

Pedagogy and Transmission of Mongolian Long Song in Higher Education: A Case Study of Inner Mongolia

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Abstract

This study investigates the pedagogy and transmission of Mongolian Long Song (Urtiin Duu) in higher education, focusing on three universities in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. Although inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Urtiin Duu faces challenges from globalization, urbanization, and the erosion of nomadic lifeways. Using cultural sustainability and constructivist learning as guiding theories, the research adopts a comparative case study approach. The CIPP evaluation model is applied to analyze institutional and contextual conditions, while the 4C/ID instructional design model is used to examine classroom practices. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observation, teacher documentation, course material analysis, and student artifacts, and analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding. Findings reveal that current teaching practices often prioritize technical reproduction over cultural meaning, creating disjunctions in student learning. However, culturally responsive workshops, peer collaboration, and tasks integrating ecological metaphors foster stronger cultural awareness and identity construction. The study concludes that sustainable transmission of Urtiin Duu in academia requires student centered pedagogy that balances technical mastery with cultural understanding, contributing to broader debates on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and advancing ethnic arts pedagogy in higher education.

Keywords: Urtiin Duu, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Sustainability, Constructivist Learning, Higher Education, CIPP Model, 4C/ID Instructional Design, Pedagogy

Introduction

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has become a critical concern in global academic and policy discourse, particularly since the adoption of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. While inscription on UNESCO's Representative List has increased the visibility of traditions such as Mongolian Long Song (Urtiin Duu), it has also generated tensions between preservation as symbolic recognition and transmission as lived practice. Urtiin Duu, renowned

for its expansive melodies, improvisational aesthetics, and ecological imagination, exemplifies this tension. Once embedded in nomadic lifeways and intergenerational oral transmission, the tradition is now primarily taught within higher education, where standardized curricula often emphasize technical proficiency at the expense of cultural meaning.

Existing scholarship highlights these dilemmas. Studies point to the limitations of “list logic” (Hafstein, 2009), the importance of cultural sustainability as a framework for vitality and continuity (Soini & Birkeland, 2014), and the potential of education to function as both a threat and an opportunity for ICH transmission (Smith & Akagawa, 2009). In Inner Mongolia, universities have emerged as the main institutional sites for Urtiin Duu pedagogy, yet the literature shows that students frequently struggle to internalize ecological metaphors, improvisatory practices, and cultural identity through formal instruction (Song, 2023; Dorjdagva, 2024).

This study addresses these gaps by examining how Urtiin Duu is taught, experienced, and reinterpreted in higher education. Three universities—Inner Mongolia Arts University, Inner Mongolia Normal University, and Bayannur Hetao University—were selected as comparative cases. Guided by cultural sustainability and constructivist learning theories, the research employs the CIPP model to analyze institutional and contextual factors and the 4C/ID model to assess classroom level pedagogy. The aim is twofold: first, to identify the challenges and opportunities of teaching Urtiin Duu in academic settings; and second, to propose pedagogical strategies that integrate technical skill with cultural meaning, thereby contributing to the sustainable safeguarding of Urtiin Duu.

By situating Urtiin Duu pedagogy at the intersection of heritage studies, cultural sustainability, and educational reform, this article contributes to both theoretical debates and practical strategies for transmitting intangible cultural heritage in higher education.

Literature Review

Safeguarding and Transmission

Since the UNESCO 2003 Convention, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has moved beyond static preservation toward frameworks emphasizing continuity and vitality. The concept of “safeguarding” was intended to foster enabling environments in which living traditions could thrive (Blake, 2009). However, scholars have criticized the overreliance on inscription mechanisms, noting the “list logic” by which heritage gains symbolic recognition but not necessarily community vitality (Hafstein, 2009). Kirshenblatt Gimblett (2004) further describes heritage as “metacultural production,” often reframed for external display rather than sustained within local practices.

For Urtiin Duu, UNESCO inscription in 2005 elevated its global visibility but also risked detaching it from everyday pastoral and communal contexts (Song, 2023). Initial projects emphasized staged performances and documentation, but these did little to address the lived experience of younger generations increasingly disconnected from nomadic lifeways. Scholars argue that safeguarding must therefore evolve into strategies of transmission, prioritizing intergenerational learning, active pedagogy, and contextual engagement (Smith & Akagawa, 2009). Transmission reframes heritage not as a static object but as an ongoing process negotiated through teaching and performance. In this view, safeguarding and

transmission are complementary: recognition provides resources, but vitality depends on how practices are embedded in education and community life.

Cultural Sustainability and Constructivist Learning

The framework of cultural sustainability offers a conceptual lens to evaluate how heritage can thrive within modern institutions. Soini and Birkeland (2014) propose cultural sustainability as a fourth pillar of sustainable development, alongside economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Core elements include vitality, diversity, intergenerational continuity, and the integration of cultural perspectives into governance and education. Throsby (2017) extends this by conceptualizing heritage as cultural capital requiring both conservation and renewal. Applied to Urtiin Duu, these perspectives highlight that sustainability involves not only technical preservation of vocal forms but also the continuity of ecological imagination, improvisatory aesthetics, and identity functions across generations (Dorjdagva, 2024).

Education is central to this process. As Meissner (2021) notes, embedding cultural sustainability into curricula enables learners to connect heritage with contemporary identities. For Urtiin Duu, this implies designing pedagogy that integrates technical mastery with ecological and cultural consciousness. Constructivist learning theory provides a compatible pedagogical foundation. Fosnot (2013) emphasizes that learners construct knowledge actively through experience, interaction, and reflection, rather than passively imitating instructors. In community contexts, Urtiin Duu historically relied on such processes: children learned by listening, imitating, and experimenting under the guidance of elders (Song, 2023). In higher education, constructivist pedagogy suggests that students should not only reproduce melodies but also engage with the cultural meanings encoded in lyrics and performance practices.

Constructivism also emphasizes scaffolding and learner identity. Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the Zone of Proximal Development illustrates how learners progress when guided through tasks slightly beyond their current competence. Applied to Urtiin Duu, scaffolding enables students to master demanding breathing techniques or improvisatory ornamentation while gradually internalizing cultural meaning. Moreover, culturally conscious pedagogy (Gay, 2010) situates identity formation at the center of education, ensuring that students encounter Urtiin Duu as a resource for cultural pride and intercultural understanding. This synergy between cultural sustainability and constructivist learning provides a theoretical foundation for rethinking Urtiin Duu pedagogy in higher education.

Urtiin Duu in Higher Education: Research Gaps

Existing literature on Urtiin Duu demonstrates both its historical depth and pedagogical challenges. Historically, Urtiin Duu emerged as an expansive vocal tradition tied to the ecology of the Mongolian steppe, where extended syllables and lyrical imagery embodied nomadic cosmology (Song, 2023). Aesthetically, its improvisatory qualities resist codification, complicating integration into standardized curricula (Dorjdagva, 2024). Acoustical analyses confirm its uniqueness, with extended vibrato and wide vocal ranges producing harmonic structures distinct from Western bel canto and Chinese folk singing (Hu, 2023). These studies affirm Urtiin Duu's significance as both cultural heritage and musical system.

In contemporary practice, however, transmission has shifted from community based learning to institutional frameworks. Universities in Inner Mongolia, including Inner Mongolia Arts University, Inner Mongolia Normal University, and Bayannur Hetao University, now serve as primary sites of instruction. Research shows that while these institutions provide resources and legitimacy, they also risk fragmenting holistic practices into modular skills—such as breathing drills, historical lectures, or technical ornamentation—detached from ecological and cultural meanings (Chahan & Suanmonta, 2024). Students often report difficulty relating Urtiin Duu to their lived experiences, particularly those from non Mongolian backgrounds (Song, 2023). Teachers frequently rely on imitation, limiting opportunities for creativity and reflection, and assessment systems privilege technical accuracy over improvisatory or cultural understanding.

Despite growing recognition of these challenges, empirical research on student learning experiences, identity formation, and culturally responsive pedagogy in Urtiin Duu higher education remains limited. Most studies focus either on historical origins or policy frameworks, leaving a gap in analyzing how institutional curricula and classroom practices affect learners. This study addresses that gap by examining Urtiin Duu pedagogy through the combined lens of cultural sustainability and constructivist learning, with attention to both institutional structures and student perspectives.

Methodology

This research is grounded in a qualitative comparative case study design which was chosen because the teaching and transmission of Urtiin Duu within higher education represent a complex and multi layered phenomenon that cannot be understood through quantitative indicators alone and therefore requires an in depth exploration of the cultural, institutional, and pedagogical contexts in which the tradition is embedded. The purpose of this methodological choice is to situate Urtiin Duu pedagogy not as an isolated practice of vocal training but as a culturally situated process shaped simultaneously by institutional mandates, heritage safeguarding policies, teacher agency, student identity, and broader discourses of cultural sustainability, and by adopting a comparative lens across three universities in Inner Mongolia the study is able to highlight both shared conditions and distinctive approaches that together illuminate the challenges and possibilities of sustaining this intangible cultural heritage within academia.

The research sites consist of Inner Mongolia Arts University, Inner Mongolia Normal University, and Bayannur Hetao University, each of which represents a critical locus for Urtiin Duu pedagogy, and each of which occupies a distinctive institutional niche within the region's higher education system. Inner Mongolia Arts University positions itself as the flagship institution for training professional artists and safeguarding Mongolian cultural heritage, emphasizing performance excellence and curriculum integration with national standards. Inner Mongolia Normal University prioritizes the training of teachers who will transmit cultural traditions to secondary schools and community institutions, therefore combining artistic training with pedagogical methodology. Bayannur Hetao University serves a more regional and community oriented mission, offering Urtiin Duu programs that emphasize accessibility, cultural participation, and links to local traditions. The selection of these universities thus allows for a comprehensive comparison across professional, pedagogical, and community oriented models of higher education transmission.

To analyze these cases systematically, two theoretical instruments were employed, namely the CIPP evaluation model and the Four Component Instructional Design model, both of which were adapted to the particular context of *Urtiin Duu* pedagogy. The CIPP model is used to examine the institutional and policy environment by considering context, which includes heritage safeguarding mandates, regional cultural policies, and institutional mission statements; input, which includes faculty expertise, resources, curricular frameworks, and community partnerships; process, which includes the methods of teaching, the structuring of classroom activities, and the interaction between teachers and students; and product, which includes the outcomes observed in student performance, cultural awareness, and identity formation. This model ensures that the study attends not only to what happens inside the classroom but also to the external and institutional factors that shape pedagogy. The 4C/ID model, on the other hand, provides a pedagogical lens through which the study can analyze the sequencing of tasks, the provision of supportive information, the degree of scaffolding, and the extent to which technical exercises are linked to cultural meaning. For example, learning tasks such as mastering vibrato, extended breathing, or ornamentation can be understood not only as technical drills but also as opportunities to scaffold cultural interpretation, while part task practice can be analyzed in terms of how effectively it connects isolated skills to holistic performance. By integrating these two models, the research is able to bridge macro level institutional analysis with micro level classroom practices.

Data collection was carried out during 2023 and 2024 and involved a multi pronged approach designed to capture a wide range of perspectives and materials. In depth interviews were conducted with thirty six participants, including fifteen faculty members, fifteen students, and six administrators, all of whom were selected based on their direct involvement in *Urtiin Duu* programs. Faculty members were asked about their pedagogical philosophy, their methods of teaching technical and cultural aspects, their experiences with curriculum design, and the challenges they face in balancing technical rigor with cultural transmission. Students were asked to reflect on their motivations for studying *Urtiin Duu*, the difficulties they encountered, their experiences of learning in classrooms and workshops, and the ways in which this learning shaped their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Administrators were asked about institutional policy, the role of *Urtiin Duu* within the university's mission, and the support available for heritage safeguarding.

In addition to interviews, eighteen classroom observations were conducted across different modules such as fundamental technique, repertoire interpretation, performance workshops, and history of Mongolian music. These observations provided insight into teaching strategies, the dynamics of teacher–student interaction, the degree of student participation, and the alignment or disjunction between stated curricular objectives and actual classroom practices. Detailed field notes were taken during each observation to record both verbal and non verbal aspects of pedagogy, including how teachers demonstrated techniques, how students responded, and how cultural meanings were explained or left implicit.

Teacher documentation was another important source of data, consisting of weekly teaching logs, reflective notes, and occasional self evaluations provided by faculty members. These documents revealed how teachers planned their lessons, reflected on student progress, and adjusted their strategies in response to challenges, thereby offering a longitudinal

perspective on pedagogy that was not always visible in individual classroom observations. Course materials were also collected and analyzed, including syllabi, lesson plans, PowerPoint slides, assessment rubrics, and annotated musical scores. These documents were particularly valuable for understanding the degree of formalization in the curriculum, the extent to which cultural references were integrated, and the logic of evaluation used to assess students. Finally, student artifacts were gathered, consisting of performance recordings, reflective essays, learning portfolios, and in some cases annotated transcriptions of repertoire. These artifacts provided a direct window into student learning outcomes, showing both technical development and cultural interpretation over time.

The analysis of this diverse body of data followed a grounded theory approach as outlined by Strauss and Corbin, which proceeded in three interconnected stages. Open coding involved breaking down the data into discrete concepts, such as technical mastery, cultural meaning, identity formation, and teacher imitation, which were noted repeatedly across interviews, observations, and documents. Axial coding involved reassembling these concepts into categories by identifying relationships and causal linkages, for instance connecting the emphasis on technical mastery with assessment rubrics or linking identity formation with participation in workshops and community events. Selective coding then synthesized these categories into overarching themes that structured the findings, such as the identification of pedagogical dissonance between technical replication and cultural meaning, the recognition of student cultural consciousness as both an outcome and a process of pedagogy, and the emergence of innovative strategies that sought to reconcile technical training with cultural vitality.

The process of analysis was iterative and reflexive, involving multiple rounds of coding and recoding, the use of NVivo software to manage and visualize data relationships, and constant comparison between cases to identify similarities and differences. This methodological rigor ensured both the credibility and the trustworthiness of the findings, which were further validated through triangulation across data sources and through member checking with a subset of interviewees who were asked to review preliminary interpretations.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. All participants were informed of the objectives of the study and signed consent forms prior to their involvement. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by assigning pseudonyms to participants and by removing identifying information from transcripts and field notes. The data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes. The research design was reviewed and approved by the University Malaysia Sabah, ensuring compliance with ethical standards of qualitative inquiry.

Although the comparative case study design provides rich contextual insight into Urtiin Duu pedagogy in three universities, its limitations must be acknowledged. The focus on a single region and on three institutions means that the findings cannot be generalized to all contexts of intangible cultural heritage education. The reliance on qualitative methods, while producing depth and nuance, also precludes statistical generalization. Nevertheless, the richness of the data and the integration of institutional, pedagogical, and student perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding that advances theoretical debates on

cultural sustainability and constructivist learning while offering practical insights for heritage safeguarding in higher education.

Findings and Discussion

Teaching Challenges

The findings of this study indicate that the teaching of Urtiin Duu in higher education institutions across Inner Mongolia encounters several persistent challenges that can be understood as a structural outcome of the tension between oral tradition and standardized curriculum because although universities such as Inner Mongolia Arts University, Inner Mongolia Normal University, and Bayannur Hetao University provide institutional platforms and resources that legitimize Urtiin Duu as an academic subject, the pedagogical logic through which it is delivered often fragments the tradition into discrete modules of technical training, historical explanation, and performance assessment, thereby undermining its holistic cultural nature. Teachers in these universities are often highly accomplished performers who have mastered the demanding vocal techniques of Urtiin Duu, yet many of them lack formal pedagogical training, which results in a reliance on imitation as the dominant method of instruction, where students are expected to reproduce their teacher's rendition with technical accuracy rather than to interpret the repertoire creatively or engage with its ecological and philosophical meanings. This reliance on imitation conflicts with the principles of constructivist learning, which emphasize that students should construct knowledge through interaction, reflection, and active engagement, and it also contradicts the objectives of cultural sustainability, which stress vitality, diversity, and intergenerational continuity rather than rigid replication. Another critical challenge lies in the assessment systems of higher education, which are designed around measurable criteria such as pitch accuracy, vocal range, and breath control, but are poorly suited to evaluate improvisation, ecological metaphors, or identity formation, all of which are intrinsic to the cultural depth of Urtiin Duu. Consequently, students who excel in reproducing technical elements may still graduate without having internalized the cultural essence of the tradition, and this reveals a pedagogical dissonance in which institutional frameworks that aim to safeguard Urtiin Duu simultaneously risk hollowing out its cultural vitality.

Student Experiences

Analysis of student perspectives reveals that the learner experience of Urtiin Duu in higher education is shaped by a dual dynamic of cultural pride and alienation, because while Mongolian students often describe their engagement with Urtiin Duu as a means of reconnecting with their ethnic identity and heritage, they also express frustration that institutionalized teaching methods strip the practice of its improvisatory spirit and ecological resonance, turning what was once an immersive cultural experience into an academic requirement. For many of these students, the act of singing Urtiin Duu evokes memories of family traditions and pastoral environments, yet in the classroom the focus on technique and standardized repertoire often prevents them from exploring these personal and cultural connections, resulting in a sense of disjunction between cultural memory and academic performance. Non-Mongolian students, by contrast, often approach Urtiin Duu with curiosity but also with difficulty, reporting that while they appreciate the uniqueness of its vocal style, they struggle to grasp its ecological metaphors, its spiritual imagery, and its improvisatory ethos, all of which feel distant from their own lived experiences. The gap between cultural insiders and outsiders highlights the limitations of pedagogy that treats Urtiin Duu primarily

as a technical skill rather than as a cultural practice, because students are not provided with adequate opportunities to interpret lyrics, engage in cultural dialogue, or reflect on how the tradition relates to their identity and worldview. At the same time, there is evidence that when teaching incorporates workshops, collaborative singing, and discussions of ecological and cultural meanings, students report higher levels of engagement, stronger motivation, and deeper cultural awareness, suggesting that learner centered and culturally responsive approaches have the potential to transform the educational experience from one of alienation to one of identity formation and intercultural understanding.

Innovative Strategies

Despite these challenges, the research also identifies several innovative strategies that point toward more sustainable forms of Urtiin Duu pedagogy in higher education, and these strategies can be seen as attempts to reconcile the demands of academic curricula with the cultural vitality of oral traditions. One promising approach involves the design of culturally tailored workshops where technical training is embedded within cultural contexts, so that exercises in breathing or ornamentation are linked to ecological imagery such as the wind across the steppe or the movement of horses, thereby enabling students to understand technique as an expression of cultural philosophy rather than as an isolated skill. Another approach emphasizes peer learning, where students are encouraged to sing collaboratively, reflect on each other's performances, and experiment with improvisation, which not only develops technical confidence but also fosters a sense of shared cultural ownership and identity construction. Furthermore, some programs have begun integrating ecological creativity into educational tasks, asking students to create new lyrics or variations inspired by environmental themes, which allows them to reinterpret Urtiin Duu in ways that are meaningful to contemporary life while still grounded in tradition. These strategies align closely with constructivist principles of active, experiential, and contextualized learning, and they also resonate with the framework of cultural sustainability, which emphasizes adaptability, diversity, and intergenerational continuity. However, their implementation remains uneven, constrained by rigid syllabi, standardized assessment systems, and limited institutional recognition of cultural outcomes, which means that while innovative pedagogies demonstrate potential, they require structural support at the level of curriculum design and educational policy in order to become sustainable. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the future of Urtiin Duu in higher education depends on whether institutions can move beyond replication of technical form to embrace pedagogical practices that integrate technical mastery with cultural meaning, thereby fostering both individual creativity and collective cultural continuity.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this study demonstrate that the pedagogy of Urtiin Duu in higher education in Inner Mongolia embodies a field of contradictions in which institutional efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage coexist with practices that risk fragmenting or hollowing out the cultural vitality of the tradition, and this contradiction reveals that safeguarding cannot be understood as a matter of technical preservation or formal inscription alone but must instead be theorized and practiced as a dynamic and continuous process of transmission that integrates technical mastery with cultural meaning, academic legitimacy with community vitality, and student centered learning with institutional frameworks. By adopting cultural sustainability and constructivist learning as guiding theories, and by

applying the CIPP model alongside the Four Component Instructional Design model, this research has argued that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage requires a pedagogical paradigm shift, one that treats heritage not as a static object for conservation but as a living practice that must be taught, learned, and reinterpreted in ways that are meaningful to contemporary students and communities.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on intangible cultural heritage by advancing the argument that cultural sustainability provides a more comprehensive and operationalizable lens than conventional safeguarding discourse, because it places emphasis on vitality, adaptability, diversity, and intergenerational continuity, and when combined with constructivist learning theory it becomes possible to conceptualize the transmission of heritage as a process in which students actively construct cultural knowledge through participation, reflection, and identity formation rather than passively imitating the performances of their teachers. This theoretical integration fills an important gap in heritage studies, which has often been polarized between policy level discussions of safeguarding mechanisms and ethnographic descriptions of community practices without sufficient attention to the pedagogical processes through which heritage is transmitted in modern institutions. By demonstrating how educational theories can be mobilized to analyze heritage pedagogy, the study also contributes to a methodological expansion of ICH research, showing that models originally developed for program evaluation and instructional design can be fruitfully adapted to examine the micro dynamics of teaching and learning in traditional arts.

From a practical perspective, the study identifies several implications for higher education institutions that aim to safeguard intangible cultural heritage while fulfilling their academic missions. The findings suggest that curriculum design must move beyond the narrow replication of technical forms and instead embed cultural meaning into learning tasks, for example by linking breathing techniques or vocal ornamentation to ecological imagery and cultural narratives, thereby enabling students to experience technique not as a detached exercise but as an embodied expression of cultural philosophy. The study also underscores the importance of peer learning and collaborative workshops, which allow students to exchange interpretations, build confidence through mutual support, and cultivate a sense of shared ownership that enhances both technical proficiency and cultural consciousness. Moreover, the incorporation of ecological creativity into assignments—such as composing new lyrics inspired by environmental themes or adapting repertoire for contemporary contexts—demonstrates how heritage can be revitalized as a living practice that speaks to present day concerns while remaining grounded in tradition.

At the level of teacher training, the findings imply that universities must invest not only in recruiting accomplished performers but also in equipping them with pedagogical skills that enable them to guide students through constructivist learning processes. Teachers should be encouraged to move beyond imitation as a method of instruction and instead adopt strategies that scaffold learning, facilitate reflection, and integrate cultural discussion into technical training. Professional development programs, perhaps offered in collaboration with teacher training faculties or cultural organizations, could provide workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy, student centered learning, and the integration of heritage into interdisciplinary

curricula. Such initiatives would not only enhance teaching quality but also ensure that Urtiin Duu is transmitted in ways that resonate with students' identities and lived experiences.

At the level of institutional policy, the study calls for reforms in assessment systems, which currently privilege measurable technical outcomes such as pitch accuracy or vocal range at the expense of less tangible but equally critical outcomes such as improvisatory creativity, cultural interpretation, and identity construction. Universities should design assessment criteria that balance technical proficiency with cultural understanding, perhaps by including reflective essays, collaborative projects, or community based performances alongside traditional examinations. In addition, institutions should strengthen their partnerships with local communities, inviting culture bearers, tradition holders, and community performers into classrooms to create spaces of intergenerational learning that reconnect students with the living contexts of Urtiin Duu. Such initiatives would align academic pedagogy with the principles of cultural sustainability, ensuring that higher education serves as a bridge rather than a barrier between heritage and contemporary society.

At the level of cultural policy, the findings suggest that heritage safeguarding frameworks must expand their focus from recognition and documentation to transmission and pedagogy. Governments and cultural agencies should support universities not only by funding research and performances but also by incentivizing innovative pedagogical practices that integrate cultural sustainability into curricula. This may include grants for community university collaborations, scholarships for students engaged in heritage research, or the establishment of regional centers for heritage pedagogy that bring together scholars, teachers, students, and community practitioners. By embedding cultural sustainability into educational policy, governments can ensure that safeguarding is not confined to symbolic recognition but translated into sustainable practices of teaching and learning.

Finally, the study highlights several directions for future research. While the present analysis focused on three universities in Inner Mongolia, future studies could expand the comparative scope by examining Urtiin Duu pedagogy in other contexts such as conservatories in Beijing, cultural institutions in Mongolia, or diaspora communities abroad, thereby generating cross regional perspectives on how the tradition adapts to different institutional and cultural environments. Comparative research on other intangible cultural heritage traditions in higher education, such as Chinese kunqu opera, Tibetan chanting, or Kazakh dombyra performance, could further illuminate the broader challenges and possibilities of integrating oral traditions into standardized curricula. Moreover, future studies could combine qualitative and quantitative methods, using surveys or longitudinal tracking to complement ethnographic insights, and could explore the impact of digital technologies, online learning platforms, and virtual archives on the transmission of intangible cultural heritage in academic contexts.

In conclusion, the sustainable safeguarding of Urtiin Duu in higher education depends on the capacity of universities, teachers, and policymakers to move beyond narrow frameworks of technical replication and to embrace pedagogical strategies that integrate technical mastery with cultural meaning, that treat students as active constructors of knowledge and identity, and that position heritage as a dynamic resource for cultural sustainability in a rapidly changing world. By situating Urtiin Duu pedagogy at the intersection of heritage

studies, educational reform, and cultural sustainability, this study not only contributes to theoretical debates but also offers practical guidance for institutions seeking to harmonize the demands of academic curricula with the vitality of living traditions, and in doing so it affirms that intangible cultural heritage can thrive in higher education when pedagogy is designed to nurture both technical excellence and cultural consciousness, thereby ensuring that heritage remains meaningful, adaptable, and alive for future generations.

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