

Fujian Agriculture & Forestry University

Pollution of China's natural resources is a significant problem for our global environment, with the most infamous sites of pollution being the air in major cities (or water in some areas of China), especially Beijing. According to the New York Times and “The Global Burden of Disease Study 2010,” China was responsible for 40% all global deaths linked to air pollution in 2010. *The Atlantic Wire* states that 2013 could be even worse, and that levels of air pollutants in the early months of this year were already up 30% from the same period in 2012. It is clear to all who see the current state that something needs to be done. The purpose of my internship in China was to see and experience the pollution firsthand and gain some insight into how the Chinese culture perceives the state and urgency of the polluted environment.

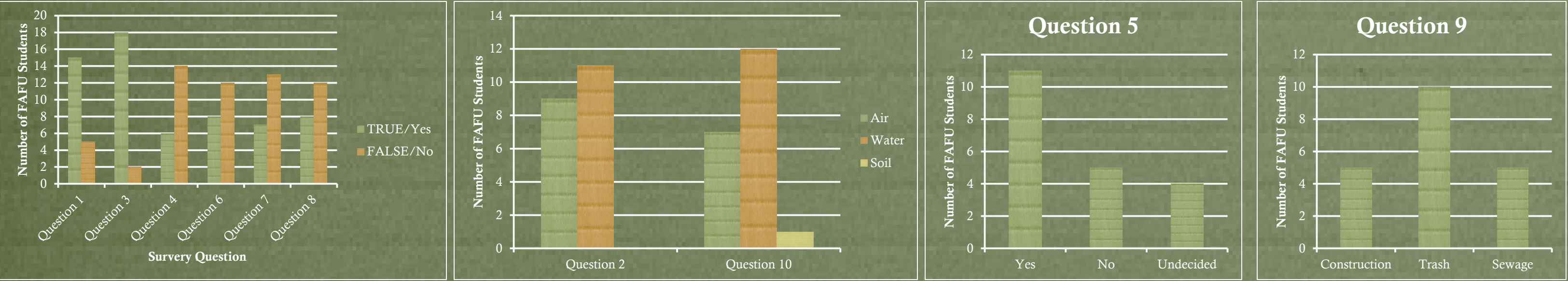
As part of this internship, I lived on campus at the Fujian Agriculture & Forestry University (FAFU) for one month. FAFU is located in the Fujian Province of southeastern China, in the rural part of the city of Fuzhou. During our time in Fuzhou, I simultaneously studied Sampling & Environmental Monitoring, learned about local environmental issues, and researched the student population and its perspectives on the current pollution problems of Fuzhou and China as a whole.

Internship Objectives – Survey & Results

As stated before, the objective of this internship was to research pollution problems in China as well as gather data on the public opinion on the environmental situation. To accomplish this, I designed a ten question survey to gauge local knowledge and opinions of pollution problems and current environmental policies in China. Twenty anonymous, randomly selected FAFU students answered the following ten questions:

1. China has a serious pollution problem. (T/F)
2. What environmental aspect do you think is most polluted?
A) air B) water C) soil
3. The Chinese government has laws to improve environmental conditions. (T/F)
4. The laws in place are effective. (T/F)
5. If you were a policy maker, would you do anything differently? (Y/N)
6. The water/air quality on the FAFU campus is unsatisfactory. (T/F)
7. Are you aware of FAFU student organizations that promote keeping a clean environment? (Y/N)
8. There are rules set by FAFU to stop pollution on campus. (T/F)
9. What pollutes campus the most?
A) construction material & site runoff C) sewage overflow during storms
B) trash dumping into waterways
10. Which part of the environment do you think should be improved first?
A) water quality B) air quality C) soil quality

Results:



Analysis & Conclusion:

The results of the survey were generally what I was expecting. Nearly all of the students agreed that China had a serious pollution problem and that the government's policies are not effective enough to make a significant difference. Many even admitted that if given the chance, they would enact stronger protection policies. One surprising result of this survey was how close the results for the “most polluted” resource, with water being voted number one by only a two vote difference. I had expected air to be the frontrunner for that question. Water was also voted as the resource that should be improved first, if required to pick only one. Again, this was unexpected. Overall, it appears that at least the student population in Fuzhou is very aware of the problems China's environment faces. This gives me hope that as this generation ages, better policies and practices will be put into place and the environment will eventually be given the chance to recover.

Firsthand Experiences



Top Left: Polluted air in Xiamen, China



Top Right: Polluted air in Beijing, near Olympic sites



Left middle & bottom: Construction site that pollutes water drainage (bottom right)



Relationship to Career Goals

The experience in China has the potential to be very valuable for my future. The interaction with a foreign culture helped me to broaden my views and open my mind to views that may contrast my own. Investigating local sources of pollution has improved my observation and research skills, and interviewing for the survey has improved my skills for effective communication. These types of skills will be useful later on when I begin a career as an Environmental Sampler, during which I will be required to conduct interviews and background research in addition to field investigation and sampling.

References

- Bump, Philip. “China’s Deadly Air Pollution Is Already Up 30 Percent This Year.” *www.TheAtlanticWire.com*. The Atlantic Wire, 4 Apr. 2013. Web. 5 June 2013.
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Acknowledgements

A very special thanks to the Study Abroad office, Dr. Ebbale, Dr. Shim, and most importantly, FAFU. Without each of these very special components, this internship and experience would not have been possible, and I am very grateful for all the work each put into making it the best experience imaginable.

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