

A Comparative analysis of school psychology practice in Mongolia and China: Alignment with the NASP 2020 professional standards

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Abstract- School psychological services play a critical role in promoting educational equity and supporting student mental health. Although Mongolia introduced 22 legal mandates for school psychologists in 2021, their alignment with international benchmarks—particularly the NASP 2020 Practice Model—has not yet been systematically evaluated. This study applies a functional mapping methodology to comparatively analyze school psychology frameworks in Mongolia and China. National mandates were systematically mapped against the 10 domains and 92 practice indicators of the NASP 2020 model to assess structural alignment and identify professional gaps. The results indicate that Mongolia's mandates exhibit approximately 90% alignment at the macro-domain level; however, notable micro-level imbalances persist. Significant professional voids were identified in Legal–Ethical Practice (Domain 10) and Data-Based Decision-Making (Domain 1), while relative strengths were observed in family–school–community collaboration (Domains 7 and 8). To address these disparities, a phased “22+8+10” operational mapping strategy is proposed, outlining an expansion toward 40 core professional functions by 2030. This operational mapping provides a feasible pathway for Mongolia to achieve parity with international standards while strengthening context-specific practices.

Keywords: School psychologist, NASP 2020, Functional mapping, Comparative policy analysis, Professional standards

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid rapid global social transformation and the escalating prevalence of complex mental health challenges—including chronic stress, anxiety, and depression—the demand for professional psychological services within educational settings has reached unprecedented levels. Within this modern context, school psychologists have emerged as vital catalysts for supporting student well-being, addressing critical child protection concerns, and mediating the increasingly complex family–school–community triad. International frameworks, notably those developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, explicitly recognize mental health as a fundamental pillar of educational quality and overall quality of life. These global shifts underscore a critical necessity: national school psychology practices must transition from localized, ad-hoc activities toward rigorous alignment with internationally recognized professional standards.

Despite a global convergence toward standardized practice, the implementation of school psychology remains highly sensitive to regional policy and cultural contexts. In the Asian landscape, China serves as a prominent example of rapid expansion driven by strong state policy support, yet it continues to face significant hurdles in defining professional roles and establishing unified frameworks. Current global trajectories, as emphasized by MacKay [1] and Stobie [2], suggest that modern school psychology must adopt an integrated, interdisciplinary approach, heavily grounded in neuropsychological foundations, to provide truly comprehensive services.

In Mongolia, the field is undergoing a similarly rapid transformation within the broader scope of national educational reforms. Historically rooted in pedagogical and developmental psychology, Mongolian school psychological services have traditionally focused on academic and cognitive development [3]. Although the professional role of school psychologists was formally institutionalized through legal mandates in 2021, the persistent absence of comprehensive professional standards continues to limit the effectiveness and consistency of practice [4]. Currently, there is a significant lack of empirical research evaluating how Mongolia's 22 mandated professional functions align with the NASP 2020 Practice Model—the international “gold standard” for the profession.

1.1 Purpose

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a systematic comparative analysis of school psychology frameworks in Mongolia and China, utilizing the NASP 2020 Practice Model as a standardized evaluative benchmark. By mapping national mandates against 92 specific practice indicators across 10 domains, the study seeks to identify structural alignments and professional “voids.” Furthermore, this research aims to propose a '22+8+10' operational mapping strategy to guide the institutional maturation of Mongolian school psychology services through 2030, ensuring parity with global excellence.

1.2 Research design

This study employs a qualitative comparative policy analysis integrated with a quantitative functional mapping methodology. The research design follows a three-stage process:

- Documentary Analysis: Systematic review of national regulatory frameworks in Mongolia (Decree A/476) and China.
- Functional Mapping: Semantic cross-examination of national mandates against the 92 indicators of the NASP 2020 Practice Model.
- Strategic Synthesis: Development of a phased operational mapping framework based on the identified implementation barriers and professional gaps. This indicator-based assessment moves beyond descriptive analysis toward a systematic evaluation of professional alignment with international best practices.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

School psychology is defined as an interdisciplinary profession that synthesizes psychological theory, empirical research, and applied clinical practice to enhance the educational experience. Its historical lineage can be traced to early European experimental psychology, influenced by the psychometric traditions of Wundt, Galton, and Binet, while its formalized professionalization was solidified in the United States during the early 20th century [5]. According to Oakland and Jimerson [6], the development of school psychological services globally is contingent upon four key pillars: societal demand, a rigorous scientific base, formalized training systems, and a regulated, qualified workforce.

The maturity of these services is profoundly conditioned by governance structures and cultural norms. School psychological services are well-established in nations with universal education and advanced human service infrastructures, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States. However, literature consistently demonstrates that educational advancement alone does not guarantee service effectiveness. Governance models—centralized versus decentralized—strongly dictate service trajectory [6]. Centralized systems, like those in Mongolia and China, offer policy coherence but may inadvertently limit professional autonomy.

In the Chinese context, the field has grown rapidly since the early 2000s under state support; however, this expansion has often outpaced professional standardization [7]. A recurring concern is “role diffusion,” where psychologists are positioned as auxiliary personnel for moral education rather than independent practitioners. Unlike Western systems guided by unified standards like the NASP framework and formal ethical regulations, the absence of such mechanisms in emerging systems introduces risks of role overload and burnout [7; 8].

Furthermore, the effectiveness of services is linked to structural indicators like the psychologist-to-student ratio [9]. The NASP 2020 Professional Standards represent a paradigm shift from traditional, individual counseling toward a system-level framework based on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). MTSS operates as a comprehensive framework that provides a continuum of evidence-based, systemic services across three distinct levels of intensity: Tier 1 (universal support for all students), Tier 2 (targeted interventions for at-risk groups), and Tier 3 (intensive,

individualized support). By utilizing data-based decision-making within this structure, school psychologists can proactively address both academic and mental health needs before they escalate into more significant crises. This model integrates neuropsychological and systemic approaches across ten domains:

1. Data-Based Decision-Making
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Academic Interventions
4. Mental and Behavioral Health Services
5. School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning
6. Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools
7. Family, School, and Community Collaboration
8. Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations
9. Research and Evidence-Based Practice
10. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

This framework serves as the theoretical lens through which the current study evaluates the institutionalization of school psychology in Mongolia, addressing the gap between fragmented national practices and international "gold standards" [10].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative policy analysis to examine the professional roles and functions of school psychologists in Mongolia and China. The analysis evaluates national mandates against international benchmarks to identify systemic alignments and discrepancies. The selection of functional mapping as a primary methodology is justified by its efficacy in systematically aligning local professional mandates with international competency frameworks, a process previously validated in regional contexts to identify gaps between policy expectations and practical implementation [11].

1) Data Sources and Document Analysis

The primary data were derived from the following official regulatory documents.

- Mongolia (MON): The "General Requirements for Educational Psychologists in General Education Schools," approved by Ministerial Decree A/476 (2021) of the Ministry of Education and Science, which outlines 22 core professional functions.
- China (CHN): The Ministry of Education's "Guidelines for Psychological Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools" and the "Guidelines for Psychological Health Education in Primary and Secondary Schools" (2012) [12] issued by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China.
- International Benchmark: The NASP 2020 Practice Model, comprising 10 domains and 92 detailed practice indicators, served as the evaluative framework for this study (see Table 1).

Table 1. The NASP 2020 domains of professional practice

№	Domain of Practice	Description
1	Data-based decision making	Use of varied models and methods of assessment and data collection for identifying strengths and needs, developing effective services, and measuring outcomes.
2	Consultation and collaboration	Knowledge of varied models and strategies of consultation and collaboration applicable to individuals, families, groups, and systems.
3	Academic interventions and instructional support	Implementation of evidence-based strategies to promote cognitive and academic skills and to enhance student learning and engagement.
4	Mental and behavioral health services	Provision of evidence-based strategies to promote social-emotional functioning, mental health, and resilience, and to reduce behavioral risks.
5	School-wide practices to promote learning	Development and implementation of school-wide policies and programs that promote a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.
6	Services to promote safe and supportive schools	Expertise in crisis intervention, preventive practices, and social-emotional learning to ensure school safety and student well-being.
7	Family, school, and community collaboration	Promotion of effective family-school partnerships and community involvement to enhance outcomes for students.
8	Equitable practices for diverse student populations	Recognition and respect for individual and cultural diversity to ensure equitable access to services and support for all students.
9	Research and evidence-based practice	Evaluation of research and the translation of findings into professional practice to improve service efficacy and professional accountability.
10	Legal, ethical, and professional practices	Adherence to legal requirements, ethical standards, and professional principles in all aspects of psychological service delivery.

Table 1 outlines the 10 domains of the NASP 2020 Practice Model used as the analytical framework to cross-examine national standards.

2) Coding process and activity mapping

To ensure a systematic comparison of research units, a comprehensive coding system was developed.

- NASP 2020 Indicators: 92 separate practice activities were coded from DMN 1.1 to DMN 10.13.
- Mongolian Mandates: 22 national professional functions were coded from MON 1.1 to MON 4.6.
- Chinese Mandates: 14 operational guidelines were coded from CHN 1.1 to CHN 6.2.

3) Correlation matrix and statistical analysis

To determine the degree of alignment between national practices and international standards, a correlation matrix was constructed using Microsoft Excel. To ensure methodological rigor, the mapping process utilized a qualitative content analysis based on semantic similarity. Each national mandate (MON and CHN) was cross-referenced with the 92 NASP indicators. Semantic similarity was measured using a three-point criteria: (1) identity of professional intent, (2) overlap in target population, and (3) equivalence of expected clinical outcomes. For instance, a national function was mapped to a specific NASP DMN code only if its core activity matched the technical description of the international standard. To enhance reliability, a dual-coding protocol was implemented, where discrepancies in initial mapping were resolved through consensus-based reconciliation. To ensure the internal validity of the coding process, inter-rater reliability (IRR) was assessed. The initial independent coding yielded an 86% agreement rate between the two researchers. All identified discrepancies (14%) were subsequently reviewed and resolved through a formal reconciliation protocol involving a third academic advisor until 100% final consensus was reached on the functional distribution. The resulting data were synthesized using a correlation matrix and pivot tables in Microsoft Excel to facilitate a quantitative assessment of international standard implementation rates. The 90% alignment rate reported in this study refers to macro-domain coverage; it signifies that the national framework includes at least one professional mandate represented within 9 out of the 10 NASP domains, rather than an exhaustive alignment across all 92 individual indicators.

Table 2. Sample of semantic mapping and coding protocol

National function code	National mandate description	NASP DMN code	NASP Practice indicator description	Semantic alignment logic
MON 1.1	Assess students' learning difficulties and identify special educational needs.	DMN 1.2	Use assessment data to identify students' learning problems and monitor progress.	Strong Overlap: Both mandates prioritize diagnostic assessment for learning support.
MON 3.4	Provide counseling to parents and family members regarding student well-being.	DMN 7.2	Collaborate with families to promote student mental health and school success.	Functional Equivalence: Aligned under the framework of family-school partnership.
CHN 2.1	Establish and maintain mental health files for students.	DMN 1.1	Utilize varied models and methods of assessment and data collection.	Semantic Similarity: Aligns with the professional intent of data-based monitoring.

4. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Policy alignment

In the initial phase of the analysis, the structural alignment of national policy documents was evaluated against the 10 domains of the NASP 2020 Professional Standards. The results indicated that China's seven general operational areas achieved 100% alignment with the NASP domains. In contrast, Mongolia's four primary functional areas corresponded with nine out of ten domains, representing a 90% alignment rate. This 90% metric reflects macro-level domain coverage, signifying that the Mongolian framework includes at least one professional mandate represented within 9 out of the 10 NASP domains, rather than an exhaustive alignment across all 92 individual indicators. Mongolian policy documents exhibited a significant gap in Domain 10 (Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice), where explicit regulatory mandates were largely absent (Figure 1).

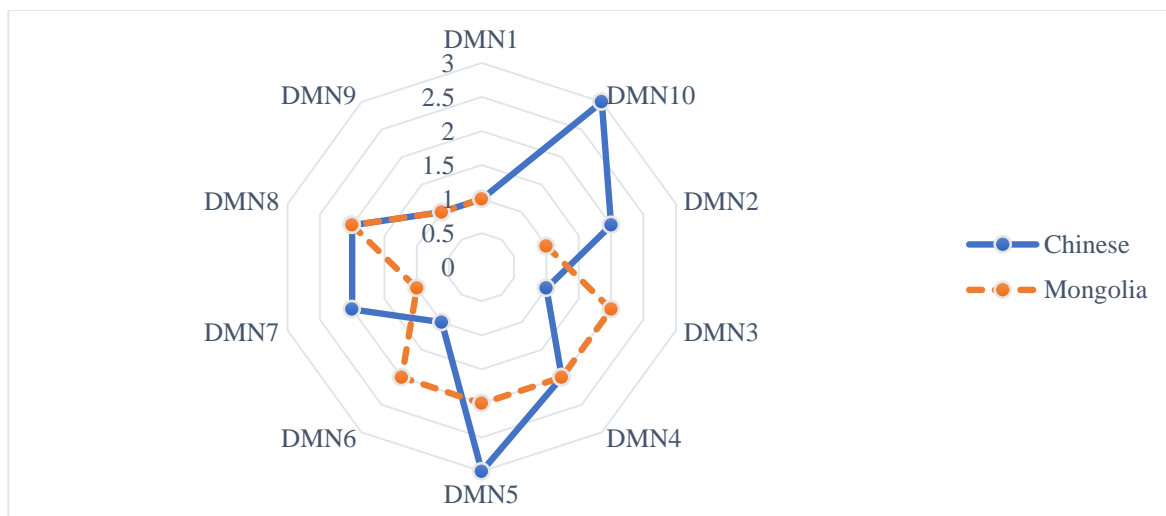


Figure 1. Comparative radar chart of national policy alignment with NASP 2020 domains.

While both nations show high macro-alignment, the structural organization of these mandates differs. China's alignment is characterized by a high degree of technical specificity in Domain 1 (Data-Based Decision-Making), driven by national requirements for standardized student psychological filing. Specifically, the Chinese 'Guidelines (2012)' demonstrate a high degree of technical rigor in Domain 10 regarding professional accountability and clinical documentation, which provides a more robust regulatory foundation for psychological practice than the current Mongolian mandates. In contrast, Mongolia's 90% alignment reflects a broad conceptual mirroring of the NASP domains but lacks the specific regulatory depth found in the Chinese 'Guidelines for Psychological Health Education'.

This 90% macro-alignment suggests that the administrative language used in Mongolian policy effectively mirrors the conceptual 'labels' of international domains. However, the qualitative gap in Domain 10 (Legal-Ethical Practice) is particularly concerning, as it represents the 'moral compass' of the profession. Without clearly defined ethical mandates, the structural alignment remains superficial, as practitioners lack the legal safeguards and ethical protocols necessary for high-stakes clinical decision-making. The absence of these specific mandates in the current 22 functions indicates that the Mongolian system is still in an 'emergent' phase of professional institutionalization.

4.2 Detailed mapping of professional practices

Despite strong macro alignment, micro-level analysis revealed uneven distribution. Mongolia showed broader coverage (57 mappings) than China (44), but with clustering in traditional domains and limited presence in data-driven and research-based practices.

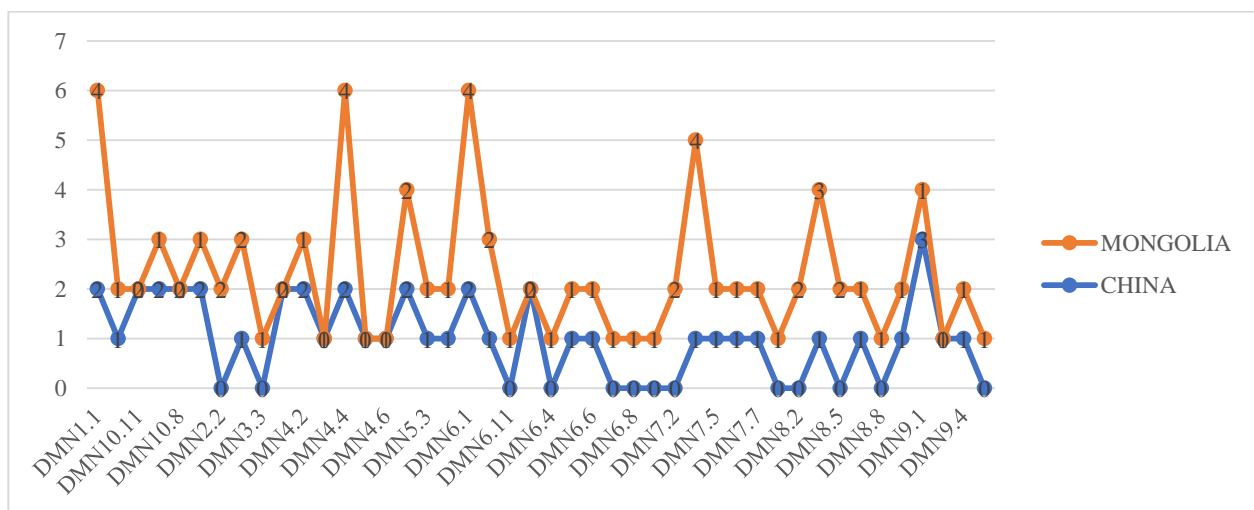


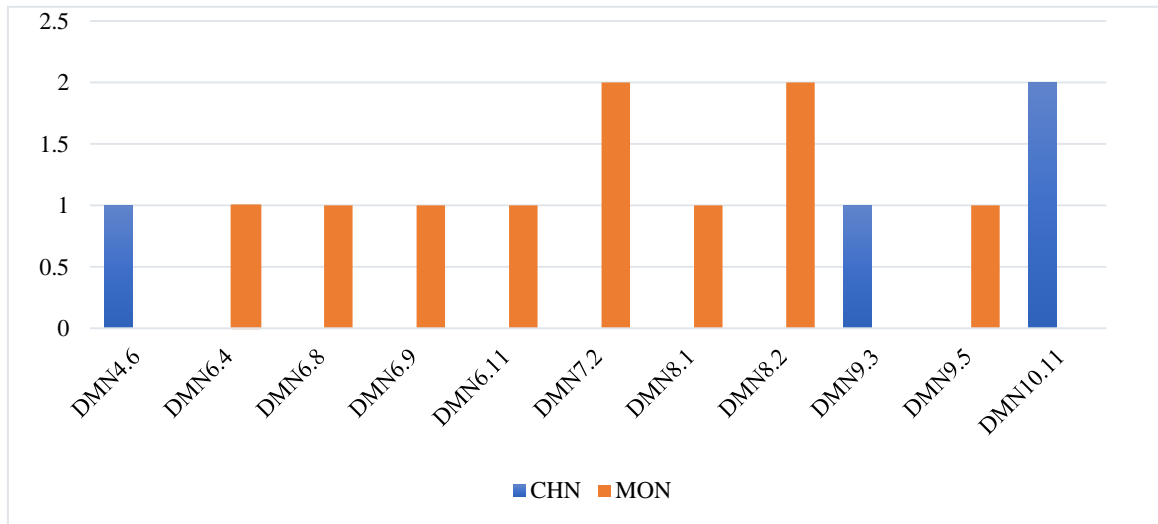
Figure 2. Mapping frequency of national functional mandates against NASP 2020 practice indicators.

This data suggests that the current Mongolian job descriptions for school psychologists cover a broader conceptual range of international practice indicators compared to those in China. However, this alignment is characterized by significant "clustering" in specific traditional domains. Conversely, strategically critical areas such as "Data-Based Decision Making" (Domain 1) and "Research and Evidence-Based Practice" (Domain 9) exhibited the weakest correlation, highlighting a substantial deficit in evidence-based accountability within the national frameworks.

4.3 Comparative analysis of unique and common professional practices

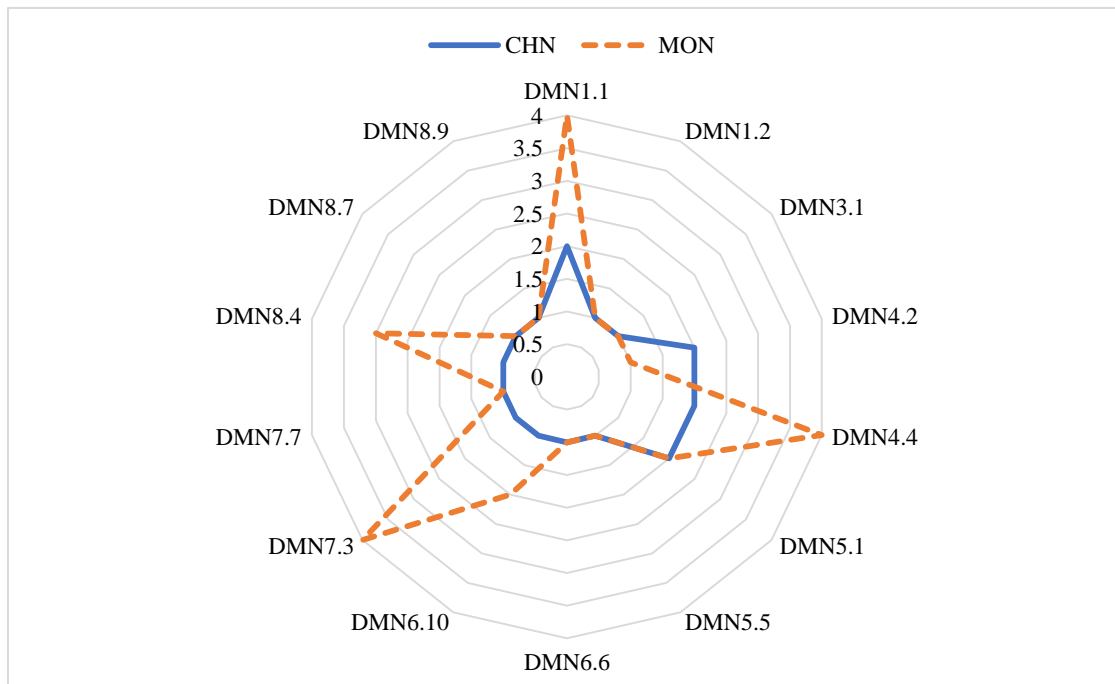
The subsequent phase of the study involved a detailed examination of the similarities and divergences in the professional activities of school psychologists in Mongolia and China, framed within the NASP 2020 indicators.

Figure 3. Unique functional indicators identified exclusively within national policies.



Analysis of national specificities revealed three indicators (DMN 4.6, DMN 9.3, and DMN 10.11) unique to the Chinese policy framework, suggesting a heightened institutional focus on professional ethics, legal compliance, and research evaluation. Conversely, Mongolia exhibited eight unique indicators (ranging from DMN 6.4 to DMN 9.5). These findings suggest that Mongolia demonstrates strengths in family-school-community collaboration, while China shows a stronger emphasis on ethical regulation and research integration.

Figure 4. Distribution of common professional activities identified in both countries.



Several indicators, such as DMN 1.1 (Data-Based Decision Making), DMN 4.4 (Mental Health Interventions), and DMN 7.3 (Family-School Collaboration), are operationalized in both nations, aligning with contemporary international trends. However, the mapping frequency for these common indicators was notably higher in Mongolia. This is attributed to the more granular and descriptive nature of the Mongolian national mandates (2021 Ministerial

Decree), which break down professional roles into specific tasks, whereas Chinese guidelines utilize more concise, area-focused operational language.

4.4 Strategic optimization of school psychology functions: A roadmap toward 2030

To address the domain imbalances and professional gaps identified in the previous analysis, the existing 22 core functions of Mongolian school psychologists were reclassified and synchronized with the 10 domains of the NASP 2020 Practice Model. This realignment forms the basis for a phased operational mapping framework (Table 3).

Table 3. Strategic "22+8+10" roadmap for expanding school psychology functions in Mongolia.

NASP 2020	<i>(Table 3A)</i>			NASP 2020	<i>(Table 3B)</i>			Phase II Integration (30+10)
	Functional mapping (Current 22)				Phase I expansion (22+8)			
DMN1	MON1.1	MON4.6		DMN1	MON1.1	MON4.6	DMN1.4	DMN1.6
DMN2	MON2.2	MON4.3		DMN2	MON2.2	MON4.3	DMN2.3	DMN2.6
DMN3	MON1.6	MON4.2		DMN3	MON1.6	MON4.2	DMN3.2	DMN3.6
DMN4	MON1.3	MON2.1	MON3.1	DMN4	MON1.3	MON2.1	MON3.1	DMN4.1
DMN5	MON3.4	MON4.1		DMN5	MON3.4	MON4.1	DMN5.6	DMN5.7
DMN6	MON2.4	MON2.5	MON3.3	DMN6	MON2.4	MON2.5	MON3.3	DMN6.2
DMN7	MON1.4	MON3.2	MON3.5	DMN7	MON1.4	MON3.2	MON3.5	DMN7.4
DMN8	MON1.2	MON2.3	MON4.4	DMN8	MON1.2	MON2.3	MON4.4	DMN8.3
DMN9	MON1.5	MON4.5		DMN9	MON1.5	MON4.5	DMN9.3	DMN9.6
DMN10				DMN10	DMN10.1	DMN10.9	DMN10.10	DMN10.3

Identified deficits (Table 3A): Mapping the current 22 mandates (MON codes) revealed a significant "clustering" effect within specific domains (DMN 4, 6, 7, and 8), while creating a "professional void" in Domain 10 (Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice) and other strategically vital areas.

Proposed strategic solution: The Phased Expansion Model (Table 3B): Using content analysis of the 92 NASP 2020 indicators, this study selected 18 feasible practice activities to be integrated into the national framework through a two-phase implementation strategy:

- Phase I (Expand to 30 functions): By incorporating 8 priority indicators, this phase ensures equitable functional distribution across all 10 domains. This extended set of 30 functions is proposed for implementation and pilot testing over the next 2–3 years to stabilize the professional foundation.
- Phase II (Expand to 40 functions by 2030): In the subsequent 2-3 year period, an additional 10 specialized indicators will be integrated, bringing the total to 40 core functions by 2030.

The strategic significance of this roadmap lies in its forward-looking design. By the year 2030 - coinciding with the anticipated release of the next NASP model - Mongolia will have established a robust institutional capacity based on 40 internationally aligned professional activities. This proactive maturation will structurally prepare the national system to transition toward future global standards, backed by a well-established empirical and practical foundation.

4.5 Analysis of implementation barriers

Beyond the 18 indicators integrated into the strategic roadmap, a content analysis was conducted to identify the systemic and structural barriers hindering the implementation of the remaining 38 unaligned practice standards. Table 3 categorizes these challenges into five primary thematic areas.

Table 4. Qualitative analysis of implementation barriers for unaligned NASP 2020 indicators

Functional areas	Core content of indicators	Identified implementation barriers
Professional credentialing (DMN 10.12, 10.13)	Attaining National Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) status; leadership in national/regional professional associations.	Systemic Unreadiness: Lack of a national licensing and credentialing system aligned with international standards; professional associations lack the regulatory capacity and structural framework for advanced certification.
System-level influence (DMN 2.7, 5.9, 10.7)	Directing systemic change; policy advocacy; exercising professional leadership in institutional decision-making.	Structural Authority Limitations: Prevailing perception of psychologists strictly as "counselors" by administrators; lack of clearly defined mandates or professional authority to intervene at the systemic level.
Professional supervision (DMN 10.4, 10.11)	Providing professional supervision and mentoring; adhering to workplace environment standards and principles.	Absence of Mentorship Infrastructure: Lack of a standardized system for training "Professional Supervisors"; absence of financial and organizational mechanisms to support clinical supervision within the education sector.
Advanced clinical assessment (DMN 3.8, 4.5, 8.6)	Utilizing culturally adapted assessments; implementing evidence-based interventions.	Methodological & Resource Deficits: Critical shortage of standardized diagnostic tools adapted to the Mongolian context; lack of integrated methodologies and equipment for advanced behavioral analysis.
Implementation science (DMN 1.7, 2.8, 9.7)	Utilizing science-based principles to evaluate program impact; research-based institutionalization.	Time and Workload Constraints: Excessive workload focused on frontline duties (counseling and training) limits the capacity for systematic research and high-fidelity implementation monitoring.

In conclusion, this detailed mapping against the 92 NASP 2020 indicators defines the current landscape and future developmental trajectory of school psychology in Mongolia. While 18 specific functions were identified as feasible for immediate strategic expansion, the remaining 38 indicators currently face institutional readiness challenges, making them difficult to implement within the present structural and resource constraints. However, these indicators represent long-term developmental targets that can be integrated incrementally as the national educational system matures. Ultimately, these findings provide a robust empirical foundation for modernizing Mongolia's national policy framework in alignment with international excellence standards.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Alignment between national practice and international standards

The findings highlight a critical transition point in Mongolia's school psychology system—from a counseling-oriented model toward a comprehensive, standards-based professional framework. The absence of legal-ethical infrastructure reflects not merely a policy gap but an indicator of systemic developmental stage. This lack of formal legal-ethical protocols creates a state of 'professional vulnerability' for Mongolian school psychologists, who must navigate high-stakes student issues without the shield of standardized ethical review boards or specific legal protections. Consequently, establishing Domain 10 mandates is not only a matter of international alignment but a fundamental necessity for protecting both the practitioner and the client within the Mongolian educational legal framework. The macro-alignment visualized in the comparative radar chart (Figure 1) illustrates the broad parity between Mongolia and China; however, a micro-level analysis of the 92 specific practice indicators reveals significant nuances in institutional maturity and systemic evolution. Notably, the robust presence of Domain 7 (Family, School, and Community Collaboration) and Domain 8 (Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations) in Mongolian policy documents represents a distinctive regional advantage compared to the Chinese framework. This phenomenon is directly attributable to the historical emphasis within the Mongolian educational reform on "parental involvement" and communal responsibility, which has successfully institutionalized these domains within national mandates. However,

it is imperative to distinguish between structural alignment and functional implementation. The 90% alignment observed in this study represents a 'superficial alignment' where international terminology is mirrored in policy language, yet the practical infrastructure—such as standardized diagnostic tools and ethical review boards—remains absent. Therefore, while the policy 'labels' match global standards, the actual professional capacity for high-fidelity practice is still emerging. This gap between policy and practice is not unique to Mongolia; international literature consistently highlights that in emerging school psychology systems, 'role diffusion' often precedes 'role specialization.' For instance, similar to findings by Jimerson et al. [13] regarding global service development, Mongolia's current focus on social-emotional support mirrors the developmental trajectories seen in Eastern Europe and parts of Southeast Asia, where services initially focus on crisis intervention before maturing into the comprehensive MTSS models seen in the United States (NASP, 2020) [14]. Furthermore, the 'superficial alignment' noted in this study aligns with Hatzichristou et al.'s [15] observations that the cross-national translation of psychological frameworks often requires a long-term 'indigenization' process to move beyond linguistic mirroring toward cultural and functional competence.

5.2 Identifying professional gaps and systemic imbalances

The functional mapping and radar analysis identify a critical "professional void" within Domain 10 (Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice). Comparative analysis with China highlights that while the Chinese model provides granular definitions for ethical-legal regulations (e.g., DMN 10.11), the Mongolian framework lacks equivalent specificity. This deficit suggests an "institutional unreadiness"; as school psychology is a relatively nascent field in Mongolia, the formal mechanisms for professional ethics committees and comprehensive legal-regulatory infrastructures are still in their formative stages. These results underscore the need for a targeted shift from general counseling roles toward legally grounded professional practices.

5.3 Strategic significance of the "22+8+10" developmental roadmap

The proposed expansion to a 30-function model (22 baseline + 8 strategic additions) serves as a pragmatically balanced transition toward international parity.

- Workload management: Attempting to implement all 92 NASP indicators simultaneously would risk professional burnout due to excessive administrative and clinical burdens; therefore, the "+8" expansion offers a sustainable evolutionary path.
- Feasibility and implementation science: The content analysis confirms that the selected 8 indicators (e.g., DMN 10.1, DMN 5.6) can be integrated into the current school environment without requiring immediate infrastructural overhauls or significant additional funding.
- Barrier mitigation: Addressing the remaining 38 indicators requires long-term systemic strategies to overcome existing methodological deficits and the current lack of professional supervision frameworks identified in the barrier analysis.

5.4 Preparing for NASP 2030: A strategic vision

To achieve parity with established systems like that of the United States - which possesses over a century of professional history - Mongolia must adopt a phased functional mapping approach. Expanding from the current 22 functions to 40 by the year 2030 establishes a "professional foundation" capable of assimilating future global standards. By the time the NASP 2030 standards are released, this incremental maturation ensures that Mongolia will have the institutional capacity and empirical experience necessary to adopt the next generation of international "gold standards" without systemic shock. These findings position Mongolia as a "developing hybrid model" situated between policy-driven expansion and standards-based professionalization.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides a systematic evaluation of school psychology practices in Mongolia against international standards. While macro-level alignment is high, micro-level gaps highlight the need for structured development. First, while a high level of macro-level alignment (90%) is observed, significant micro-level imbalances persist, particularly in legal-ethical regulation and data-based practice. Comparative analysis with China confirms that while Mongolia demonstrates distinct cultural strengths in family-school-community collaboration (Domains 7 and 8), there remains a "professional void" in legal-ethical frameworks (Domain 10) and data-based decision-making (Domain 1).

Second, the simultaneous implementation of all 92 NASP indicators is currently constrained by institutional and human resource capacities. The proposed “22+8+10” operational mapping strategy offers a practical roadmap for achieving international alignment by 2030 while preserving context-specific strengths. By strategically integrating 8 new Practice Indicators (DMN) identified through content analysis, Mongolia can achieve a balanced development across all ten domains, ensuring at least three core functions per domain.

Third, the "Extended Operational Mapping" developed in this study transitions the role of school psychologists toward multifaceted, system-level service delivery. Establishing 40 core professional functions by 2030 will serve as the essential foundation for elevating Mongolia's school psychology sector to international excellence and ensuring seamless integration with the forthcoming NASP 2030 standards.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed to elevate the school psychology framework in Mongolia to international standards:

- 1) Update national professional mandates: Formally integrate the proposed "+8" strategic indicators into the national framework for school psychologists to ensure a balanced development across all ten NASP 2020 domains.
- 2) Strengthen legal and ethical frameworks: Address the identified "professional void" by establishing robust ethics committees and detailed legal-regulatory guidelines to govern school psychology practice (Domain 10).
- 3) Establish a supervision system: Develop a standardized mechanism for professional supervision and mentorship, ensuring that psychologists receive clinical guidance rather than purely administrative oversight.
- 4) Develop standardized assessment tools: Invest in the development and validation of culturally and linguistically adapted diagnostic tools to enable data-based decision-making (Domain 1) within the Mongolian educational context.
- 5) Implement the 2030 roadmap: Integrate the transition toward a 40-function service model into medium-term national educational policies to ensure readiness for the forthcoming global NASP 2030 standards.

In conclusion, the modernization of Mongolia's school psychology sector requires more than just an expansion of job descriptions; it demands a fundamental shift in professional identity. By adopting the '22+8+10' roadmap, policymakers can ensure that the growth of the profession is both sustainable and scientifically rigorous. This strategic transition will empower school psychologists to move beyond their traditional roles as counselors and emerge as system-level leaders, capable of driving educational equity and providing evidence-based support for the mental health of all students. The road to 2030 is not merely about achieving numerical parity with international standards, but about building an institutional culture of excellence that is uniquely suited to the Mongolian context.

6.2 Declaration of generative ai and ai-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used Gemini (an AI language model) in order to improve the linguistic quality, perform academic translation, and format the structure according to journal guidelines. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.


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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION


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