

Curriculum Management Strategies of Summer Social Practice Courses for University Students in Guangxi Based on the Concept of Social Innovation Skills in Guilin Tourism University

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Abstract

This research aimed to: (1) study the current and desirable conditions of curriculum management of summer social practice courses based on the concept of social innovation skills at Guilin Tourism University; (2) develop curriculum management strategies for these courses; and (3) evaluate the developed strategies. A multiphase mixed-methods design was implemented. In Phase I, 316 students were selected by simple random sampling from a population of 1,500 students who had participated in summer social practice courses. A questionnaire measured Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation while integrating seven social innovation skills. In Phase II, seven experts participated in a focus group discussion; content analysis, SWOT analysis, and the TOWS Matrix were used to formulate strategies. In Phase III, five experts independently evaluated the first draft, after which seven experts validated the revised draft in a second focus group. The current condition of curriculum management was moderate ($M = 3.249$), whereas the desirable condition was high ($M = 4.162$). Three strategies and six sub-strategies were developed: transforming Curriculum Evaluation, redesigning Curriculum Goals, and optimizing the Curriculum Process to develop students' social innovation skills. In the final evaluation, overall suitability was very high ($M = 4.62$, $S.D. = 0.49$),

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and overall feasibility was high ($M = 4.50$, $S.D. = 0.55$). The results support a context-specific, evidence-informed framework for aligning goals, learning processes, and evaluation in summer social practice courses.

Keywords: Curriculum Management, Social Innovation Skills, Summer Social Practice

Introduction

Chinese higher education increasingly emphasizes the integration of theoretical learning, practical ability, and social needs. Social practice provides an important context in which university students can connect disciplinary knowledge with real-world social issues. However, participation in social practice alone does not necessarily produce meaningful learning outcomes; its effectiveness depends on systematic instructional design, appropriate implementation processes, and coherent evaluation mechanisms (Tan et al., 2021). For application-oriented universities, curriculum reform should also strengthen the connection between course content and authentic practical contexts in order to improve students' practical and problem-solving abilities (Shi & Yu, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to develop systematic curriculum management strategies for summer social practice courses rather than treating them as isolated extracurricular activities.

Social innovation in higher education involves developing and applying new responses to social needs through collaboration, problem solving, and community engagement. Recent scholarship emphasizes that universities can strengthen social innovation through purposeful partnerships and learning activities that connect individuals, organizations, and communities (McDonnell-Naughton & Păunescu, 2022; Dryjanska et al., 2022; Burke et al., 2024). These principles are especially relevant to practice-based courses, where students must interpret real needs, work with stakeholders, adapt under uncertainty, and reflect on the social value of their actions.

Guilin Tourism University provides a relevant institutional setting because its disciplinary strengths are closely connected to Guangxi's cultural tourism, rural revitalization, and cultural heritage contexts. The university has organized summer

social practice activities such as cultural-revitalization fieldwork and 'language + culture' support teaching in Ziyuan County. According to the participation records provided by the Communist Youth League Committee of Guilin Tourism University, 1,500 students participated in university-organized summer social practice activities associated with the summer social practice courses from 2023 to 2025, indicating that these activities operated at a substantial scale. Nevertheless, prior to this study, the current and desirable conditions of the courses had not been systematically examined through the linked dimensions of Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation with explicit attention to social innovation skills. This local evidence defines the empirical problem addressed by the study.

Operationally, curriculum management refers to the coordinated design and administration of Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation in summer social practice courses. Summer social practice courses refer to university-organized, practice-based learning conducted during the summer period and connected to community or social settings. Social innovation skills refer to seven measurable competencies embedded across the three curriculum-management dimensions: creativity, dealing with ambiguity, motivating others, interpersonal savvy, perspective, listening, and dealing with paradox (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2016). The study therefore examines not a general annual curriculum, but specifically the management of summer social practice courses at Guilin Tourism University.

Research Objectives

1. To study the current and desirable conditions of curriculum management of summer social practice courses based on the concept of social innovation skills at Guilin Tourism University.

2. To develop curriculum management strategies for summer social practice courses based on the concept of social innovation skills at Guilin Tourism University.

3. To evaluate the curriculum management strategies for summer social practice courses based on the concept of social innovation skills at Guilin Tourism University.

Expected Benefits of the Research

The findings provide Guilin Tourism University with an evidence-based basis for aligning Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation with students' social innovation skills. The developed strategies may guide administrators, teachers, and community partners in improving the management and implementation of summer social practice courses.

Research Methods

1. Population and Sample

The population consisted of 1,500 Guilin Tourism University students who participated in university-organized summer social practice activities associated with the summer social practice courses from 2023 to 2025, according to the participation records provided by the Communist Youth League Committee of Guilin Tourism University. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's formula, $n = N/[1+N(e^2)]$, with a margin of error of 0.05: $n = 1500/[1+1500(0.05^2)] = 315.79$. Therefore, the final sample size was rounded to 316 students. Simple random sampling was employed to give each eligible student an equal probability of selection (Yamane, 1973).

2. Participants in Strategy Development and Evaluation

Seven experts were purposively selected for Phase II and the second-round validation: three scholars in educational management, two Guilin Tourism University teachers with educational-management experience, and two university administrators. Five experts independently evaluated the first strategy draft. Selection was based on relevant postgraduate qualifications and documented professional experience in curriculum and teaching, educational management, tourism education, student affairs, or practice education. The panels included experts with doctoral or master's

degrees and academic or administrative appointments such as professor, associate professor, lecturer, dean, deputy dean, university teacher, and university administrator. All experts had at least five years of relevant professional experience in curriculum and teaching, educational management, tourism education, student affairs, or practice education.

3. Research Instruments and Quality

The questionnaire contained demographic items and five-point Likert-scale items measuring the current and desirable conditions of Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation. Each dimension incorporated creativity, dealing with ambiguity, motivating others, interpersonal savvy, perspective, listening, and dealing with paradox. Three experts assessed the content validity of the questionnaire using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The IOC values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00. According to Rovinelli and Hambleton (1977), an IOC value of 0.50 or above indicates acceptable congruence between an item and its intended objective. Therefore, all questionnaire items met the established criterion and were retained.

Reliability was assessed using the 316 valid responses collected from the formal survey. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.974 for Curriculum Goal, 0.987 for Curriculum Process, 0.984 for Curriculum Evaluation, and 0.994 for the overall questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or above are generally considered to indicate acceptable internal consistency (Hair et al., 2022). Therefore, the questionnaire and all three dimensions demonstrated very high internal consistency.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The first focus group discussion involving seven experts was conducted face-to-face, recorded, and fully transcribed. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. Expert statements were categorized into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT results were subsequently matched using the TOWS Matrix (Wehrich, 1982) to formulate the initial strategies. During the evaluation phase, five experts independently evaluated the first draft online in terms of

suitability and feasibility. Based on their ratings and recommendations, the strategies were revised. The revised strategies were then evaluated and validated by seven experts through a second-round online focus group discussion in terms of suitability and feasibility.

Research Results

Objective 1: Current and Desirable Conditions

All three curriculum-management dimensions showed the same pattern: moderate current conditions and high desirable conditions. The overall current mean was 3.249, compared with a desirable mean of 4.162 (Table 1).

Table 1 Survey Results on Current and Desirable Conditions of Curriculum Management (n = 316)

Dimension	Current $\bar{x}$	Current S.D.	Level	Desirable $\bar{x}$	Desirable S.D.	Level
1. Curriculum Goal	3.244	0.967	Moderate	4.166	0.657	High
2. Curriculum Process	3.257	0.959	Moderate	4.164	0.669	High
3. Curriculum Evaluation	3.246	0.955	Moderate	4.156	0.662	High
Overall	3.249	0.954	Moderate	4.162	0.659	High

At item level, the findings showed a need to strengthen how creativity and dealing with ambiguity are cultivated across course components, while students also expected more diversified, process-oriented evaluation of competencies such as listening and dealing with paradox. The results indicate that the university has an existing management foundation, but that goals, learning arrangements, and evaluation require stronger alignment with social innovation skills.

Objective 2: Strategy Development

The focus group identified internal strengths in organized teaching arrangements, an established management framework, tourism-related practical

resources, and broad student participation. Weaknesses centered on insufficient integration of social innovation skills into curriculum goals and evaluation, limited formative assessment, and uneven development of creativity and ambiguity-management skills. Opportunities included supportive policy, rural revitalization contexts, sociocultural resources, and digital platforms; threats included funding constraints, teacher workload, policy uncertainty, and implementation demands. SWOT findings were matched through the TOWS Matrix to develop three strategies and six sub-strategies (Table 2).

Table 2 Final Curriculum Management Strategies Based on Social Innovation Skills

Strategy	Sub-strategy	Main measures
1. Transform Curriculum Evaluation to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	1.1 Establish social innovation-oriented evaluation criteria	Develop standards; establish an evaluation committee; provide training; use results for continuous improvement.
	1.2 Implement diversified assessment methods	Use self-, peer-, teacher-, portfolio-, and digital assessment.
2. Redesign Curriculum Goals to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	2.1 Integrate social innovation skills into curriculum objectives	Revise objectives; specify skill indicators; strengthen alignment.
	2.2 Improve learning experience design	Design practice activities emphasizing creativity, perspective, listening, and problem solving.

Strategy	Sub-strategy	Main measures
3. Optimize Curriculum Process to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	3.1 Develop social innovation learning activities	Use project-based, problem-based, and experiential learning.
	3.2 Strengthen diversified teaching approaches	Build teacher capacity; promote collaborative teaching; integrate community resources.

Objective 3: Strategy Evaluation

Five experts first evaluated the draft strategies. Overall suitability was high ($M = 4.48$, $S.D. = 0.45$), and overall feasibility was high ($M = 4.37$, $S.D. = 0.46$). After revision, seven experts conducted a second-round focus group evaluation. Final suitability was very high ($M = 4.62$, $S.D. = 0.49$), and feasibility was high ($M = 4.50$, $S.D. = 0.55$). (Table 3)

Table 3 Second-Round Evaluation of Final Strategies ($n = 7$)

Strategies and Sub-strategies	Suitability $\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Feasibility $\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Strategy 1: Transform Curriculum Evaluation to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	4.50	0.52	High	4.29	0.61	High
1.1 Establish social innovation-oriented evaluation criteria	4.57	0.53	Very High	4.43	0.53	High
1.2 Implement diversified assessment methods	4.43	0.53	High	4.14	0.69	High
Strategy 2: Redesign Curriculum Goals to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	4.64	0.50	Very High	4.57	0.51	Very High
2.1 Integrate social innovation skills into curriculum objectives	4.71	0.49	Very High	4.57	0.53	Very High
2.2 Improve learning experience design	4.57	0.53	Very High	4.57	0.53	Very High

Strategies and Sub-strategies	Suitability $\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Feasibility $\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Strategy 3: Optimize Curriculum Process to Develop Students' Social Innovation Skills	4.71	0.47	Very High	4.64	0.50	Very High
3.1 Develop social innovation learning activities	4.71	0.49	Very High	4.71	0.49	Very High
3.2 Strengthen diversified teaching approaches	4.71	0.49	Very High	4.57	0.53	Very High
Overall	4.62	0.49	Very High	4.50	0.55	High

Research Discussion

Discussion of Objective 1

The study found moderate current conditions but high desirable conditions across Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation. A plausible mechanism is that the university already has organized summer practice activities, yet competency-oriented alignment has not been fully translated into explicit goals, intentionally sequenced learning experiences, and evaluation evidence. This interpretation agrees with recent higher education research emphasizing that social innovation is strengthened when curricula connect disciplinary learning, community needs, collaboration, and reflection rather than treating engagement as an isolated activity (McDonnell-Naughton & Păunescu, 2022; Dryjanska et al., 2022). The practical implication is that improvement should begin with alignment across all three management dimensions instead of adding stand-alone activities.

The item-level need to strengthen creativity and dealing with ambiguity is also understandable because summer social practice exposes students to open-ended community conditions that cannot be addressed through fixed classroom routines. Dryjanska et al. (2022) identify creativity, problem solving, communication, and learning by doing as recurring features of higher education practices for social innovation. In the present institutional context, these competencies require

structured opportunities to define problems, test responses, receive feedback, and revise solutions. Teachers should therefore design iterative projects and reflection tasks rather than rely only on participation and final reports.

Discussion of Objective 2

The three developed strategies connect evaluation transformation, goal redesign, and process optimization in a continuous management cycle. Their development from survey evidence, expert discussion, SWOT analysis, and TOWS matching explains why the framework is context-specific rather than a generic list of good practices. The framework agrees with Burke et al. (2024), who show that university social innovation depends on coordinated engagement among individuals, organizations, and communities. It also extends that logic into curriculum management by specifying where competencies should appear: in intended outcomes, learning arrangements, and assessment evidence. Practically, administrators should implement the six sub-strategies as an integrated system, while retaining the study's fixed dimensions of Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation for monitoring.

Discussion of Objective 3

The final curriculum management strategies received a very high level of suitability ($M = 4.62$, $S.D. = 0.49$) and a high level of feasibility ($M = 4.50$, $S.D. = 0.55$). These findings may be explained by the two-stage evaluation process. Five experts first independently evaluated the initial draft, after which the strategies were revised according to their ratings and recommendations. The revised strategies were subsequently validated by seven experts through a second-round focus group discussion. This finding is consistent with Hallström et al. (2023), whose multi-round expert consultation achieved a high level of consensus on educational principles with implications for curriculum design. It also agrees with Oxley et al. (2025), who demonstrated that iterative expert consultation can facilitate consensus building and the refinement of priorities in educational research. However, both previous studies employed the Delphi method, whereas the present study combined independent

expert evaluation with focus group validation in the specific context of curriculum management at Guilin Tourism University. The comparatively lower feasibility rating for curriculum evaluation transformation suggests that establishing new evaluation standards, training evaluators, involving multiple stakeholders, and implementing continuous improvement procedures may require greater institutional coordination. Therefore, the university should implement the strategies in stages, clearly assign responsibilities, provide professional development for teachers and evaluators, and regularly monitor implementation evidence before expanding the strategies across courses.

Limitations

The study was conducted at one application-oriented university and used student perceptions to describe current and desirable conditions; therefore, the findings should not be generalized to all universities in Guangxi without further evidence. The expert panels were small and purposively selected, as appropriate for strategy development, but their judgments may not represent all stakeholder groups. The study evaluated the suitability and feasibility of the proposed strategies rather than their post-implementation effects. Longitudinal and comparative studies are required to test changes in student competencies and course outcomes after implementation.

New Knowledge

The new contribution is not the seven skill dimensions themselves. It is the empirically derived management pathway that embeds those skills across three mutually reinforcing curriculum functions in a specific summer social practice context. Survey evidence identifies the management gaps; expert and SWOT-TOWS analysis translates those gaps into strategic choices; and two-stage evaluation refines the choices into three strategies and six implementable sub-strategies. The resulting knowledge is a traceable sequence from diagnosed condition to strategic response

and expert validation, centered on alignment among Curriculum Goal, Curriculum Process, and Curriculum Evaluation.

Research Suggestions

The research achieved its three objectives. Current curriculum-management conditions were moderate and desirable conditions were high. Three strategies and six sub-strategies were developed, and the final expert evaluation indicated that their suitability was rated at a very high level and their feasibility at a high level.. The university should revise course objectives to specify social innovation outcomes, design project-based and community-connected learning experiences, and establish diversified formative and summative assessment. Implementation should include clear responsibility, teacher development, community participation, digital evidence collection, and periodic review. Future research should evaluate implementation outcomes, examine changes in creativity and ambiguity management, and compare the framework across institutions and over time.

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