

# Survey on the effectiveness of university student visits in the context of educational aid to Xinjiang

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**Abstract.** The survey on the effect of university students' study visits in this study is based on the statistical and survey data of A University, which involves the statistics of study visits from 2015-2019, and 180 students and teachers' questionnaires from 13 visiting universities were completed. The main findings are that the overall evaluation satisfaction of the effect of study visits reached 97%, among which the recognition of professional knowledge and study ability improvement reached about 70%, and the participating students strengthened their awareness of further study and increased. The study proposes to promote the study visits of university students in Xinjiang. The study proposes the main suggestions to promote the improvement of the effect of study visits for college students in Xinjiang universities, which are to moderately increase the difficulty of professional courses in Xinjiang universities, to increase the support for study visits by means of special scholarships, and to actively develop the scope of study visits and exchanges, etc.

## 1 Preface

It is a major national initiative to revitalize the development of higher education in Xinjiang for higher education institutions to carry out counterpart support to Xinjiang. Xinjiang universities are all supported by a number of domestic higher education institutions. Among them, Nanjing Agricultural University and many other colleges and universities provide counterpart support to A University. The survey on the effect of college students' visit in Xinjiang universities is based on the survey data of A University.

The effect of the study visit is the improvement of the quality of the university students, which is manifested in the improvement of the professional level of the subject, the improvement of the independent learning ability and academic ability, and the increase of the willingness to further study after graduation. This paper focuses on the subjective judgement of the above issues by teachers and students related to study visits to understand the effect of study visits. [1] According to previous research, the elements that influence the effectiveness of a study visit are the motivation and the process of the visit. The stronger the motivation and the more ideal the process, the more it helps to improve the implementation

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effect of study visits. [2] Based on the analysis of the survey, this article proposes suggestions to help improve the motivation and process of study visits.

## **2 Overview of a university student visit**

### **2.1 The launch and development of university student visits**

Benefiting from the national aid policy and with the support of sister institutions and their aid cadres, A University first reached a study visit agreement with Zhejiang University in 2011, and from 2012 to 2015, 11 new agreements were reached with Renmin University of China and other universities one after another. In 2016, The University launched the Graduate Student Visiting Program, sending graduate students to five universities, including China Agricultural University, for the first time. 46 graduate students participated in the visiting study for one semester.

The university has formulated rules and regulations related to the selection and management of visiting students and established a corresponding working mechanism. Since 2012, each year, a batch of outstanding students from the third year of undergraduate study have been visiting the mainland. The length of the study visit is one academic year except for the first batch which is one semester. [3] According to the statistics, the number of university students visiting the mainland from 2012 to 2019 has reached 727.

### **2.2 Characteristics of university student visits**

#### *2.2.1 Distribution of disciplines*

According to the statistics of relevant departments, during the five years from 2015 to 2019 (the data from 2015 to 2020 is used until the final time of the questionnaire), a total of 511 undergraduates participated in the visiting study, among which 165 majored in agriculture, accounting for 32.3% of the total number of visiting students. There were 147 students majoring in engineering, accounting for 28.8% of the total number of visitors. There were 75 students majoring in science, accounting for 14.7% of the total number of visitors. 124 in humanities and social sciences Humanities and social sciences (including management, literature, economics and law), accounting for about 24.3% of the total number of visitors.

#### *2.2.2 Distribution of visiting schools*

The University has established visiting links with 13 universities in China. The highest number of visiting undergraduate students in the five-year period 2015-2019 was at Nanjing Agricultural University, with 84 students, accounting for approximately 16.4% of the total. 61 at Northwest A&F University, accounting for 11.9% of the total; 53 at China Agricultural University, accounting for 10.4% of the total; Zhejiang University accepts 50, accounting for about 9.8% of the total. Beijing Forestry University, Hohai University and Southwest University also receive a number of students, all totalling 40 or more.

#### *2.2.3 Effectiveness of early study visit activities*

The initiative was warmly welcomed by the students of the university. The students study hard and actively strive for visiting universities in mainland China. The dispatched students also cherish the opportunity to visit universities in mainland China. The visiting study has

achieved obvious results. Among the first 10 students who visited Zhejiang University, 9 were admitted to master's degree, 2 were rated as outstanding graduates. Among the 57 visiting students in the second batch, 16 of them were awarded as outstanding graduates, 9 of them were awarded as outstanding graduation theses of the university, and 25 of them were enrolled or admitted to master's degree programs. [3]

### **3 Survey on the effectiveness of students' study visit**

In order to have a deeper understanding of the students' basic situation during the visiting period and better improve the visiting system of the school, as well as to accumulate data and information for relevant academic research, our research group launched a survey of visiting students and teachers in Xinjiang. This survey was carried out in A university and related visiting universities.

#### **3.1 Basic information of the questionnaire**

##### *3.1.1 Questionnaire design*

In order to comprehensively and objectively investigate and understand the feedback evaluation of the visiting effect, the questionnaire is designed for students when selecting objects, also for teachers; Understand not only the opinions of visiting students, but also the opinions of our students and visiting students; Understand the opinions of teachers in the university and visiting universities. The content of the questionnaire is designed according to different objects, which mainly includes 35 questions, such as learning pressure, learning harvest, visiting management, post-visiting study planning, and evaluation of visiting students and visiting students by different subjects.

##### *3.1.2 Sending and retrieving questionnaires*

The questionnaire was issued to the 2019 and 2020 undergraduate students participating in the university-level visiting program, students and teachers visiting schools, and students and teachers visiting schools. In April 2021, 180 people completed the questionnaire by invitation. Invitation to fill in the source channel is mainly Wechat QR code. The specific source channel was 146 submissions via Wechat QR code, accounting for 81.11% of the total sample; 30 mobile phones were submitted, accounting for 16.67% of the total sample. 4 links were submitted, 2.22%.

The geographic location is automatically obtained based on the IP address, mainly from Xinjiang. There were 127 geographical locations in Xinjiang, accounting for 70.56% of the total sample. 22 were from Beijing, accounting for 12.22% of the total sample. 15 were from Shaanxi province, accounting for 8.33% of the total sample. 9 were from Jiangsu, accounting for 5% of the total sample. A total of 7 samples were collected from Guangdong, Anhui and other 7 provinces, accounting for 3.89% of the total sample.

##### *3.1.3 Software usage and data quality*

This questionnaire was analysed using the “Questionnaire Star” website tool and the accompanying SPSS online analysis. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  is 0.896. The validity analysis using exploratory factor analysis showed that the 14 scale questions were divided into 3 dimensions. the KMO value was  $0.873 > 0.6$  and the cumulative variance explained value is 91.18%, passing the Barth sphericity test, indicating that most of the information on the questions

could be extracted from the 3 dimensions. Thus, collectively, the study data has a good level of structural validity. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire are high and the study is worthwhile.[4]

### 3.2 Main results of the questionnaire

#### 3.2.1 Basic statistical characteristics

Structure of survey objects. School A is the original school and School B is the visiting school. Among the 180 questionnaires, 120 students participated in the visiting program, of which 75 have completed the visiting program and 45 are currently visiting the program. 43 students from School A and 7 students from School B visited the school. There are 8 teachers from School A and 2 teachers from School B.

The structure of the visiting universities. A total of 118 questionnaires were filled out involving 13 visiting universities, 112 of which were undergraduate students visiting 12 counterpart universities, and 6 of which were vocational colleges visiting schools in Xinjiang, which to a certain extent could satisfy the overall feedback of the representative's counterpart aid visiting effect.

#### 3.2.2 The overall evaluation of the visiting effect

139 people answered this question, and the results show that they are about 97% satisfied with the overall arrangement of the study visit. This indicates that the vast majority of students and teachers highly approve of the study visit process, and reflects that the university receiving the visit provides good study programmes and living conditions for students, etc. See Table 1 for details.

**Table 1.** Satisfactory evaluation of the study visit process.

	Were you satisfied with the overall arrangement of your visit?	Percentage rate
Very satisfied	70	50.36
More Satisfied	49	35.25
Generally satisfied	16	11.51
Less Satisfactory	3	2.16
Very dissatisfied	1	0.72

When answering the multiple choice question "What did you learn during the visit?" 83.45% chose "improved professional knowledge", 76.98% chose "improved learning ability", 75.54% chose "experienced different teacher education concepts and academic practices", 69.06% chose "improved independent learning ability". It shows that most of the interviewees recognize the role of visiting study in improving the students in various aspects, especially for their professional knowledge and learning ability to improve the absolute number of recognition.

### 3.2.3 The influence of visiting students on their choice of further study

Reinforced the awareness of further education. 127 people answered the question about the impact of study visits on the willingness to pursue higher education. In terms of motivation to visit the university, about 80% of the 127 had a desire to study for a master's degree. Students who are highly motivated to study took part in the study visit, which helped to enhance the effect of the release. At the same time, the questionnaire results also show that the willingness to pursue further studies is strengthened during the study visit. As a result of the study visit, about 25% of the 52 students who originally had a less strong intention to study for a master's degree strengthened their intention to pursue further studies; about 20% of the 86 students who originally did not pursue a doctoral degree changed their mind. See Table 2 for details.

**Table 2.** Comparison of willingness to go on to higher education before and after the study visit.

	Did you have the idea of studying for a Master's degree before your visit?	Are you thinking of pursuing a Master's degree after your visit?	Did you have the idea of studying for a PhD before your visit?	Are you thinking of pursuing a PhD after your visit?
None	25	26	86	69
Some	52	38	29	41
Strong	50	63	12	17
Total number	127	127	127	127

### 3.2.4 Stress during the study visit

When answering the multiple topic "What do you feel under pressure at the beginning of the study visit", 96 people chose "course study", accounting for 69.06%, 72 people chose "various grades and certificates", accounting for 51.8%, 34 people chose "economy and life", accounting for 24.46%, and 53 people chose "making friends", accounting for 38.13%. This shows that there are multiple pressures on visiting students, including learning pressure and social pressure, which need to be resolved by the school through comprehensive consideration.

### 3.2.5 Students' suggestions for improving study visits

In answer to the multiple choice question "What do you think the former university can improve in the arrangement of visiting students?" Among 139 students, 71 chose "the release of living allowances from the original university during the visiting period", 66 chose "the release of transportation subsidies from the original university during the visiting period", accounting for 47.48%, and 68 chose "the recognition of credits from the original university during the visiting period", accounting for 48.82%. About 75 people, or 53.96 percent, chose to expand the scope of visiting schools. More than one-third of the respondents said they could expand the majors of visiting schools or expand the majors of visiting schools.

## **4 Suggestions for promoting improved effectiveness of college student visits in Xinjiang universities**

First, it is moderately difficult for college students in Xinjiang to study, especially English. High-level universities in China are generally aligned with the international popular curriculum and teaching materials in the construction of professional foundation courses and specialized courses. Therefore, one of the main pressures of Xinjiang undergraduates in visiting studies is that the English foundation is not enough to successfully adapt to the relevant course requirements. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the development of undergraduate students' English communication, reading and writing skills at the level of undergraduate English education and teaching in schools. [2] It is necessary to adapt to this development trend and consider upgrading the proportion and scope of English language instruction in our courses.

Secondly, it is recommended to increase support for study visits by means of special scholarships. Although the original plan of the university has already covered the round-trip transportation costs of the visiting students, the increase of living costs due to the visiting students may reduce the motivation of our students. It is suggested that the special scholarship should be set up and issued to ensure the basic expenses of daily life for the visiting students.

Third, actively develop the scope of visiting exchange. At present, the universities with Xinjiang universities are all "985" plan universities, but the disciplines in Xinjiang universities still cannot be completely covered, so it is necessary to actively develop the scope of visiting exchange. On the one hand, we can strive for the exchange opportunities of domestic non-counterpart universities through various channels, on the other hand, we actively strive for the exchange opportunities of international high-level university visits. For example, in 2022, the outstanding students of law of A University namely successfully participated in the summer camp of Northwest University of Political Science and Law.

Fourthly, combining postgraduate and undergraduate students on study visits. Postgraduates are overall stronger than undergraduates in terms of professional learning and academic training. After a certain selection mechanism, postgraduate students' study visits can, on the one hand, help postgraduate students obtain better learning resources, improve their learning efficiency and expand their learning horizons; on the other hand, it can help improve the academic communication and professional level of the relevant academic team of the postgraduate students; in addition, postgraduate students can play a guiding and driving role for undergraduate students in the same visiting school, which is conducive to promoting the effect of undergraduate students' study visits. [5]

## **5 Conclusions**

Can college students' study visit activities based on education aid mechanism achieve the expected results? In order to answer this question, this study conducted a questionnaire survey on the teachers and students related to study visit activities. Based on the analysis of the 180 questionnaires collected, respondents were about 97% satisfied with the overall arrangement of the study visit and the effectiveness of the visit policy was evident. The majority of respondents agree with the role of study visits in improving the quality of students, especially in terms of professional knowledge and study skills. The study visit process has a significant positive impact on students' intention to go on to higher education. At the same time, the effect of study visits on students' interest in research is significant. In terms of the stress of the study visit, students reported multiple stresses, mainly academic and social stresses during the visit.

In order to further improve the system of visiting students in aid of Xinjiang, the study recommends enhancing the intensity of English and other courses for college students in

Xinjiang; increasing support for visiting students with special scholarships; actively developing the scope of visiting exchange; and combining postgraduate and undergraduate students on study visits.

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