intangible cultural heritage and the standardized, measurable logic of institutional higher education. 2) Based on teacher interview consensus, a four-dimensional curriculum optimization pathway was constructed to improve objectives (making them operational), content (integrating culture and language more deeply), implementation (embedding fieldwork, stage performance, and a dual-teacher classroom model), and evaluation (using diversified, process-oriented approaches). The pathway is further translated into actionable recommendations for education authorities, university administrators, and frontline teachers to support sustainable curriculum development. This study provides practical and theoretical insights into the professional transmission and innovative development of Mongolian Long-tune as an important form of intangible cultural heritage within the framework of higher education.

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Introduction

Mongolian Long-tune is a distinguished representative and a core carrier of traditional Mongolian musical culture, and its systematic transmission holds significant value within contemporary higher education. In recent years, alongside ongoing curriculum reforms in basic education, the roles of cultural inheritance, aesthetic education, and national identity embedded in Long-tune have attracted increasing scholarly attention and have been further emphasized in academic research (Segura and Sekulova, 2024). However, much of the existing literature focuses on its broader cultural significance or its dissemination in primary and secondary education. Empirical studies that specifically address the professional curriculum system of Mongolian Long-tune in Inner Mongolia universities—particularly those that systematically examine current teaching practices, underlying needs, and development pathways—remain relatively limited. This gap has resulted in insufficient theoretical grounding and empirical reference for curriculum construction at the university level, contributing to persistent challenges such as fragmented curriculum structures, inadequately developed teacher training systems, and delayed improvement of teaching resources.

Focusing on higher education institutions in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region that offer Mongolian Long-tune-related courses, this study undertakes an empirical investigation to examine the current implementation status and core challenges of these courses. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the research seeks to clarify teaching needs related to professional inheritance and contemporary innovation, and to explore feasible pathways for promoting curricular standardization and sustainable development. Addressing this gap, the study aims to provide empirically grounded insights for higher education administrators, curriculum designers, and frontline teachers, thereby offering practical references for decision-making and instructional practice in the context of ethnic music education. In this sense, the present study is not merely a general needs assessment, but an attempt to diagnose the structural mismatch between intangible cultural heritage transmission and modern higher education, and to propose a more culturally responsive pathway for curriculum development.

Objectives of the Research

1. To study the current situation and need issues of Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia through a comprehensive analysis.

2. To summarize the development pathways of Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia.

Research Methodology

The 1st Step: Documentary Study

The first stage of the research involved a documentary study to establish the theoretical and analytical foundation of the investigation. Existing literature was reviewed from three main perspectives: the art ontology of Mongolian Long-tune, its educational application, and curriculum design theory.

Research on the art of Long-tune has focused on its origins, musical structure, and cultural significance. Previous studies have identified the classification of Long-tune based on lyrical structure and emphasized its historical development, performance rituals, and role in maintaining cultural memory and collective identity (Namjil et al., 2022; An, 2024; Segura & Sekulova, 2024). Studies on Long-tune education have examined its transmission in school contexts, highlighting the importance of integrating modern teaching methods, technology, and independent curriculum systems to support sustainable inheritance and student engagement (Chahan & Suanmonta, 2024; Sun & Sornyai, 2025; Myagmarsuren, 2024). In addition, curriculum design research—particularly studies grounded in Outcome-Based Education (OBE)—has emphasized outcome-oriented curriculum construction, diversified evaluation mechanisms, and systematic curriculum alignment, while also noting the institutional and conceptual challenges involved in implementation (Shaheen, 2019; Ali & Jamin, 2025; Chen, 2025).

Overall, although existing studies provide important insights across artistic, educational, and theoretical dimensions, they remain fragmented and have not been systematically integrated into an operable curriculum development framework for university-level Long-tune courses. This documentary analysis therefore provides the conceptual basis for identifying curriculum gaps and informing the subsequent empirical investigation.

The 2nd Step: Research Design

Based on the documentary study, this research employed a two-stage empirical design combining quantitative diagnosis and qualitative interpretation. The first stage used a large-sample questionnaire survey to assess the gap between the current curriculum situation and ideal needs across four dimensions: curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation. The second stage explored the underlying institutional and cultural causes of these gaps through in-depth interviews, with the aim of constructing a systematic and practical curriculum optimization pathway. This design follows a logical sequence of "status identification–cause analysis–path construction," ensuring both analytical rigor and practical relevance.

The 3rd Step: Subjects and Sampling

The research subjects were university teachers in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region who offered Mongolian Long-tune courses. The questionnaire survey adopted systematic sampling, selecting participants at equal intervals from faculty lists of relevant

universities. Based on Morgan's sampling guidelines, the sample size was determined to be 278 participants. A total of 278 questionnaires were distributed and returned, yielding a 100% valid response rate. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was employed to select five teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience in Long-tune instruction for in-depth interviews.

The 4th Step: Instruments and Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative research instruments were used. The quantitative instrument was a self-developed questionnaire titled Questionnaire on the Current Status and Needs of Mongolian Long-tune Curriculum, designed according to Tyler's curriculum principles. The questionnaire consisted of 26 items covering four dimensions: curriculum objectives (4items), content (9 items), implementation (9 items), and evaluation (4 items). Each item included two parallel subscales—"Current Status" and "Needs"—measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Validity testing yielded KMO values of 0.851 for the current status scale and 0.925 for the needs scale, with Bartlett's test of sphericity reaching statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Reliability analysis showed Cronbach's α coefficients of 0.886 and 0.919, indicating high internal consistency.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions focusing on curriculum implementation challenges and optimization strategies across the four dimensions. Questionnaires were distributed online via the Wen Juanxing platform over a four-week period. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing with informed consent, recorded in full, and transcribed verbatim.

The 5th Step: Data Analysis and Model Building

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0. Descriptive statistics were first used to calculate the mean and standard deviation of current status and needs for each dimension. The Priority Needs Index (PNI) was then applied using the formula $PNI = (D - S) / S$, where D represents the mean of needs and S represents the mean of the current status. Higher PNI values indicate more urgent needs for curriculum improvement. Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, including text familiarization, coding, theme identification, review, and interpretation.

Model building was conducted as an iterative, evidence-based process. Quantitative PNI results and qualitative interview themes were integrated to identify key curriculum shortcomings related to cultural relevance, practicality, and systematization. Based on this integration, a collaborative "objectives–content–implementation–evaluation" curriculum optimization model was constructed, providing a coherent and operable framework for curriculum reform.

Research Results

The 1st objective is to study the current situation and need issues of Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia through a comprehensive analysis. From the research result, it was found that:

The current situation is reflected through Characteristics of the Questionnaire Survey Sample: The 278 teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey came from eight universities in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region that offer Mongolian Long-tune courses. Their basic characteristics are shown in Table 1. The sample exhibits a certain degree of diversity in terms of gender, teaching experience, professional title, and type of institution, which can reflect the overall structure of the Long-tune Teacher Team in Inner Mongolia universities.

Table 1: Distribution of basic characteristics of the questionnaire survey sample (N=278)

Feature	Category	Number of people	Percentage
Gender	Male	146	52.5%
	Female	132	47.5%
Teaching Experience	≤ 5 years	12	4.3%
	6-15 years	95	34.2%
	≥ 16 years	171	61.5%
Job Title	Lecturer	53	19.1%
	Associate Professor	146	52.5%
	Professor	79	28.4%
Types of Institutions	Comprehensive universities	102	36.7%
	Art colleges	92	33.1%
	Teacher training colleges	84	30.2%

A significant systemic current-need mismatch between the current state of Mongolian Long-tune courses and teaching needs.

There is a systemic "deficit" between the current state of the curriculum and the actual needs. Quantitative data shows that teachers' evaluation of the current state of the Mongolian Long-tune curriculum is generally lower than their expected needs. As shown in Table 2, there is an overall gap (difference of -1.96) between the current average (2.43) and the need average (4.39) across the four dimensions of objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation. The PNI index indicates that the need for improvement is quite urgent (PNI values range from 0.52 to 1.09). Among them, the gaps in the dimensions of "curriculum evaluation" and "curriculum content" are particularly prominent, with differences of -2.33 and -2.09 respectively, and PNI values of 1.09 and 0.85 respectively, reflecting that the evaluation mechanism and teaching content are the weakest links in the current curriculum development.

Table 2: Current Status, Needs, Difference, and PNI Value of Each Element Level of Mongolian Long-tune Course

Course Dimensions	Current Average	Need Average	Difference between Current Average and Need Average	PNI Value
Course Objectives	2.76	4.2	-1.44	0.52
Course Content	2.45	4.54	-2.09	0.85
Course Implementation	2.38	4.36	-1.98	0.83
Course Evaluation	2.14	4.47	-2.33	1.09
Population Mean	2.43	4.39	-1.96	0.81

The course exhibits three major shortcomings: cultural relevance, practicality, and systematicity.

The Mongolian Long-tune curriculum are mainly concentrated in three aspects: cultural relevance, practicality, and systematicity. The core shortcomings, their current average, need average, and differences are shown in Table 3. The practicality indicator shows the largest gap, indicating a lack of classroom practice. The significant gap between the cultural background and the language curriculum suggests the curriculum is detached from its cultural context. The gaps in the completeness of the curriculum outline and the evaluation methods reflect a lack of systematic design in the curriculum system. These five indicators constitute the priority areas for improvement in curriculum reform.

Table 3: Comparison of Current Status and Needs of Core Shortcomings in Mongolian Long-tune Courses

Course Dimensions	Brief description of the question items	Current Average	Need Average	Difference	Illustrate
Course Implementation	Teaching emphasizes practicality	1.70	4.76	-3.06	Lack of teaching practice
Course Content	Reflecting the cultural background and history of the Mongolian people	1.71	4.68	-2.97	Insufficient content of cultural heritage
Course Evaluation	Diverse evaluation methods	1.71	4.68	-2.97	The evaluation system is too simplistic.
Course Content	Includes Mongolian language course content	1.70	4.62	-2.92	Course language elements missing
Course Objectives	Possesses a systematic and complete course syllabus	2.56	4.76	-2.20	The curriculum lacks logical structure.

Deep Attribution: The Dilemma of Integrating the Logic of Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission with the Logic of Higher Education.

To explore the causes of curriculum gaps in depth, this study conducted in-depth interviews with five senior long-tune teachers (basic information is shown in Table 4) to obtain qualitative data.

Table 4: Basic Information of Interviewees

Serial number	Teaching experience	Job title	Affiliated Institution
T1	18 years	Professor	Inner Mongolia Normal University
T2	12 years	Associate Professor	Inner Mongolia Arts University
T3	22 years	Professor	Inner Mongolia Normal University
T4	15 years	Associate Professor	Inner Mongolia Normal University
T5	11 years	Lecturer	Inner Mongolia Arts University

Qualitative interviews revealed that the aforementioned quantitative current-need gap is not a superficial phenomenon, but rather a structural contradiction rooted within the Mongolian Long-tune curriculum. Interviewed teachers generally believed that the core of the curriculum's predicament lies in the fact that the "non-standardized, emotional, and context-dependent characteristics of the living transmission of intangible cultural heritage" have not yet been organically integrated with the "standardized, academic, and measurable requirements emphasized by the higher education system." This logical misalignment is first reflected in the curriculum objectives: the macro-level mission of "cultural inheritance" is difficult to translate into specific, operational, and measurable classroom teaching objectives; secondly, it is reflected in the teaching methods: the traditional skill transmission method centered on "oral and personal instruction" has an inherent tension with the modern class-based teaching system oriented towards efficiency and scale; and thirdly, it is reflected in the evaluation orientation: the standardized assessment system centered on technical proficiency cannot comprehensively reflect students' development in key dimensions such as cultural understanding, artistic expression, and creative transformation. Therefore, the systemic mismatch in the three aspects of goal setting, teaching implementation, and evaluation system constitutes the deep-seated institutional root cause of the limited development of the Mongolian Long-tune curriculum.

The 2nd objective is to summarize the development pathways of Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia. From the research results, it was found that:

The construction of a framework for developing a curriculum path that enables collaborative optimization across the entire chain of "objectives—content—implementation—evaluation."

In response to the existing problems in the Mongolian Long-tune curriculum, the interviewed teachers reached a clear consensus on the direction of optimization and constructed an improvement framework covering all aspects of the curriculum. As shown in Table 5, this framework is based on a four-dimensional structure of "goal-content-implementation-evaluation," and proposes specific paths and operational details for each dimension, reflecting the teachers' general expectation for "systematic optimization" rather than "partial repair" of the curriculum.

Table 5: Systematic Optimization Path of Mongolian Long-tune Course

Course Dimensions	Core path direction	Specific optimization details
Course Objectives	Structured and operational	1. Break down the macro-level inheritance goals into three measurable levels: "cultural cognition - skill mastery - practical innovation". 2. Develop a list of specific curriculum objectives that align with each teaching stage.
Course Content	Deep integration and systematization of culture	1. Develop independent modules for "An Introduction to the History and Culture of Mongolian Long-tune" and "Basic Mongolian Language for Long-tune Singing". 2. Compile systematic, unit-based school-based teaching materials, and establish a "Classic Repertoire Library" and a "Contemporary Adapted Repertoire Library".
Course Implementation	Practice-oriented and model innovation	1. Field research and stage performances are incorporated into the regular teaching process each semester, achieving a normalized integration of classroom teaching and practical activities. 2. Promote the "dual-teacher classroom" model, in which university teachers and intangible cultural heritage inheritors jointly teach, and build a workshop-style teaching format. 3. Build a digital teaching resource platform for Mongolian Long-tune to support course teaching and self-study.
Course Evaluation	Diversity and Process	1. Construct a comprehensive evaluation system that covers classroom performance, stage presentation, and final assessment. 2. Design a "Mongolian Long-tune Learning and Growth Portfolio" to systematically record students' learning process and stage achievements. 3. A diversified evaluation method combining student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and expert review is introduced.

The New Body of Knowledge

This study has made substantial progress in three core areas: "status quo diagnosis," "conflict attribution," and "pathway construction." First, through empirical research, it fills the gap in systematic evidence, accurately identifying the curriculum's triple shortcomings in cultural, practical, and systemic aspects. Second, it transcends mere phenomenological

description, revealing the deep-seated contradictions between the "living transmission" of intangible cultural heritage and standardized higher education from the perspective of institutional logic integration. Finally, it integrates practical wisdom to construct an operational path covering the entire chain of "goals—content—implementation—evaluation." These three contributions are interconnected, forming a complete knowledge loop from problem diagnosis to solution construction, providing a valuable theoretical reference and practical paradigm for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage curricula.

Table 6: New Contributions

Area	The blank space of existing work	Contributions of this article
Lack of systematic empirical evidence	Systematic first-hand data and quantitative analysis on the current status and demand of intensive courses in higher education institutions, and the description of problems mostly remains at the macro level.	A quantitative diagnostic report on "systemic current and need mismatch" was provided, revealing the overall gap and three core shortcomings of the course in four dimensions: objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation.
Insufficient analysis of the core contradiction mechanism	The study failed to delve into the specific manifestations of the inherent tension between the "living heritage transmission" of intangible cultural heritage and the "education system" of higher education institutions, and its profound impact on the curriculum.	It reveals the deep structural roots of the curriculum dilemma: it clearly points out that the "dilemma of integrating two logics" is the institutional root cause of the systemic mismatch in the three links of objectives, teaching, and evaluation.
The lack of an operable path Framework	The existing solutions are mostly fragmented suggestions, lacking a Collaborative optimization framework that covers the entire course chain and is feasible.	A "four-in-one" curriculum development path framework was constructed, proposing a Systematic optimization scheme covering the entire chain from objectives to evaluation.

Discussion of Research Results

From the research result of the 1st objective, it was found that Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia universities exhibit a clear mismatch between current teaching practices and actual instructional needs across curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation. This mismatch is most evident in insufficient cultural contextualization, limited practical training opportunities, and weak curriculum systematization. This is because the transmission of Mongolian Long-tune is traditionally based on non-standardized, experience-driven, and context-dependent modes of "living inheritance," which are difficult to align with the standardized, outcome-oriented logic of university curricula. This finding is consistent with the concept and research work of Segura and Sekulova (2024), who argue that intangible cultural heritage education often encounters structural tension when embedded within formal institutional systems that prioritize standardization and measurability over lived cultural practice. More specifically, when Mongolian Long-tune is transformed from a lived cultural practice into a formal university subject, certain essential qualities may be weakened by rigid course structures and conventional grading mechanisms. Therefore, the curriculum dilemma identified in this study should be understood not only as a technical issue of course design, but also as a form of cultural tension between heritage logic and academic logic.

From the research result of the 2nd objective, it was found that effective development of Mongolian Long-tune courses requires a collaborative optimization pathway integrating curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation as a coherent system. This is because isolated or single-dimension curriculum adjustments cannot resolve the structural contradictions identified in the empirical findings, whereas system-level alignment enables cultural inheritance goals to be translated into operable teaching designs and evaluation mechanisms. This result is consistent with the curriculum development framework proposed by Ali and Jamin (2025), who emphasize that outcome-based curriculum design in higher education requires coordinated alignment among objectives, learning content, instructional strategies, and assessment methods to achieve sustainable and effective educational improvement. At the same time, the proposed dual-teacher model has particular practical significance, because it provides a possible institutional mechanism for bridging the gap between traditional artists and university-based teachers. Through collaborative teaching, traditional bearers can contribute contextualized performance knowledge and cultural memory, while university teachers can provide curricular organization, pedagogical structure, and assessment coordination. In this way, the model may help reduce the separation between living transmission and standardized teaching, thereby making curriculum reform more culturally grounded and educationally operable.

Conclusion

This study argues that the current predicament of Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolian universities stems from the lack of effective integration between intangible cultural heritage transmission methods and the modern higher education system. By integrating the consensus of the teaching staff, a systematic optimization path based on "goals-content-implementation-evaluation" is constructed, providing an overall framework and practical guidance for curriculum reform. This path not only addresses the current mismatch between curriculum current and need but also provides a replicable model for the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage courses within the higher education system. More importantly, the study indicates that curriculum reform in this field should move beyond purely standardized academic management and instead build a more balanced educational mechanism capable of responding to both cultural authenticity and institutional requirements.

Suggestions

From the results of the research, the researcher has the following suggestions:

1. The suggestions from the research

From the 1st objective, it was found that Mongolian Long-tune courses in Inner Mongolia universities exhibit a significant mismatch between current teaching practices and actual instructional needs, particularly in cultural contextualization, practical training, and curriculum systematization. Therefore, education authorities and university administrators should apply the findings by strengthening institutional support for intangible cultural heritage courses. Relevant institutes should incorporate Mongolian Long-tune courses into core or compulsory curriculum modules, provide policy and funding support for practice-based teaching activities, and encourage the integration of cultural context, history, and language into formal curriculum structures in order to reduce the gap between cultural inheritance goals and standardized higher education requirements.

From the 2nd objective, it was found that effective development of Mongolian Long-tune courses requires a collaborative optimization approach covering curriculum objectives, content, implementation, and evaluation. Therefore, universities and frontline teachers should apply this framework by translating cultural inheritance goals into operational teaching objectives, systematically organizing course content, embedding field research, stage performance, and dual-teacher classroom models into regular teaching, and adopting diversified, process-oriented evaluation methods. Music faculties and curriculum development units should use the proposed four-dimensional framework as a practical guideline to promote coherent and sustainable curriculum reform.

2. The suggestions for future research

2.1 Comparative studies across different regions or ethnic music courses to examine whether similar curriculum mismatches and optimization pathways exist in other intangible cultural heritage education contexts.

2.2 Longitudinal research to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed curriculum optimization framework after implementation, particularly in terms of student learning outcomes; cultural transmission impact; students' learning experiences and perceptions of cultural identity development.

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