



# **Development of a Proposal for Internationalization of Manizales as University Town**

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## ABSTRACT

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The current thesis aimed to implement a research project on a university town called Manizales in the country of Colombia. The research objective was to define how to promote the internationalization of Manizales as university town.

This study was developed as a case study in which the internationalization of the university town was the study object. To gather the data, a mix of qualitative data, in the form of interviews and focus groups was performed and analysed through data reduction methodology, while quantitative data was collected through a survey to visiting students and analysed as a sample population with basic statistics and graphs.

Key results show that participants conceive that Manizales already provides key characteristics to be called university town such as quality of life, excellence in education, research, infrastructure, while it needs to improve its foreign language skills and focus on increasing foreign visiting students, teachers and researchers as well as developing specific infrastructure for those.

The conclusions indicate that universities have worked together on common education objectives however there is an important defy to implement common research, common international cooperation actions, and ensure long term government objectives for enhancing the internationalization of Manizales as university town.

The thesis concludes with the presentation of a proposal for the internationalization of Manizales as university town, as a result of the analysed data and showcases of international university towns.

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Key words: internationalization, university town, factors, proposal

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The current thesis was commissioned by Manizales university campus, a university organization created to promote common universities' policies and actions. The assignment was requested in the quest of supporting universities develop a long-term proposal for internationalizing Manizales as university town.

The city has been recognized for a long time as a university town and a reference for students in Colombia. Currently it is being ranked as the top one from the ranking of Colombia's university towns (Fundación Luker et al. 2021). It stands now on a point in which internationalization is critical to its growth and development, therefore, promoting the city as an international destination for students, lecturers and researchers is the step to follow. A priori, the city holds key characteristics to be considered a university town, however it lacks an international plan to take it to the next level of positioning on the international education sphere.

The quality of its universities, the high living standards including a secure place to live in, its cultural agenda, green areas and relaxing atmosphere built on for years, make it a suitable university town to be shown internationally.

The main aim of this research is to develop an internationalization proposal for Manizales as university town. Its objectives are presented as follows:

- To build theoretical research on structures and characteristics of university towns, as well as features for internationalization of universities.
- To analyse the current state of Manizales against key factors for internationalization found on the theoretical research.
- To perform qualitative and quantitative field research at universities in Manizales, in order to obtain relevant information as input for the proposal for internationalization of the university town.

- To develop a proposal for the internationalization of the city, based on the data input.

The thesis is being established as a case study from the research point of view, by taking the internationalization of the university town as the research object, in which primary data collection is to play a role in understanding several internationalization dimensions. As an inductive, qualitative method, the case study will be developed as follows: Firstly, the theoretical framework aims to give

1. An understanding of what a university town is, its characteristics and remarks,
2. A background on university internationalization and the strategies used on their internationalization process.
3. A summary of key factors for internationalization of university towns being proposed from the literature review.

Secondly, the direct research will be based on the key factors for internationalization of university towns. Even though, the case study favours qualitative methods, this case study will be developed by using mixed methods as follows: 1. Quantitative: Surveys to visiting university students. 2. Qualitative: Interviews to university Deans and key actors in the university town, as well as university focus groups to discuss the vision of Manizales as university town and the key factors for internationalization the city shall focus on.

All input data and discussion outputs will be used to develop the action plan to internationalize Manizales as University town.

In summary, this paper will present the methodology, key theoretical findings, data results from field research as well as the proposal for internationalization of Manizales as university town.

## 1.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research developed through the thesis proposes the following research question: **How to promote the internationalization of Manizales as university town?**

Two sub-research questions have also been defined as follows:

- What are the key characteristics of Manizales as university town?
- What are the key factors for internationalization of Manizales as university town?

To answer this inquest, several research methods were analysed, placing the research question in the centre, to strategically define which type of research was more convenient to get the expected results. As a result, the descriptive research is to be conducted as “the problem is structured and well understood”, (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Strange 2020, 64) and the research can therefore focus on how to collect the best possible data to answer the research question. This leads us to the question of what type of data is needed and which data collection methods are to be used. Firstly, secondary data will be used to provide a theoretical framework, thus, theoretical research on university towns, as well as university strategies for internationalization will be conducted. Key factors for internationalization of university towns will be analysed and compared against Manizales, as part of the empirical research, to know the status of the city in contrast to those factors. Finally, by using all primary research data and key theoretical findings, a tailor-made proposal for internationalizing the university town will be presented.

The primary data is proposed to be conducted on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, with the aim to obtain new qualitative knowledge that can be used for improving the internationalization of the city of Manizales as university town.

Creating this qualitative knowledge will imply the use of an inductive process by gathering individual information from several university towns, evaluating the state of internationalization in Manizales and forming a new tailored made proposal from separate data. As the study object will be in the centre of the research, to form this tailored made proposal, the case study becomes relevant to analyse different dimensions of internationalization and form a new set of knowledge serving to the purpose of improving internationalization in the university town.

The data collection methods and instruments used are described as follows:

Secondary data: literature review on university town features and internationalization of universities data, from which key factors for internationalization of universities towns are to be proposed.

Primary data:

Quantitative

- Visiting students survey with closed and open questions.

Qualitative

- Deans and other actors' semi-structured interview
- Focus groups with semi open questions.

All data will be finally analysed and used as inputs for creating an internationalization proposal for Manizales as university town. Quantitative data will be analysed through excel's statistical and numerical functions while qualitative data will employ a data reduction analysis method through the use of a categorization technique to identify the main elements and features of the input data.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework will first present the context and characteristics of university towns, followed by key features on internationalization of universities. Finally, an analysis of Manizales, its characteristics and qualities as university town will be presented.

### **2.1 University Towns**

The world has seen the raise of university towns for many years, being the Bologna case, one of the oldest, with its university running since 1.088, known as “the oldest university in the world” (University of Bologna 2021). Afterwards many more university towns have been erected in Europe, USA and lately Asia as a newest boom.

Throughout the years, university towns have expanded due to globalisation trends, in a quest to acquiring more international students. These towns have become a pole of development for countries, while their growth has either been organically or planned, as their universities and their culture shape the context of the cities in which they are.

University towns have helped driving economic growth, in parallel to achieving its main educational purpose. Education has thus been a global force for fostering economy at national level, encountering that numerous developed countries have been able to grow and develop to becoming knowledge economies (Douglass 2009 on Mosneaga and Agergaard 2012). Some countries have strategically decided to invest in education, science and innovation to enhance their development, such as China, USA, Japan, among others like European Union countries. The European Union case has strengthened through the Bologna process agreement aiming at ensuring university quality standards across Europe, in which international mobility is playing a key role on supporting national and regional economic development (Vincent-Lancrin 2009, Robertson 2010, on Mosneaga and Agergaard 2012). Thus, universities have become a channel for internationalization, being able to change their own national societies into



knowledge economies (European Commission 2006, 11, on Mosneaga and Agergaard 2012).

Besides the economic impact, education is being considered a national strategy for growth in several nations, thus, university towns have found a specific niche to boost city development around universities, students and surrounded business in which all collaborate together. Universities have also driven globalization by promoting international mobility and research while taking their education sphere to an international level. (Marginson 2007, Mazzarol, Soutar & Seng 2003 on Mosneaga and Agergaard 2012).

Universities also have a social function by working together with the cities they belong to (ESG, 2015 on Antilla & Jussila 2018). They both have learnt to share infrastructure, resources and common strategies for growth and internationalization, creating a win-win situation reflected on more professional opportunities for the population, cluster development, applied research and better quality of life for students, which is represented on higher benefits and better results for both actors. (Benneworth et al. 2010).

### **2.1.1 What is a university town?**

The literature introduces the names of university city, university town and university college, the last one specially used in the USA. All three names refer to the same concept of study. The current research has adopted the name of university town to refer to those three above mentioned.

Like the Bologna case, many other countries have either seen their universities developing into university towns throughout the years, while other places have practically planned the development of the university town. These two models have dominated the rise of university towns. In Europe, universities have co-existed with towns for many years, developing economic, social and urban connections and resulting in a symbiosis university- town, while in USA, universities have attracted urban settlements towards them (Adendorff & Donaldson 2012, Lafer 2003, Weber 2001, on Li et al. 2014) being the opposite

to the European model, however worldwide promoted specially in Asian countries in which the arise of a university town supposes the planning of a city around.

Li et al. (2014) consider Cambridge and Oxford in England, and Tsukuba in Japan as clear examples of university towns. These models have chosen to have campus away from the cities, however their organic growth have connected them to the towns they belong to, creating hubs around the universities, similar to the Silicon Valley cases in which MIT and Harvard have influenced the creation of innovation centers which nurture from their relations with those universities. As Bender et al. (2013) mention, the model of Bologna and Paris have in opposite, embraced their cities.

Asia has also seen the development of key university towns, as a strategy to compete internationally and to achieve a high position in Education (Teo 2013). Japan, Korea, Singapore and China have made important efforts to be seen on the international sphere by investing important resources for developing university towns with a high level of research, innovation and quality education.

In Latin America, both cases have emerged, for example, Buenos Aires university town has been planned since its inception, not only in terms of infrastructure but also on its educational philosophy as a critical development axe. Other cities like Puebla in Mexico, or Cuenca in Ecuador, have grown organically into university towns.

For Gumprecht (2009), an American researcher, university towns are those in which the universities are able to influence and change the dynamic and lifestyle of the town, culturally, socially and economically. His research shows a bunch of characteristics shared by university towns, such as:

- The towns' culture is shaped by the students and their own culture and lifestyle.
- Higher percentage of professional opportunities and population with university degrees
- Networks among private companies, government and universities support greater economic growth

- Being temporary home for many makes it a dynamic and vibrant place with rich cultural agendas and youthful atmosphere
- Intercultural place influenced by different origins and cultures
- Good living standards with green spaces, transport networks, and greater infrastructure

As another perspective, Carmody (2022) calls a university town, “the community where the social life, economic status and population demographics are determined mainly by the local post-secondary academic institutions”. He limits the university town to mainly economic activities sustained by the academia and mainly the town population made up by students and university workers. This classification takes out many university cities that have organically become university hubs, even though the city and its residents are not exclusively upheld by the university, therefore it will not be further developed as it does not fit to the current research.

Finally, Devon Almond (2020) has published an article identifying common characteristics found in the everyday environment of university towns around USA. His research is based on the influences the universities have on the daily life of the towns, proposing five drivers as such:

- Own university features that influence the town
- Private sector features which have been influenced by the university
- Government features which have been influenced by the university
- Populations’ culture and lifestyle which have been influenced by the university
- University town relations which shape specific town economic activities

Taking into account all different characteristics, I consider university towns as learning hubs surrounded by, and interacting with small cities in which bilateral relations are formed to enhance university conditions as well as students’ quality of life, while building a supporting social and economic network with their communities.

Most of analysed university towns show important links between universities and the communities they are in. Some towns have developed economic clusters around universities, other have built their economy around the education sector while other have specialised on specific areas with the support of university knowledge and research.

University towns enjoy a lively atmosphere shaped by their students. Cultural activities, sport, restaurants, bar, libraries, and open spaces around the city also shape the city's culture becoming youthful places and, in many cases, mixing and bonding students with general population to create a new culture. Besides this, the continuous movement of students uphold a permanent exchange of international and national cultures which again affects the city's culture. Saying that, a university town's culture is constantly evolving due to the influence of its exchanges and bilateral relations with the university and its students.

Besides the city's culture, economic relations between both provide the city opportunities to have an educated workforce, applied research practices and joint projects to solve social and economic issues. A lot of direct jobs and small businesses are created to serve the student population, establishing an important interdependence of students demanding services and local infrastructure looking at meeting their needs, demands and desires.

## **2.2 Internationalization of universities**

As mentioned before, universities have greatly internationalised through the economic globalisation, in which the knowledge economy has been an important player in translating knowledge into innovation, applied research and people's interaction across the world.

Internationalization of universities as a topic has been studied for several decades. Since the 90s, Knight (1997, on Gao 2014) developed a framework defining university internationalization, based on three forces: the motives universities hold to internationalise, the strategies they implement and the approaches they use on their quest to internationalization. As a broad concept,

internationalization comprises all activities performed on the university functions which aim to provide a global and international perspective, thus, universities internationalise by political, economic, socio-cultural and academic dimensions (Knight 2006 on Maringe and Foskett 2013, 25), in which globalisation has played a key role as it has provided world opportunities to teaching and research, making higher education more competitive while providing more alternatives to potential students, who have lifted geographical barriers.

This framework has evolved as globalization has pushed universities to find new ways to internationalise based on their own needs, thus internationalization has not found a common and unique description, instead universities have incorporated new concepts like internationalization at home and internationalization of curriculum, (Elkin et al. 2005), transnational mobility (Maringe and Foskett 2013, 35), transformative internationalization in which universities are becoming “internationally minded communities” (Robson 2011, 626)

Nowadays, various forces have moved internationalization of higher education to a new level, such as worldwide recognition, economical competition (Elkin et al. 2005), regional and national development, research for solving global issues (Foskett 2013, 38), mobility among others.

Currently, different frameworks for internationalization of Higher Education have been found in the literature, among those, Elkin et al. (2005) proposed a model as a result of a worldwide universities research with the aim of identifying key factors for internationalization. Gao (2015) presents a framework to measure university internationalization and Ramirez (2013) proposes key components for internationalization of higher education in Colombia.

The following table presents a comparison of all three frameworks showing how key dimensions for university internationalization are being tackled.

TABLE 1. Comparison of university internationalization frameworks.

Frameworks/ Indicators	Key factors for internationalization	University International Measurement Framework	Internationalization of higher education in Colombia
Governance and organizational support	Human Resources for international activities Financial support for internationalization International Presence	Support for international students	Financial support for mobility Management endorse internationalization
Student	International students Mobility of students	Student exchange programs Postgraduate international students Undergraduate international students	Student mobility
Faculty	International profile of the faculty team International perspective and experience	Staff interaction in international context Staff exchange programs	Staff academic mobility
Curriculum	Courses with international component Joint degrees Student's participation in international studies	Internationally focused programs of study	Curriculum internationalization
Research	international cooperative research programmes Internationally focused research centers International researchers Internationally aknowledge research achievements	Internationally recognised research activity International research collaboration	International research collaboration Global research networks
Engagement	International network and partnership International presence of ALUMNI	International institutional links Attendance to international conferences	International networks International academic events

(Based on Elkin et al. 2005, Gao 2015, Ramirez 2013).

These components will be considered as part of the Internationalization Plan for Manizales as university town.

Finally, a current global issue faced by universities, is how measurement of higher education internationalization is being done and how potential students make their choices about where to pursuit their studies. International university rankings have become good indicators for measuring the state of internationalizations of universities. The international ranking system appeared around 2003 as a response to having a great offer of universities worldwide and potential students demanding and searching for high quality standards (So and Ho 2014), in which factors like quality education and research are key measures, among other factors which came later on with newly rankings. At present, two of the most representative rankings are Times Higher Education and QS world university ranking.

The evaluating factors measure excellence in education as the primary indicator followed by the international state of universities. This system aids universities to

position themselves in the international sphere and help potential students look for the factors fitting their needs and demands. It is therefore an important tool to support internationalization and recognition worldwide.

On these rankings, universities go through a screening process to evaluate their status against indicators such as academic review, research and citations and international outlook among others. Once being evaluated, universities are given a rating against other university's performance. Being recognised by a ranking system allows a university to provide a quality warranty to potential students, lecturers and researchers, by giving those the confidence of choosing an endorsed study place. Rankings are also by their own, a powerful marketing tool for higher education institutions.

The following table shows indicators used for measuring university internationalization from both rankings.

TABLE 2. Indicators on international university ranking systems.

Times Higher Education	QS world university ranking
Teaching (30%)	Academic peer review (40%)
Research (30%)	Employer review (10%)
Citations (30%)	Citation per faculty member (20%)
Industry income (2.5%)	Student faculty ratio (20%)
International outlook (7.5%)	International students ratio (5%)
	International faculty (5%)

(Based on Times Higher education 2023 and QS world university ranking 2023).

### 2.3 Manizales as University town

Manizales is a middle city in the coffee region of the Andes mountains in Colombia, with approximately 400.436 inhabitants as of 2018 (BC noticias 2019), and a student community of 37.746 (La Patria 2020). Students represent the 9.5% of the population and out of them, 48,7% bachelor students come from different cities around Colombia (La Patria 2020). In terms of post-grade, the percentage of visiting students reaches the 67.1% (Manizales campus

Universitario 2021). With such a high percentage of visiting students, Manizales is already considered a well-known university town in Colombia.

Factors such as quality of life, quality of education, universities environment, cost of living and employability after studies, have given Manizales the first place on the University cities Index in Colombia (Ascun 2021). The survey represents the students' perceptions on the main cities with higher education offer in Colombia. Manizales counts with thirteen higher education institutions, although students concentrate on six main universities (La Patria 2020). Out of those, four are being officially recognized as institutions with high quality education standards by the National education ministry (SNIES 2021). The city has undergone a process to consolidate its university network through a local initiative called SUMA (Manizales university system), created in 2010. This initiative has allowed all universities to share and connect research, projects and courses among their students in order to increase their academic benefits and opportunities (Manizales campus Universitario 2021).

The universities provide a wide range of bachelor programs, comprising around 90% of the total students, while 10% undertake either specialization or masters (La Patria 2021). The universities are all independent in their governance and policies, although the national university of Colombia campus Manizales follows guidelines and policies from its national office located in Bogota. Two of them are publicly funded (National university, campus Manizales and Caldas university), the other 4 are private institutions.

The city, since 1927 has aspired to become a university town although not all local governments have seen this as a vision and a goal (Cardona 2021). Throughout the years, Manizales has organically grown as university town shaped by thousands of students who have spent at least five years of studies in the city. A dynamic atmosphere was developed throughout the time, characterized by endless cultural events, small cafes, sport tournaments, night life and the touch of regional cultures brought by students from all over Colombia.

Currently, the last local governments through a long-term development plan has established the goal for Manizales to strengthen a university town. This means,



local policies, resources and efforts have been combined towards strategies that look at “positioning Manizales as the best alternative to study in Colombia” (Destino Caldas 2023).

Derived from the publication how is Manizales going on higher education (2021), the following features which are present in Manizales, allow it to be renowned as university town in Colombia:

- Students’ enrolment has grown 55% between 2010 and 2019, currently with around 46.000 students, from which 77% are based on the main five universities in Manizales (around 35.000).
- There are 104 students for 1.000 inhabitants, positioning the city of the fifth place around the country in terms of students per inhabitants.
- The focus of the city lies on Bachelor studies with 66% out of 100 students.
- 46% of students enrolled in Bachelor degrees are coming from outside Manizales while 67% of students following post-grade are coming from outside Manizales
- Four universities have certification on high quality education standards granted by the National education Ministry, achieving the first level on this indicator around the country.
- 2% of the employed population works directly on higher education institutions, making it an important sector for employment in the city. When taking into consideration all indirect employment generated by higher education institutions, like restaurants, coffee bars, book shops, hostels and other accommodation means, among many other businesses around university students, surely the percentage is very representative for the city. Unfortunately, this data is not known for this study.

Throughout the years, Manizales has been able to establish a network of sister cities including Cork in Ireland, Gainesville in USA and other Latin American cities like Puebla in Mexico, Buenos Aires in Argentina among others. By strengthening relationships with those, numerous opportunities can arise, as several of those sister cities, are also university cities.

Manizales is also part of the UNESCO global network for learning cities, with approximately 229 cities around the world. The network which shares good practices, knowledge and a space for partnering, has recognized Manizales as a learning city in the year 2019, for being a city “that promotes lifelong learning for all”, including inclusive learning in all education stages, use of learning technologies, learning in the workplace, high quality and excellence in learning (UIL UNESCO 2021). Several learning cities are also considered strategic university cities for Manizales to develop closer relations and build common strategies for mobility, common research projects and competences in English as foreign language.

Finally, a comparison of Manizales against Gumprecht’s characteristics of a university town (2009) allows validating why Manizales shall belong to the group of university towns.

1. The towns’ culture is shaped by the students and their own culture and lifestyle. 5% of Manizales population is made up of visiting students who spend at least five years in the city. The six major universities are spread around the town with just two being close to each other. The surrounding of each university allows having cafes, restaurants, bars, student services and accommodation which influence the dynamics of the city and its population. The mix of cultures admits the rise of a new lifestyle influenced by students.
2. Higher percentage of professional opportunities and population with university degrees. On the year 2020, the professional population in Manizales was about the 21.60%. This compared to other cities in Colombia (19.7%) is around 2 points higher (Dane 2021, 12-13).
3. Networks among private companies, government and universities support greater economic growth. Various organizations have been created throughout the years to support, connect and enhance common projects, agreements and activities among the different entities. This is the case of the state-university-enterprise foundation, created in 1998 to articulate innovation and technology projects around the productive sphere (Fueeec 2023). The Luker Foundation is another private initiative, created to promote and support social solutions by

developing alliances with local actors such as universities and government. (Fundacion Luker 2022). Manizales campus Universitario is a university-public-private initiative to enhance the university network in Manizales (Manizales campus Universitario 2021). Another alliance for strengthening clusters, is driven by Cluster Mas Pro, in which government, enterprises and universities work together towards developing specific clusters (Alcaldia de Manizales 2023).

4. Being a temporary home for many, makes it a dynamic and vibrant place with rich cultural agendas and youthful atmosphere. Students have numerous sport and recreational venues and activities, as well as a rich offer of cultural agenda (Destino Caldas 2023). There is also a variety of bars, restaurants, coffee shops around the university sites. The interaction happening in those places creates a vibrant atmosphere for locals and visitors.
5. Intercultural place influenced by different origins and cultures. With a percentage of around 48.7% visiting bachelor students, the cultural bond among different origins is permanent. Visiting students also influence the environment of the places where they live, with whom they interact and shape a new forming culture among locals and visitors.
6. Good living standards with green spaces, transport networks, and greater infrastructure. Manizales has built public space areas throughout the city in the past years such as boulevards across the city, green park areas (Destino Caldas 2023) to allow students integrate to the city and provide more recreation opportunities to the population. The cable car as an important transport alternative is intended to have a station by a key university area.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

Acknowledging that Manizales meets the criteria to be a university town, its internationalization process as university town is still reduced. Even though the different universities around the city have their individual international office and internationalization strategies, there is not a unified plan for internationalizing the city as such. The quest is to find the most suitable proposal to enhance the city's international level, by considering its current advantages, differentiation features and specific needs.

Based on the literature review, this section will propose key factors for internationalising university towns. As the searched literature does not directly present characteristics for internationalizing university towns, a further analysis has been done to extract those key factors into a new framework of factors for internationalization of university towns. They will be used in the field research to analyse the level of internationalization of Manizales as university town.

The data collection and analysis will serve to gather factual data from universities, students and other actors in order to assess Manizales against the factors for internationalization, and to provide the basis for constructing a Proposal to enhance internationalization of the city. The thesis results aim therefore to present a Proposal to internationalize Manizales as university town.

In summary, primary data will be assessed against key factors found in the literature review to firstly understand where Manizales stands in internationalization, and to secondly present a common proposal for internationalization of Manizales as university town.

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

This project started with the idea of understanding the different variables and strategies that could improve the internationalization of Manizales as university town.

Taking this idea into account, I proceeded to propose the research design. The first step was to define the research question I wanted to answer through the thesis, thus the research question becomes the centre of the study. Afterwards I analysed what type of research I wanted to develop, considering the study characteristics, questions, potential available data, population and expected results.

Next, I defined the frame of literature review I was aiming for, followed by deciding on the data collection methodology to be used, in order to validate the research question. Finally, data analysis methods were proposed, considering the collection methods.

Once the research design was in place and the research questioned defined, the type of research was explored, finding the case study, the method that better fits this endeavour, as it explores a community as the research object and “explains the cultural and social structures, meanings, contexts and their effects” (Koppa 2022). In this case, internationalization of Manizales as university town is to be the object, and the purpose of the case study is to understand how to better internationalize it. As Cohen (2018) mentions, “it is placing the case, rather than specific variables, at the heart of the study -- recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both, causes and effects”. In other words, the research will explore the characteristics of Manizales as university town and the factors for internationalization it needs to enhance in order to reach a new level of internationalization, all these, by considering the universities and students views.

In defining the research methodology, qualitative and quantitative methods were looked at, to establish the best alternative for solving the research question and sub-questions. Quantitative methods were possible to implement by gathering quantitative data from university students, however the viewpoint from other university actors like deans, teachers, international office directors are crucial for understanding the current reality of internationalization actions and strategies in Manizales universities, and for envisioning the future state of internationalization, which led to a qualitative approach for collecting data. In this context, the case

study allows and encourages the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

Besides this, the case study is useful for “theory development and testing” (Ghauri et al. 2020, 102), thus new qualitative knowledge is an important case study feature; in this case, a new proposal for internationalization is aimed to be created as result of this study.

As the case study suggests, theoretical research is key to understand what has been explored about the object and its dimensions, thus, literature research on different university towns will be conducted. Key factors for internationalization of university towns will be analysed in Manizales to know the status of the city against those factors. Finally, by using all primary collected data and key theoretical findings, a tailor-made proposal for internationalizing the university town will be presented.

Creating this qualitative knowledge will imply the use of an inductive approach, allowing to go from a general understanding to a specific created knowledge around the object, by gathering individual information from several university towns, evaluating the state of internationalization in Manizales and forming a new tailored made proposal from separate data.

Placing internationalization of Manizales university town as the object and considering the need to explore as many sources as possible like data from university management, teachers and students will provide a certain degree of depth in the collected data.

### **3.1.1 Research Methods**

The research methods used are the following:

- Secondary data:

Literature review will focus on university town features and strategies for internationalization of universities found through the analysis. This,

complemented by an analysis of characteristics from Manizales as university town. Secondary quantitative data will be less used as it is less widely available.

- Primary data:

The primary data allows to directly define what specific information is needed to achieve the research objectives, whether is data relying on attributes or opinions or knowledge (Ghuri et al. 2020, 159). The research quest is to gather all those features 1. To understand the target population profile, 2. To gather their opinions and motivations towards the study object, 3. To increase the knowledge of the study object itself.

- Quantitative:

Although the case study focuses more on qualitative methods, the inclusion of a student survey as quantitative method is expected to find visiting student views on internationalization of the university town.

- Student surveys. Having input from the visiting university student population will provide an important outlook on why students have chosen Manizales to pursuit their studies, how they see internationalization of the university town as well as other key data on second language proficiency among others. By gathering student data, a clear opportunity arises to understand their views for enhancing the current research.

The descriptive survey mentioned by Ghauri et al. (2020, 170), allows searching the specific characteristics of any object, therefore, having a representative sample will provide confident conclusions.

The sample is taken based on a percentage of the total population (visiting students), while results will infer the views and perspectives of the visiting students around internationalization of Manizales as university town.

The survey will have the following design:

- Mix of closed and open questions.
- Category questions
- Multiple choice questions
- Ranking questions

- Qualitative:

Several available qualitative methods were considered such as observation, experiment, interviews, group interviews (Ghauri et al. 2020). As the target population was accessible, individual interviews and focus groups were chosen as those allow a better understanding of the studied object by gathering direct information and views from universities' management group and teachers.

- Interviews.

Gathering direct input from university deans and key city actors will allow the research to collect their perspectives on the current and future internationalization status of the university town. Those as the leading bodies may provide key holistic and strategic data to the research.

The interview outline was created based on inputs to perform research interviews found on the literature. The outline features the following:

- Semi structured interview, "suitable for an inductive type of research" (Ghauri et al. 2020, 116).
- Questionnaire sent in advance.
- Face to face recorded interview.

- Focus groups.

After proposing direct research through student survey and dean interviews, another key target population for this study, is the leading university staff, responsible for planning and executing strategic tasks on international relations, communication, planning, research and teaching. The input from this population is also critical to explore what has been done and what still needs to be done for taking Manizales to a further international level. To gather their views, collective data gathering methods were looked at such questionnaires, group interviews and focus groups. Of those, the focus group setting allows creating a flexible dynamic by gathering data while creating discussion. Ghauri et al. (2020)



suggest focus groups, to gain more understanding about the study object, while developing creative proposals and new ideas. Taking this into account, the focus groups will help proposing facts and views on the internationalization plan.

As the composition of focus groups can influence their outcomes and discussions, it is previewed to create one group per university in order to keep participants as homogeneous as possible to facilitate discussions and get a deeper view in discussed subjects.

Once the data is gathered, it will be finally analysed and used as inputs for creating the proposal for internationalization of Manizales as university town.

Data analysis will be performed by using 1. Data reduction analysis method through the categorization procedure for the qualitative data (Ghauri et al. 2020). Through this methodology, a categorization system is used to define key concepts that are grouped into categories. 2. Basic statistics for the quantitative data performed through excel, will allows analysing question by question to make calculations and graphs.

### **3.2 Key factors for internationalization of university towns**

The following sub-chapter will present key factors enhancing internationalization of university towns found through the literature review. It is shown as part of the methodology because as a new proposed framework, it allows comparison with Manizales to understand its level of internationalization. These factors are characteristics the university towns own intrinsically or have used to increase their internationalization. To arrive to this conclusion, a range of cities have been analysed as either they are an important example of university town worldwide, or because they have any connection or interest with Manizales as university town. Some sister cities and UNESCO learning cities have also been considered as those have a similar context, features and development as Manizales.

A list of university towns has been reviewed to propose the key factors as follows:

TABLE 3. Worldwide university towns

Australia	Asia	Europe	America
Canberra	Singapore	Cambridge - England	Berkeley - USA
	Guangzhou - China	Paris - France	Boston - USA
	Tsukuba - Japan	Bologna - Italy	Valparaiso - Chile
		Uppsala - Sweden	Buenos Aires- Argentina
		Leuven - Belgium	Medellin - Colombia
		Heidelberg - Germany	Bucaramanga - Colombia
		Salamanca - Spain	

Sister Cities
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Gainesville, USA
Medellin, Colombia
Puebla, Mexico
Cork, Ireland
Cuenca, Ecuador

Learning Cities
Bonn, Germany
Tampere, Finland
Medellin, Colombia
Puebla, Mexico
Cork, Ireland
Cuenca, Ecuador

Own table

The review has been focused on understanding the concepts and characteristics that enhance internationalization of those university towns. Not all factors were present on a single university town, although they appeared consistently in different university towns.

These factors are presented on this document as a new framework for internationalization of university towns, as such:

► Recognition statement and city vision

Most analysed cities have a branding statement based on their intrinsic characteristics or added value features, which they use to be recognized internationally. This branding statement is also aligned with the city's vision and plans, for example, Tsukuba in Japan, a city with 16.000 students is recognised as the "City of Science" and all its activities, policies and plans aim to enhance its statement (Times higher education 2022).

A great case is the one from Berkeley University which calls itself the place where Nobels are created, this seems to be very ambitious although, they rank as 8<sup>th</sup> best university in the THE universities ranking (Times higher education 2021), it

owns already 19 Nobel awards and is one of the most prestigious research places around the world. Their success is based on creating long term strategies focused on achieving more Nobel awards, through operationalizing their vision into action plans.

University towns with similar characteristics to Manizales, such as Cuenca university town in Ecuador calls itself the Atenas of Ecuador, Medellin in Colombia calls itself the digital city, Cork in Ireland, the learning and culture city. Those examples show the importance for a university town to brand itself as part of an international positioning practice and long-term view.

#### ► International marketing strategy

Throughout the experiences from the various university towns, two different practices are found. Firstly, some university towns do not need to set up an international marketing/ branding strategy, as they are already positioned by their ranking, quality of education and research network, in summary by their results. The case of Cambridge shows that their trajectory and past results are the best branding to attract the most talented students, researchers, and professors from around the world. Positioning themselves in a top-ranking level by their own results, is the best branding they can accomplish.

Cambridge, Boston and Berkeley as university towns are also a clear example of being positioned by their results. Cambridge is in the THE ranking 5<sup>th</sup>, Berkeley is in ranking 8<sup>th</sup> and Boston 62<sup>nd</sup> (Times higher education 2021).

The second case shows other university towns setting up marketing/ branding strategies to position themselves internationally. This is the case of Canberra, the university town in Australia. They execute a strong marketing strategy in different Asian universities to attract Asian students. Canberra has developed videos, brochures, website and other branding materials. They take active part of Asian university fairs and have even links to the Canberra website in different Asian universities websites (City of Canberra 2021).

#### ► Excellence in Education

High profile university towns pride themselves to have high quality education standards showcasing most universities on international ranking lists.

Those university towns attaining the top positions on international rankings accomplished a high score on criteria like, teaching, research and international students' ratio. University towns like Cambridge, Berkeley, Singapore, Leuven, Heidelberg are world examples of excellence in education, being among the best fifty universities worldwide (Times higher education 2023).

In Latin America, universities as part of university towns like Buenos Aires in Argentina, Valparaiso in Chile and Medellin in Colombia own a place among the top fifty positions in the QS regional ranking (QS top universities 2023), however even in cases in which university towns are not on the ranking, they strive to achieve high standards in education as part of their value proposal to potential students. In Colombia for example, the National Education Ministry has set a quality certification program for higher education in which universities need to pass a set of education quality indicators to achieve it. Today there are only 25% (89 out of 298 institutions) certified universities (La republica 2022). This certification is somehow a branding tool to attract students as it endorses high quality systems.

In any case, rankings have become a key tool to evaluate quality in higher education.

#### ► Universities Integration around the city

As Benneworth et al. (2010) mention, universities can benefit urban development of their cities by helping create new knowledge-intensive spaces, by working with local government in planning new infrastructure for locals and foreigners to increase city capacity. University towns which have organically grown, integrate students as part of their dynamic, creating a social, economic and cultural bond while improving their economic indicators through delivering services to the education sector. For planned university towns, integration is a must and has already been taken into consideration in the planning process. As the integration occurs both actors benefit from its positive effects. The university ensures more services and better infrastructure for its students while the town improves its local

economy, increases the education level of its population and creates the environment to receive foreign students.

This integration can also end up creating specialised clusters or markets around universities. This is the case of university towns like Boston in technology or Heidelberg in health and life science, among many others which have focused their strategy into working together with specialised markets and companies around university campuses in order to share knowledge, resources, human capital, develop research-based solutions and work together key projects. As Beaverstock et al. (2000) and Benneworth et al. (2010) mention, these clusters become knowledge hubs able to create competitiveness in a given place.

#### ► Research

Research is part of the mission of universities (Rosowsky 2022), besides professionalizing students, research provides tangible results to the society and has become one of the key indicators measured by international ranking systems. In university towns, applied research to solve local and global issues can be enhanced by alliances between private, public sector and universities.

Tsukuba in Japan is a world model of science and research university town. Being planned as science city, the town has attracted numerous research institutions from around the world (Miao 2018, 1). Its main objective is to produce science through research and innovation by establishing science parks which directly work with the universities.

Heidelberg in Germany is an example of an applied research cluster on biomedicine and life sciences in which worldwide institutions are working together with the university to develop innovative solutions to nowadays health problems.

In China for example, research is a national objective to transform the society. Research cooperation has become a channel to expand knowledge (Filho et al. 2022), and to tackle regional and national issues through technology, innovation and research. China on its quest to become a developed economy has transformed education through establishing university towns across the country while using research as one of the methods to drive progress.

► In – Mobility

Mobility is a key channel to increase internationalization at universities. For university towns, attracting students, lectures and researchers becomes one of the most valuable strategies to enhance internationalization as they bring new knowledge and added value to universities.

Incoming students and lecturers have a great impact on universities through skills transfer, capacity building, new languages, different perspectives, innovative roadmaps, international networks, cooperation among others. As they become such a valuable asset, attracting them has turned out to be a goal for many university towns and their educational institutions around the world.

Universities and their governments are developing strategies to attract incoming students through significant educational opportunities like lower student fees, right to work, among other benefits and prepare their transition to the workforce through residence permits and work opportunities to capitalize on their investment in education while supporting an economic transformation (Mosneaga & Agergaard 2012, 527)

In Europe, the ERASMUS program has worked for years among European universities providing the ground and principles for mobility across countries. The program has reached important results on increasing cultural understanding among different cultures and transferring knowledge, skills and new perspectives from country to country. (Erasmus 2023)

► Appropriate infrastructure for students and future workers

As previously said, some university towns have grown organically while others were planned from its inception. Despite the model, having a robust infrastructure plays a key role in providing students spaces for an enhanced education process, participation, leisure, access to services, housing, mobility and high-quality life standards which translate into an enriched student experience. “The university and the city are inextricably linked” (Bender et al. 2013, 56). They both capitalize on each other, while the city’s planning and future endeavours directly impact on the universities and their students.

Bender et al. (2013) suggest there is not only a physical connection but an economic and governmental relation between the city and the campus in terms of infrastructure planning and development. This, to ensure a better harmonization of resources and spaces. In summary, “universities are urban institutions” (Antilla & Jussila 2018), part of a city environment which is shaped by the interactions between students, community and local government. In university towns, these relationships become more critical when ensuring that this ecosystem functions together. For example, student housing and primary services may be provided by the community which profits from these opportunities, green areas and better transport systems not only improve the student quality of life but also impacts the entire population.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The thesis follows the case study research method in which qualitative and quantitative data are to be used, as they become complementary in finding primary information about different actors' perspective on internationalization of Manizales as university town. Case studies allow using both methods as a mixed data research (Cohen et al. 2018).

As previously mentioned, the following data collection methods were chosen among all different available alternatives.

#### Quantitative

- Student surveys with closed and open questions

#### Qualitative

- Semi-structured interview to Deans
- Semi-structured interview to other actors
- Focus groups

Even though if a case study could be constructed with only qualitative information, having input from university students is critical to allow a deeper understanding of their thoughts about internationalization of the city. At the end of the day, they are the “clients” searching for better internationalisation opportunities, therefore their voice and view is essential to this project. Moreover, the views of those students who decided to choose Manizales for certain reasons will be central to this study. In order to gather high data volume comprising different angles and topics, the best alternative was to construct and implement a survey accessible to current university students originally from places outside Manizales.

The survey was created by using the guidelines on how to make survey questions, from the “research methods in business studies” book. The questionnaire was designed based on which required data is needed to help answer the research questions (Ghauri et al. 2020, 172), on a closed and open questions format. Beginning with some personal data from students (category questions) to categorise age, study level, years in the city among others, it continues with several closed questions with the aim of finding success factors of Manizales as university town, internationalization level and proficiency of a second language. A mixture of category questions, multiple choice questions and ranking questions were designed to collect such information. The survey finalises with some open questions to let the student provide his/ her perspective on current internationalization trends and future goals of the city.

The survey emphasis was on the factors and reasons by which people have chosen Manizales as the place to continue their university studies, as well as key factors promoting higher internationalization in the university town. A few questions were added by Manizales university campus in the quest to know how much students are aware of their activities as university connector. The survey was created as a google survey for students to access, edit and easily send their answers. Once the survey was open, the international offices of each university were able to publish it and sent emails to the international and national students belonging to each university, inviting them to fill it out. The survey was open for a month and 188 answers were received throughout this time.



Although the foreign student population is about 17.000 students, and 188 answers make around 1.17%, this response was considered as a representative stand for all universities as it was first formally published through the international offices targeting foreign international and national students registered, and directly targeted students involved in any sort of activities at the international offices.

In terms of qualitative data, I wanted to directly gather the thoughts and views on internationalization of the university heads, therefore making individual interviews was the best instrument to be able to understand university perspectives on the topic. On a semi-structured interview basis, the questions were designed to provide a guide on factors for internationalization while allowing flexibility to ask more questions if required, or to get deeper on a specific point, and letting the respondent freely share his views and perspectives on all different topics.

The design also provided a clear goal towards what critical information was to be asked to support the research questions. As Ghauri et al. (2020, 117) suggest, the questions guideline was compared to the research questions to secure consistency among both. A pilot interview was prepared and tested with the thesis commissioner. Her comments were incorporated to release a final interview guide.

A recorder was used to record all interviews in order to allow a better analysis of the information. An invitation letter including the interview questionnaire was sent to each potential respondent, so they could prepare themselves and have clear expectations on what information and personal opinions were required from them. All university deans were invited to being interviewed, as well as two key city actors. Two deans confirmed the appointment as well as the director of a key city NGO. The interview time was set for one to 1.5 hours on a face-to-face interview format.

Besides the university heads there are other key players at universities who are either responsible directly for the international strategies, either responsible for marketing, communication, inter faculty university governance among other strategic roles for implementing internationalization, higher quality education and

foreign languages. I wanted to gather their views directly, so a survey was not fulfilling this requirement nor interviews as there were many potential participants. The idea of having segmented focus groups by university came by exploring the best tool to allow interaction, discussion and consensus among participants on factors for internationalization and key questions around Manizales as university town.

Ghuri et al. (2020, 125) present the focus group as a qualitative method in which a group of people (six to ten), representing the population, discuss specific topics led by a moderator who guides the discussion. This method allows participants to provide their views, arguments, and thoughts on issues the research needs answers for, therefore a rich outcome of data is to be available for further analysis.

Meetings shall be prepared based on the issues they need to address and the characteristics of the group. It is recommended that the groups are homogeneous to promote deeper discussions about the topics, one focus group per university is to be executed.

Focus groups per university were proposed to ensure homogeneity and a representative sample from each educational institute, however, to avoid members to be influenced by each other in their discussion and responses, an innovative methodology was proposed by using an online application to anonymously gather the data, as I wanted to be able to recreate a specific methodology allowing participants to freely express their views. This point was critical for defining the methodology as Manizales is a conservative city, universities are conservative domains in which position and power sometimes diminish the views of those who are under senior positions, and I wanted everyone to be able to express their views with no pressure.

After searching and getting informed on which tool was optimal to run the focus groups, I was able to create a dynamic structure by using an interactive software called ahaslides (ahaslides 2021) in which key questions were to be projected to everyone and participants with the use of their mobiles or computers were able to anonymously answer each question online. Everyone's answers were to be

projected to open the discussion and come up with key trends after analysing everyone responses and allowing discussion.

I also wanted to take the opportunity with such public, to deliver a presentation about university towns around the world and their characteristics. I presented the agenda and proposed methodology to the director of Manizales University Campus, who agreed on it.

We identified the key players of each university, and an invitation letter was individually sent from Manizales university Campus to the potential participants.

I travelled to Manizales for a week in order to make the interviews and run the focus groups. Firstly, an interview was made to the University Dean of Autonomia University Mr. Carlos Eduardo Jaramillo at his office. The second interview was to Mr. Pablo Jaramillo, the manager of Fundacion Luker which is the main private actor driving inter-university strategies, internationalization of Manizales and its universities. The final interview took place at the National university, with Mr. Neil Guerrero, the university Dean. The participants agreed to disclose their names.

All focus groups were also run throughout the week with a very successful and dynamic methodology recognized by the participants.

The following is a summary of key information for each data collection instrument used on the current thesis.

As quantitative data collection, the survey was done with the following characteristics:

- Population: Students from other regions in Colombia and international students of the main five universities (48,7%) (eje 21 2020), approximately 17.000 visiting students.
- Objective: to understand students' perceptions about the internationalization level of Manizales as university town.
- Survey with closed and opened questions including multiple choice, category, and ranking questions. Thirteen questions in total.

- The survey did not intend to categorize data from each university but to search for a general overview of students' perceptions in Manizales.
- The survey was promoted through international offices at each university to encourage visiting students to fill it out.
- The survey was edited as a google survey to allow students virtual access.
- In total, 188 responses were obtained.

The Qualitative data collection was done through two different methods: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

The Interviews had the following characteristics:

- Population: Six university deans and two city actors. Out of those, two university Deans of Autonoma university and National university and the manager of Fundacion Luker, as the main private stakeholder of Manizales as university town, became the sample.
- Objective: to understand individual perceptions about Manizales as university town, against the factors for internationalization of university towns.
- The instrument was designed with open and semi open questions to allow dialogue and discussion around the different factors.
- There were 15 questions in total and each interview counted for around one to one hour and half.
- All interviews were recorded.

The focus groups had the following characteristics:

- Population: personnel from different universities, including teachers, program directors, international office directors, marketing, projects, research personnel.
- Objectives: to understand the perception of the different universities around internationalization of Manizales as university town. To identify the common factors that promote internationalization of the university town.
- A total of five focus groups were done with the participation of about 55 people. The following focus groups were carried out: Universidad de

Manizales, Universidad de Caldas, Universidad Autonoma, Universidad Catolica, Universidad Remington and Universidad Luis Amigo.

- On each focus group, an introductory presentation was made by showcasing the thesis project and a snapshot of key university towns around the world.
- Seven questions were asked to the audience who filled out their answers on the Ahaslides software, an interactive application for people to answer on real time. The discussion was then focused on finding key patterns and categories under each question.
- Each focus group was run for about two hours.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

From the literature, and through my own experience, data analysis allows translating the data gather into understandable, consistent and standardised meanings to help answer the research questions.

Analysing quantitative data is easier as it may already be standardised and systematically presented, opposite to qualitative data which needs a deeper process and longer interpretation in order to express in on a systematic way.

For qualitative data to be analysed, Ghauri et al. (2020) suggest a process, earlier proposed by Hules and Hubbermann (1994) as follows:

- Data reduction which aims at “simplifying and transforming the data by creating categories and identifying themes and patterns” (Ghauri et al. 2020, 133).
- Data display: already shows the information on a structured and orderly way, to be used in the research findings.
- Conclusions: using the data to test and answer the research questions.

The data reduction implies the use of a technique to get systematic data. For this, Ghauri et al (2020), present different analytical procedures such as categorization, abstraction, comparison, integration among others. After

evaluating each against the data outcome needed, the categorization provides a simple but appropriate process to analyse the research data as it will allow to split the data into “concepts which are to be grouped and turned into categories” (Ghauri et al. 2020, 134). The design of focus groups already allowed conclusions to be grouped and patterns identified, thus, using this categorization technique will ensure a smooth and systematic data analysis.

Finally, as this case study emphasises on a unique context, such as Manizales as university town, the data conclusions may not provide a generalization theory but a tailored made result or “empirical generalization which is applicable to the population from which the case is drawn” (Ghauri et al. 2020, 150).

In terms of quantitative data analysis, considering that this research lies on an inductive approach with mostly qualitative data, the quantitative survey sample will be consolidated and analysed by using simple excel statistics and several charts for results presentation, which are sufficient for this study.

All three data collection methods were analysed as follows:

#### Quantitative Analysis

- The survey results were collected on a excel sheet to make further calculations, answer classifications and graphs. The use of a statistics software was not needed at this point as excel tools were enough to do basic statistics, sorting, ordering and categorization of data and graphs.

The key themes when analysing the survey were:

- Factors for choosing Manizales to carry university studies
- Studies of foreign languages
- Perception about international level of Manizales
- Factors for increasing the internationalization of Manizales as university town

#### Qualitative Analysis

- As interviews were recorded, a summary transcription of each was carried out. The data reduction methodology through the categorization

technique, was used in order to define key patterns categorized through the interviews analysis. Firstly, interviews were codified into small concepts, those were integrated into bigger groups to finally identify key categories/ patterns. An end summary with the key categories from all interviews was put in place as a final result.

- Following the same methodology as with the interviews, a summary for each focus group was written with key categories and patterns which were discussed and agreed with the focus groups. A final summary table was created to compile all key categories and patterns.

The key questions for interviews and focus groups were:

- Differentiating factors to attract visiting students
  - Further integration of universities
  - Key steps and actions to further internationalize Manizales as university town
- 
- Common factors that differentiate Manizales as university town were highlighted from all three instruments data.
  - Facts on a future vision for Manizales as university town was compiled from all three instruments data.

The following chapter will present key results from all three data collection methods applied on the research.

## 4 RESULTS

The results gathered from the field research work are divided into four categories:

1. Interview results.
2. Focus groups results.
3. Student surveys results.
4. Manizales against the factors for internationalization

### 4.1 Interview results

By using the data reduction methodology and categorization technique in all three interviews, individual words and sentences were grouped into concepts, then those were analysed and grouped to find some key categories.

The interview questions were sent to the participants beforehand for them to familiarise with the topic and get some thoughts and perspectives in advance. The three interviews were very different, the first one with Mr. Carlos Eduardo Jaramillo from Autonomía University followed the questions flow, one by one. The interview with Mr. Pablo Jaramillo from Fundación Luker was more flexible and one question was the opening to another topic or question, in the end, he addressed the key topics and questions however not all were made nor in the initial interview order. The final interview to Mr. Neil Guerrero from National University was totally different in format. He firstly read all questions, asked me about the key topics I wanted him to address and started talking for a long time giving his point of view. Then we started sharing thoughts and views in an open discussion.

The key asked questions were as follows:

- What are the city's differentiating factors to attract international and national students.
- What would be the differentiating factors to position Manizales as a world class university town in 2032?



- What is the university's strategy and differentiating factors to attract international students?
- What actions shall be performed by the local government to improve the city's internationalization level?
- In terms of infrastructure, what is needed in the city to integrate students with the city and its population?
- Which marketing actions would you use to position Manizales internationally?
- Which city brand would you give to Manizales as university town?

After listening the interviews, drawing individual words/ sentences and using the data reduction methodology, the following are the conclusions (drawn from key findings then categories to finally be grouped into themes/ patterns).

TABLE 4. Interview conclusions

#### CONCLUSIONS

Key Factors	High quality of life Sociological and socio-cultural Lab Economic dynamic supported by universities' knowledge
Town's vision	University town based on free human development and community support Internationalization in and out (10% of foreign students and lecturers) Student benefits portfolio including use of public services Foreign language as part of government plan Interculturality. Development of global citizens
SUMA vision	Ultimate objective: To become only one university Eliminate the public-private barrier Common and shared research Common international cooperation actions
Government's role	Governement plan focused on Manizales as university town City ecosystem. Every actor's role and contribution are mapped out and executed
Key factors for positioning	Natural resources and human warmth Applied research and innovation as selling factors Bring in a foreign university for creating positive competition and marketing Biodiversity and coffee region as selling factors

Own table

## 4.2 Focus groups results

All five focus groups were analysed through the data reduction methodology in order to find key categories.

The methodology used in the focus groups allowed to group people's answers to each question in order to find common patterns. The discussion allowed to analyse the patterns and then to group those in order to find key categories.

The questions asked through all focus groups were as follows:

1. What are the differentiating factors of the city to attract international and national students?
2. Which actions would increase university integration as a factor for international positioning
3. What is the enchantment of Manizales as university town?
4. How do you envision Manizales internationally positioned as university town by 2032
5. What would be the differentiating factors to place Manizales as a world class university town?
6. Which marketing actions would you use to position Manizales internationally as a progressive university town?
7. Which brand/ name would you give the city as world class university town?

Table 5. Focus group conclusions

<b>Focus Groups</b> Factors for internationalization	<b>Summary</b> Categories
Current differentiating factors	Academic excellence Intercultural university ecosystem Social innovation and community impact University environment
Universities Integration strategies	Common international cooperation Common programs and research University ecosystem
Potential differentiating factors	Common university campus Second language proficiency In-mobility Joint university - enterprise agenda Public policy focused on University town enhancement
Positioning factors	University ranking recognition University town branding led by government Common international network and cooperation
University town branding	Manizales university campus Knowledge hub International campus

Own table

### 4.3 Student surveys results

As mentioned, survey results were calculated, analysed, and graphed using excel. All 188 results were checked to avoid biases, resulting on 100% of data available to use.

Initial questions show distribution of the population in terms of study level, age, time living in Manizales, foreign language proficiency, among others. Following questions about factors for internationalization and reasons to have chosen Manizales to study. Finally, some questions regarding Manizales' vision as university town and future characteristics it shall envision.

The key answers supporting the current study will be presented on this chapter.

### 4.3.1 Age

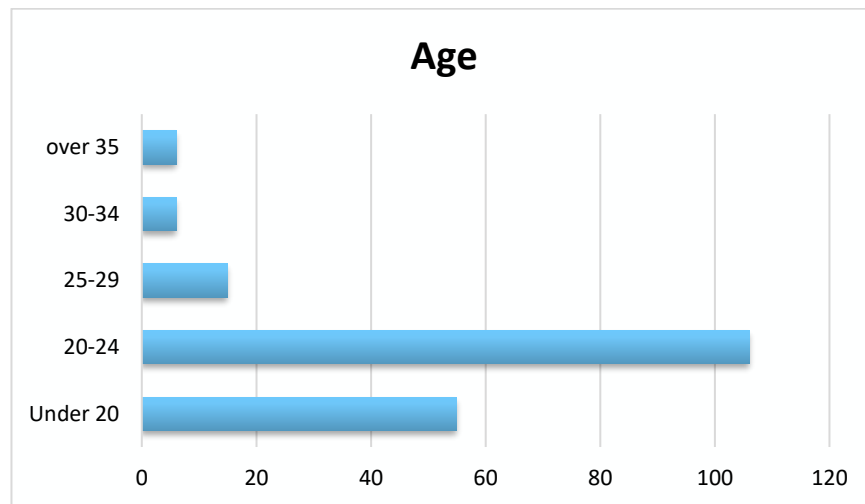


FIGURE 1. Age

Around 29% are younger than 20 years of age and 56% are between 20- and 24-year-old, therefore those students give a very fresh and up-to-date insight into key questions, especially the reasons to have chosen Manizales despite the high competition in the market nationally and internationally.

### 4.3.2 Study level

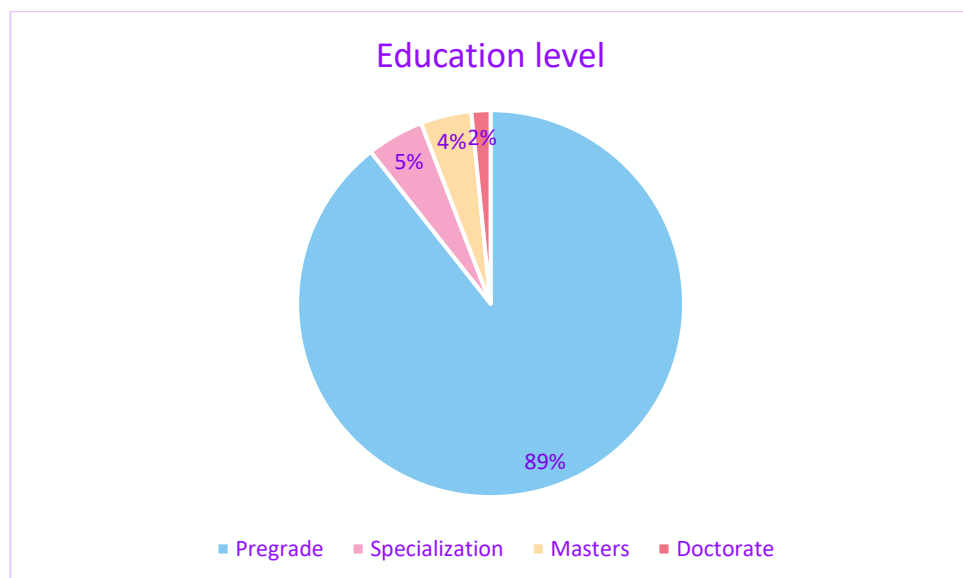


FIGURE 2. Study level

89% of the participants are undertaking bachelor level, while 5% are following specialization, 4% masters degree and 2% doctorate. This distribution is

consistent with the normal distribution of students in the city in which the biggest stake is made of bachelor students in a 65,7% on the year 2019. (Manizales campus Universitario 2021).

### 4.3.3 Time studying in Manizales

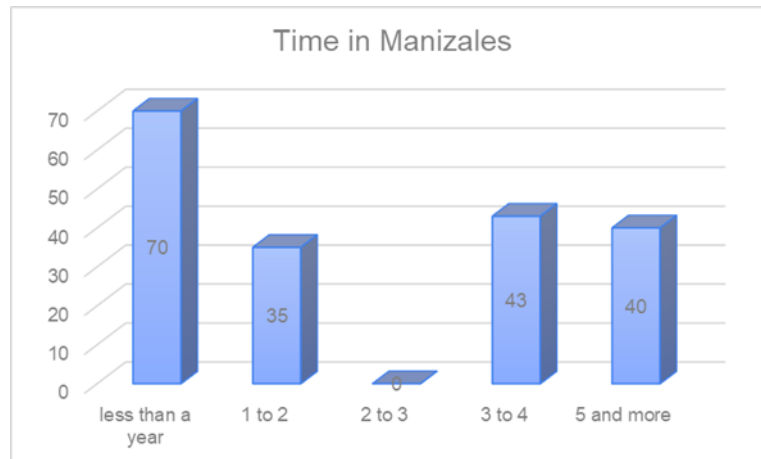


FIGURE 3. Time studying in Manizales

This graph shows a very uniform distribution among the ranks, in which out of 188, 70 people have lived less than a year in Manizales, making up 39% of the total population, while 40 people have lived 5 years of more (21% of the population). Connecting the age question with this one, it may mean that some foreign students were already undertaking their high school studies in the city before joining the university. Unfortunately, this study does not cover such hypothesis, and no available data was found to provide such conclusion, however, assuming that this is the case, high school and universities can work together towards creating common strategies to position universities and high schools in an “educational city scheme”.

#### 4.3.4 Reasons to have chosen Manizales to study

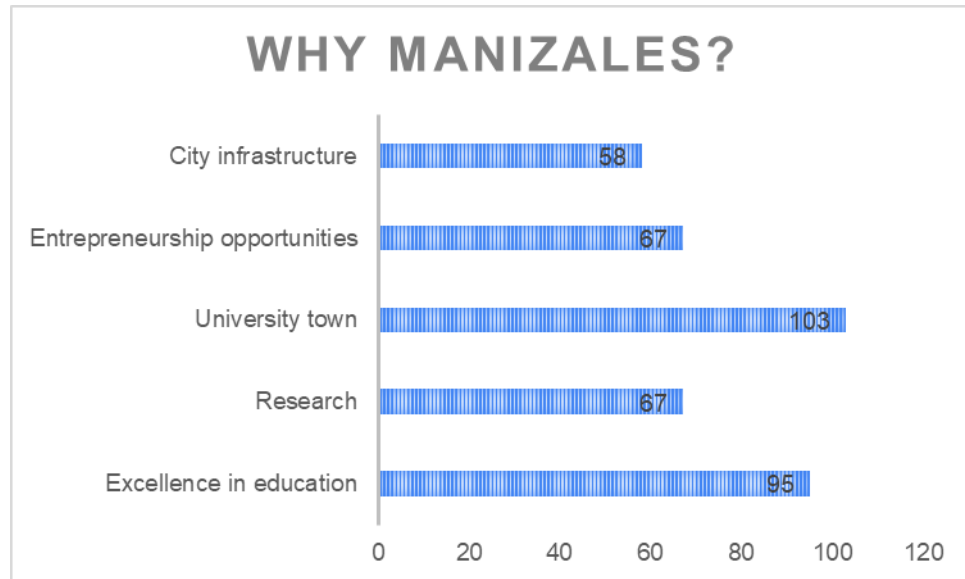


FIGURE 4. Reasons to have chosen Manizales to study

This is a key question for this study as it allows to know the key criteria foreign students considered to settle down in Manizales.

The question presented eight different reasons as such:

1. Excellence in education (the program and/or the university)
2. Research opportunities
3. Specialized study area
4. The university town itself (image, quality of life, university atmosphere etc)
5. Professional opportunities for the future
6. Future entrepreneurship opportunities in the city
7. City infrastructure for students
8. Other reasons, which ones.

Students had to choose the three most influential and mark 1 as the most influential, 2 medium level and 3 less influential from all three options.

Answers indicated five key reasons as shown in the figure 4.

The most influential reason from all was Manizales as university town itself with 103 votes. Following was excellence in education with 95 votes, research and entrepreneurship opportunities both had the same weight with 67 votes, the final

reason was student infrastructure with 58 votes. To summarise, 162 votes were given to education (excellence and research potential), 161 votes were given to the city and its infrastructure, and 67 votes to future opportunities for students.

#### 4.3.5 Foreign language competence

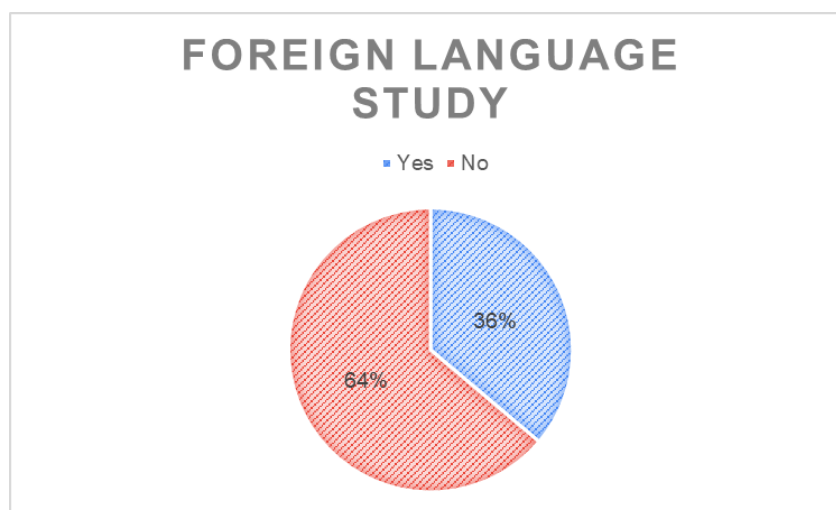


FIGURE 5. Foreign language competence

Foreign language competence lies as one of the key bases to increase internationality in any context. With university environment very highly competitive nationally and internationally, being able to communicate in other languages especially English is a must for university personnel, teachers and students. Unfortunately, the results show a very low rate on studies of a second language with only 36% out of the total. This result somehow reflects the reality of the city in terms of foreign language proficiency, being this a critical point to develop further on the Proposal for internationalization.

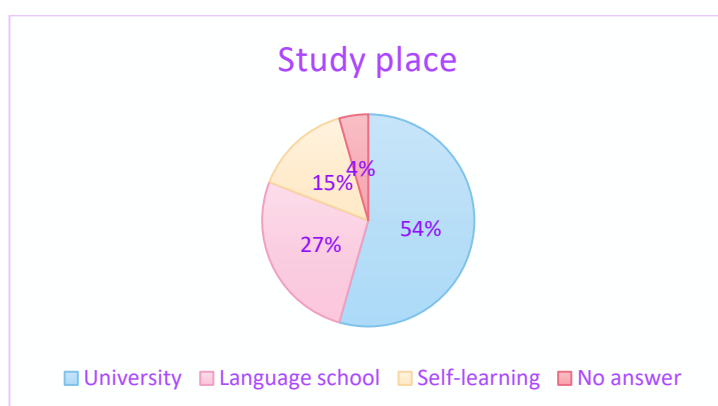


FIGURE 6. Foreign language study place

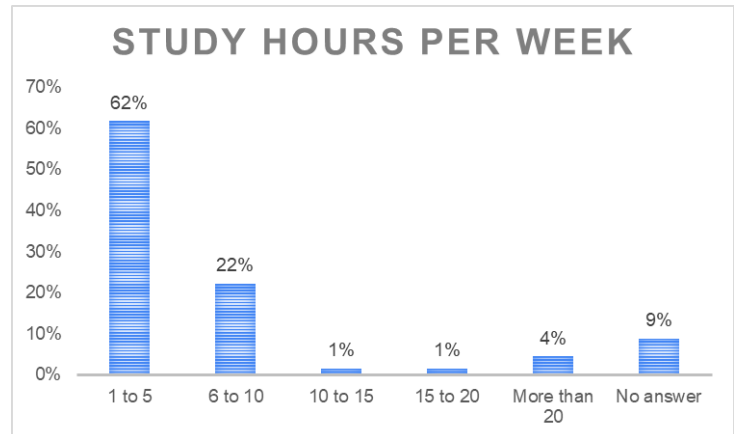


FIGURE 7. Study time per week

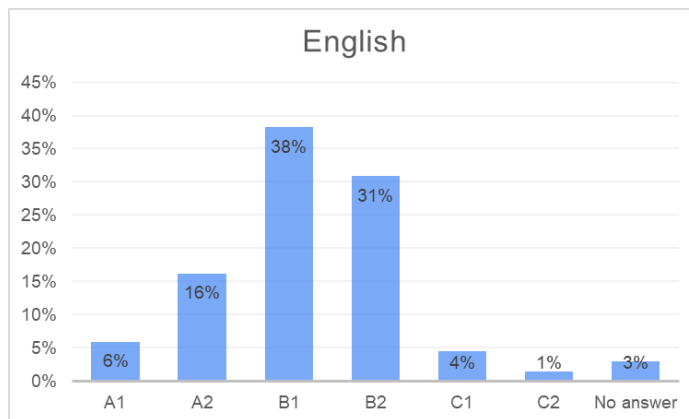


FIGURE 8. English level attained.



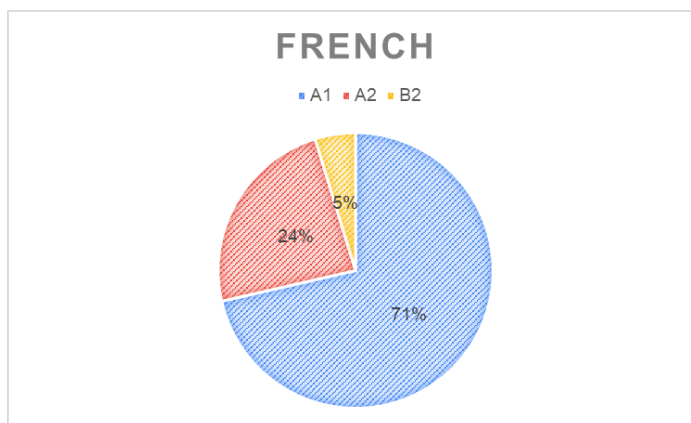


FIGURE 9. French level attained.

Continuing with the snapshot of foreign language proficiency level of university students in Manizales, half of them follow language courses at the university, followed by language schools with 27% as their preferred location. Unfortunately, those who follow language courses, do not study more than 10 hours per week, prevailing those studying between 1 to 5 hours per week (62%). The first studied language is English, being B1 and B2 the most common level among students, meaning that those may have an average command of the English language, however still not good enough to be able to follow courses in English for example. The second most common language studied is French, being the students on the basic level. In summary, the foreign language proficiency level of students is not very satisfactory at the moment, fact that reduces the short-term expectation for internationalization, thus students are the workforce to do so.

#### **4.3.6 Perspective on internationalization level of the university town and its reasons**

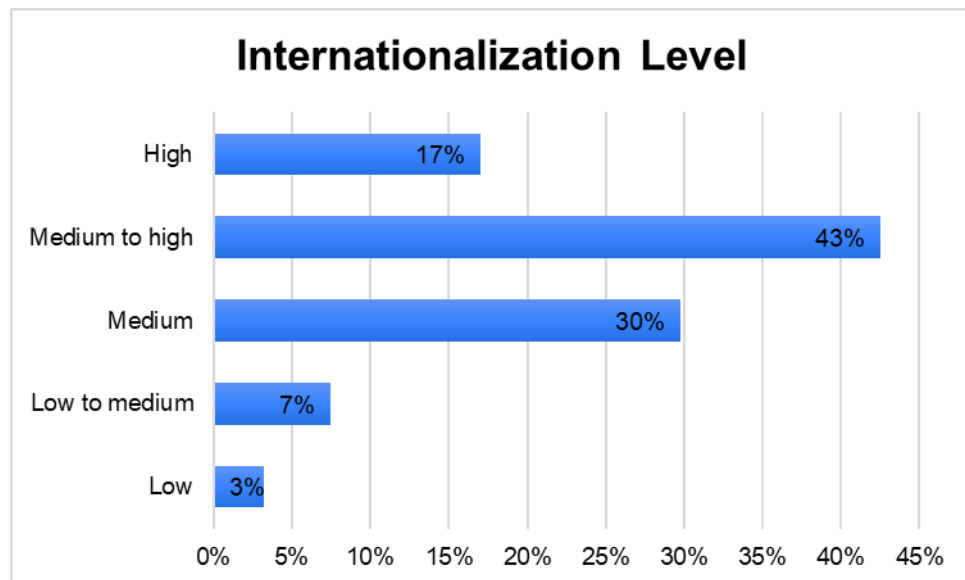


FIGURE 10. Internationalization level

Students were asked their perspective on the level of internationalization of Manizales as university town and the reasons for their answer. There were no variables to choose from, but freely to provide the reasons for their answer.

73% of students considered internationalization to be between medium and medium-high. 17% considered it to be high while 10% considered it to be between medium low to low. Results were surprisingly positive as a starting point to profile the city and to build on this medium to positive perception of internationalization.

The reasons also give an important overview on students' perspective about internationalization of the city. Even though there were no predefined variables, positive as well as negative reasons were obtained and compiled by a methodology of grouping similar answers.

Positive reasons:

- Quality and variety of study portfolio around all universities
- Adequate city infrastructure for students
- Cultural diversity
- Partnerships with other universities

Negative reasons:

- Lack of international opportunities for students or its diffusion is weak
- Low English level
- Need of more infrastructure and activities for international students comparing to other international cities
- Lack of recognition as university town

#### 4.3.7 Factors increasing the international level of Manizales as university town

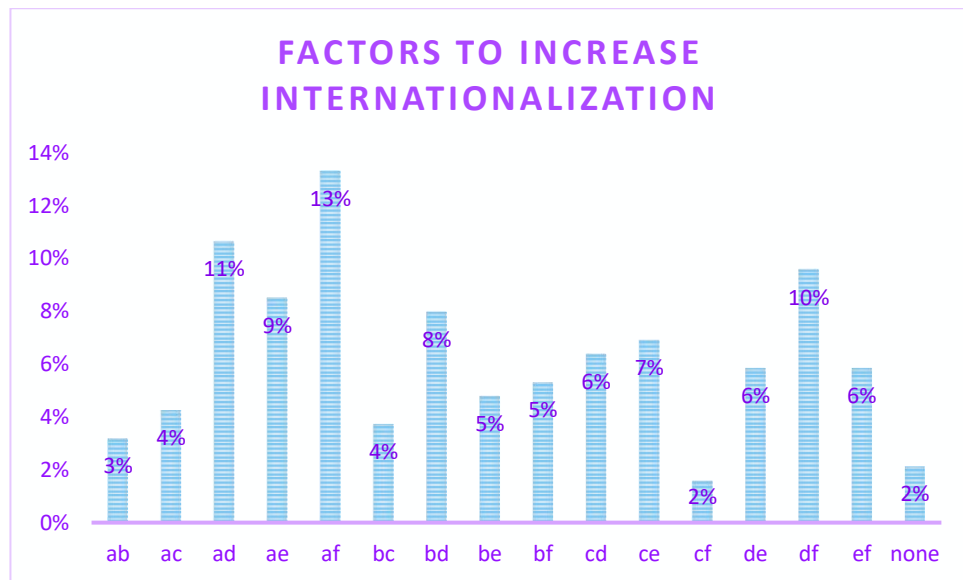


FIGURE 11. Factors increasing internationalization

Students were given a range of variables and were asked to choose the two most influential variables.

- More research opportunities at universities
- Higher number of international teachers
- Higher number of international students
- Higher foreign language proficiency level of local students
- More international marketing for the university town
- Higher student infrastructure for attracting international students
- Other. Which one.

As the graph shows, a wide variety of answers were provided. Those were analysed and added up to calculate percentages. Higher percentages show the following combinations:

13% Research opportunities and better infrastructure to attract international students

11% Research opportunities and higher foreign language proficiency level

10% Higher foreign language proficiency level and better infrastructure to attract international students

8% Higher number of international teachers and higher foreign language proficiency level

As a result, the variables mentioned above provide an important direction to take into consideration when designing the Proposal. Higher research opportunities, higher foreign language proficiency level and better infrastructure to attract international students are the ones students proposed the most, for increasing internationalization in Manizales as university town.

Following other questions, students also provided answers to what they would like to find in Manizales as university town and proposed some names to promote Manizales internationally. This input will be used when designing the Proposal.

#### **4.4 Manizales against the factors for internationalization**

To evaluate Manizales against the factors for internationalization framework, results from the data analysis were taken into consideration and ranked against each factor.

The definition of the ranking level was subjective, although utilised a methodology based on giving points from 1 to 10 (being 10 the highest score and 1 the lowest) to survey data, interview data and focus groups data under each factor.

After implementing this methodology and making calculations as an excel document, the evaluation provides the following figure:

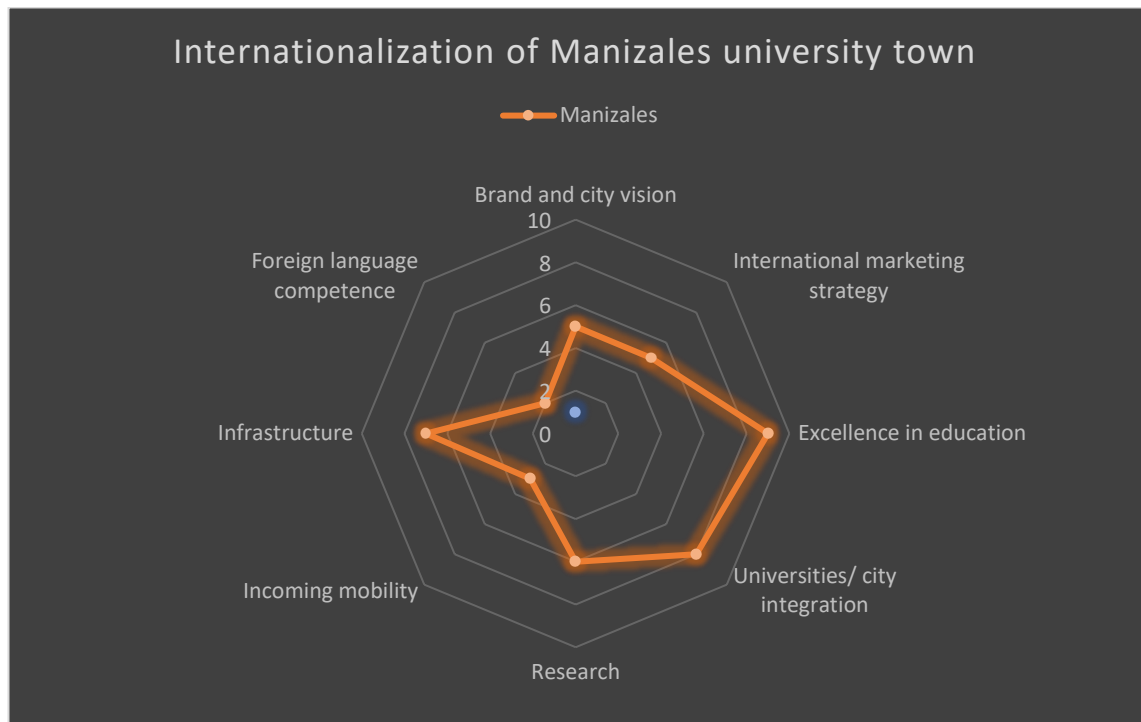


FIGURE 12. Internationalization of Manizales university town

Conclusions from the comparison show the following attributes as international university town

- Excellence in education is the highest factor. Four out of six main universities own quality certification given by the national ministry of education
- University/ city integration also scored high. The town has organically grown to become a university town. The population recognises the impact of students in the city economically, socially and culturally.
- Infrastructure scored medium, as still a specific services portfolio has to be created to students including preferential access to public transport and other public and private services. A differentiated services portfolio for international students is a “must” to have.
- Research also scored medium. There is a lot of research happening in the universities, however a common SUMA research platform and common international cooperation projects have to be promoted to ensure more visibility on the international scene and to be able to find grants, university partnerships and foreign researchers.

- Incoming mobility scored low. During the years 2016 to 2019, before the Pandemia, the total incoming student mobility for a period longer than a week to a semester, was 800 incoming students (Manizales university campus 2021). This compared to the total visiting university population gives a very low score (0.0118% average per year), providing that some top Latin-american universities have in general a high percentage of international students. For example, the university of Buenos Aires has around 117.000 students, being 25% incoming ones, or the university of Chile has around 39,000 students, being 0.05% the incoming ones. (QS top universities 2023).
- Foreign language competence. Taking into account student survey results, only around 30% of students are following a foreign language course. The majority study English with an average proficiency level of B1. For the city to be truly internationalized, English proficiency has to improve.
- City vision and marketing. Although, Manizales as “university town” is a very clear concept to everyone, not all are able to recognise a name or a vision for it. In terms of the international marketing strategy, some branding material has been done for international events, however the marketing strategy shall be consistent with the vision, name and the current internationalization plan proposed on this thesis.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

I would like to first highlight some general conclusions and learnings about the current thesis, further on, I would present some conclusions on methodology, data analysis and the research questions.

First of all, the current thesis is a consolidation of the views, perceptions and ambitions of visiting university students, deans, directors, and managerial personnel of the main universities in the city of Manizales, Colombia. The city, has been informally considered as a university town for many years as per its intrinsic characteristics. With the endorsement of the universities network, including deans and directors of international offices, this study not only shows the views of participants on the city's internationalization status but also proposes a Plan for internationalization as a final result. As the research followed an inductive process and implemented a case study methodology, new knowledge was formed and consolidated into a proposal for internationalization of the university town.

Primary data allowed defining which key factors for internationalization the university town shall focus on, enabling to answer a sub-research question. Literature review allowed providing a context on the characteristics of university towns and those of Manizales as university town, enabling to answer a sub-research question. Outputs on primary analysed data, served as the basis to develop the proposal for internationalization, enabling to answer the research question, therefore the proposal as part of the thesis conclusion, validates the research question.

Consolidating the theoretical research was a challenging task, as there was no available information directly on the topic "Internationalization of university towns". Different angles were looked at, to be able to provide a theoretical context, for example, internationalization of universities was widely available and used, internationalization of cities was reviewed, and characteristics of university towns was analysed. These different angles provided enough context and information to extract some "factors for internationalization of university town", existing in different university towns around the world. This was a newly

developed concept I proposed in the study, used further to explore and analyse primary data, as well as to make a comparison of the internationalization of Manizales against those factors. This new concept may serve as the basis for further research on internationalization of university towns, as those are a driven force for the development of cities and regions.

The thesis scope was too broad. The research was performed, and the proposal for internationalization was developed as part of the results, however some elements of study could not be deeply analysed, like searching deep on university internationalization theories or making a profound theoretical zoom to each factor for internationalization. The practical work (primary research) took longer time and preparation than expected, as three different data collection methods were used and analysed. The final consolidation of a “Proposal for internationalization” entailed a very systematic structure and solid presentation, which required knowledge, context and time. The topic and expected results provided an inner motivation throughout the development of the thesis, although there were many elements and variables to manage, representing a special commitment to deliver proper results.

All primary information and data gathered on the study, has been confidentially managed and only disclosure has been made on results. The information has been managed with all research principles to keep privacy, accuracy, and confidence on the data itself and on results. All information has been used and manipulated according to the data protection policies of the university and of those from the target population.

The data research procedures were performed under the considerations of the responsible conduct of research, in terms of manipulating the data, obtaining required permits, respecting previous works on the topic, and complying with standards.

Different literature sources have validated Manizales as university town, as per its characteristics and features. Being able to compare Gumprecht’s (2009) characteristics of a university town against Manizales, and realising that it meets around all conditions, was a very satisfactory point throughout the thesis



development. It was a critical point to conclude, as “The internationalization of Manizales university town” was defined as the study object, therefore having the object to be formally validated, was an indicator to ensure a consistent and credible research. Besides the quality education domain, factors like being a cultural hub, allowing partnerships government-university-enterprise to boost economic growth, and proving to have high quality of life standards, make Manizales a very attractive city for visiting students. This validation, also enabled answering the sub-research question – What are the key characteristics of Manizales as university town?.

The following step was to recognise which differentiating factors played a role on internationalization of the university town, and how the internationalization level could be further enhanced. Therefore, the primary data research was to support finding those answers.

The study results may not provide a generalisation theory, but an empirical result applicable to Manizales as university town, nevertheless the literature review, results and internationalization proposal may support other research processes on the internationalization topic.

The access to the population was a success factor for the study, despite having three different data collection methods, a satisfactory sample was employed for each method. This allowed inferring reliable conclusions about the whole population. It was possible with the support of Manizales university campus for endorsing the thesis and enabling access to the population.

The technique used to gather data on focus groups was very innovative from the participants’ views, as it allowed sharing individual perspectives without being influenced by other group members, and having data collected on real time. As the online tool gathered the answers, there was more time for discussion. I truly encourage colleagues who are on the same research path to use such innovative techniques on their data collection.

Quantitative data analysis was straightforward for drawing conclusions, opposite to qualitative data analysis in which a great volume of raw data was available,

including interviews records. It took a long time to apply the data reduction method through the categorization technique. Data was reduced to its smaller components to allow identifying and forming categories. The personal learning process was very interesting for this exercise and future endeavours.

One of the key data results, was based on university integration strategies, as a key factor to allow internationalization. Responses from the different collection methods, show the need to pursuit and implement common platforms among universities, on international cooperation, mobility, research and joint programs. Interviews and focus groups revealed the alignment on both participants, to create common plans on those subjects, for enhancing internationalization driven by collective university actions. These common platforms are very much aligned with the literature on internationalization of universities, in which mobility, research, joint programs, and international cooperation plans, are the key strategies that universities implement to support internationalization (Table 1). The main purpose of having common processes across universities in Manizales, is to sum up individual university efforts into more robust strategies and results to showcase internationally.

All three data collection methods allowed extracting common factors that currently differentiate Manizales as university town, those consistent factors across results were:

- Intercultural and economic university ecosystem
- High quality of life
- Excellence in education

When comparing those, to the factors for internationalization, all three factors are already associated as such: excellence in education, high quality of life linked to appropriate infrastructure, and intercultural university ecosystem linked to university integration around the city.

The evaluation of Manizales against the factors for internationalization, have shown those differentiating factors as the ones with higher score in the ranking, being excellence in education on the first position, university integration on the second position and high quality of life on the third position (Figure 12). Thus, we

can conclude that research data results, are consistent with evaluation of current factors for internationalization of the university town. Moreover, those factors linked to Gumprecht's (2009) characteristics of university towns, are supported by 1. Good living standards, 2. Town's culture shaped by students, 3. Networks among actors to support greater economic growth.

This triangulation of results, validate the sub-research question: what are the key factors for internationalization of Manizales as university town? We have already extracted the current differentiating factors to support internationalization. Factors enhancing internationalization are still to be validated.

Data drawn from the primary research collection methods, show a mix of responses in terms of potential differentiating factors enhancing internationalization of the university town. Especially student answers to this question, have shown a diverse range of variables. Thus, a categorising exercise was performed to pull the common factors across responses. Three factors were identified as follows:

- Foreign language proficiency
- Incoming mobility
- Improved university infrastructure

Comparing those to the factors for internationalization, incoming mobility is directly associated to the in-mobility factor, improved university infrastructure is linked to appropriate infrastructure for students and future workers, and foreign language proficiency is not part of the factors for internationalization. This can be explained by the fact that university towns do not express this need as a must-have, while it may be already tacitly established as the minimum basis, a non-negotiable factor. Nevertheless, I do consider, foreign language proficiency is a must-have as part of the internationalization process. Indeed, a university town could try to internationalize without having a foreign language proficiency, but its internationalization target may focus on students with the same native language, otherwise the internationalization process as such may not be materialized.

Appropriate infrastructure for students (factor for internationalization) was linked to high quality of life and improved university infrastructure (results). Both

concepts are very different, high quality of life refers to general characteristics of the town that make it a good place to live in, while improved university infrastructure is more specialized to providing differentiated services to students. Thought, the first result is already attained in Manizales, the second one is to be developed.

Reviewing those factors against Manizales's status (Figure 12), show that incoming mobility and foreign language proficiency are the lowest in the ranking, and the recommendation on the infrastructure factor, is to create preferential student services. This triangulation of results, confirm that primary research results are consistent to the framework of factors for internationalization, and the evaluation of Manizales against those.

One can therefore conclude that the differentiating factors of Manizales as university town are:

- Intercultural and economic university ecosystem
- High quality of life
- Excellence in education

And, that the university town must focus on the following factors, to promote and enhance its internationalization:

- Foreign language proficiency
- Incoming mobility
- Improved university infrastructure

These factors were used as critical pillars to define the Proposal for internationalization of Manizales as university town. This proposal allows answering the thesis research question, as it is based on 1. Key literature on internationalization used in the current study 2. The perspectives of the population (students, university staff and university leaders) and what they think needs happen to improve and promote the internationalization of Manizales.

## 6 PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION OF MANIZALES AS UNIVERSITY TOWN

Once obtaining the theoretical and field research results, the information was used to develop the following proposal for internationalization of Manizales as university town.

Objective: To propose an internationalization plan for Manizales as university town.

Aims:

1. To define the differentiated factors Manizales offers when a potential student is choosing its study place from a set of different alternatives.
2. To describe the possible and desirable internationalization level the city will aim for
3. To define the shared vision of Manizales university town as a real and attractive option

The following are the differentiating factors for enhancing internationalization of Manizales University town:

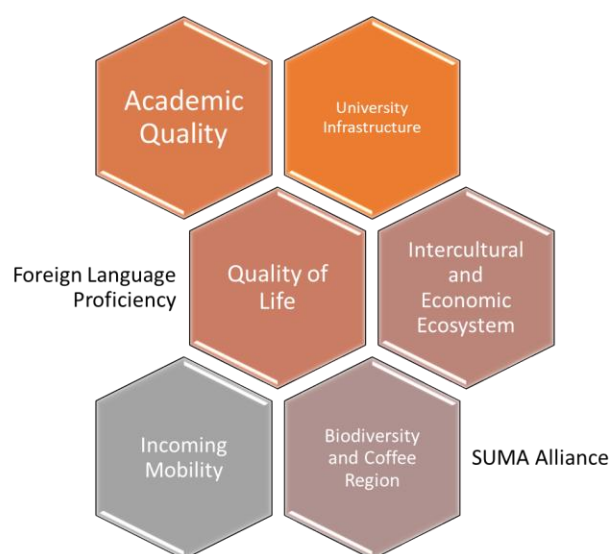


FIGURE 13. Differentiating factors for internationalization

After defining the key features owned by Manizales as university town, a proposed structure for developing the plan was defined. This structure aimed at going from general themes to particular strategies.

A timeframe was defined up to 2032 to implement the proposed plan. This year was chosen, to be aligned with the local government plan which ends on 2032.

Four different sections were designed as such:

- Axes: general themes
- Pillars: sub-categories presented under each theme
- Challenges: they are the proposed goals under each pillar
- Proposed actions: individual strategies to develop each goal.

#### **Proposed Structure. Internationalization Plan “Manizales University Town 2032”**



FIGURE 14. Proposed internationalization plan structure

Following, the differentiating axes are set for Manizales, as general and critical themes for enhancing the town’s internationalization.

The circle lies on the internationalization as the key goal, followed by education as the main critical theme. As a third layer is infrastructure and finally, differentiation and positioning viewed as tangible value-added propositions for the city.

### **Differentiating factors Axes. Manizales University Town 2032.**

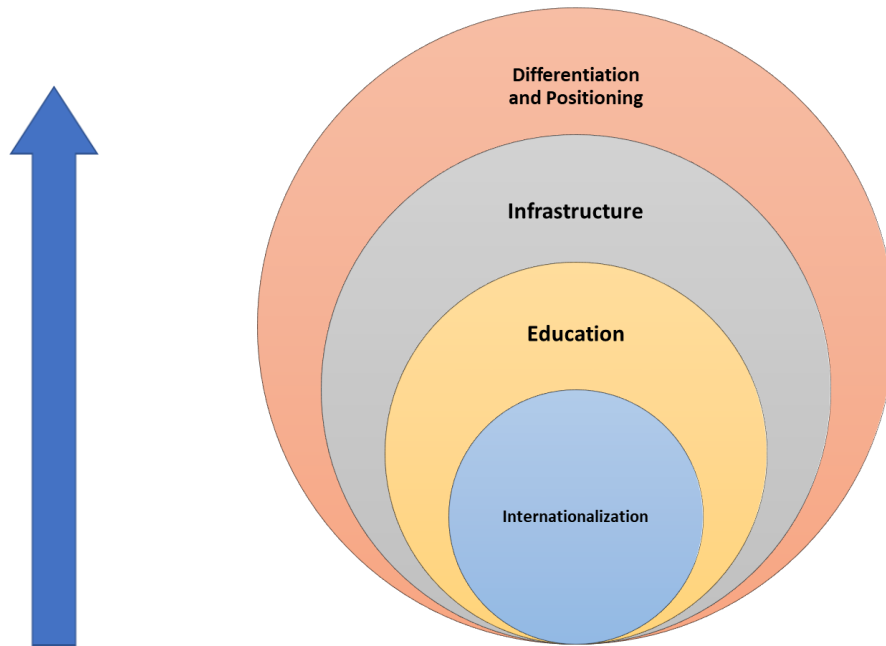


FIGURE 15. Differentiating factors axes

Once the three axes were defined, a set of pillars for each axis was proposed. These pillars become the key subcategories in which goals and strategies will be supported.

### **Differentiating Pillars. Manizales University Town 2032.**

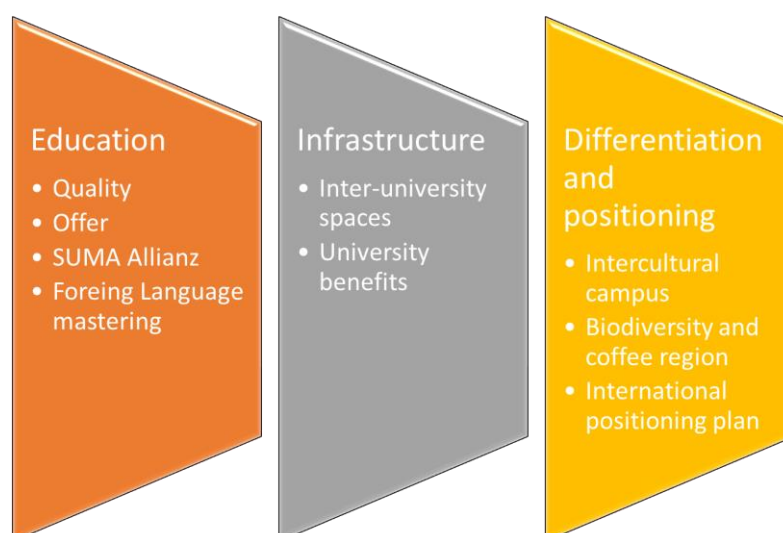


FIGURE 16. Differentiating pillars

Finally, for each pillar, challenges and proposed actions have been defined, as follows.

### Education Axis – Pillars, challenges and Actions

TABLE 6. Education axis. Pillars and challenges

Pillars	Challenges
Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% Universities, faculties and programs certified on a national level</li> <li>50% universities on international ranking as well as Manizales as university town</li> <li>Internationalization of Higher education</li> </ol>
Offer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs with double degree with foreign universities</li> <li>Each university with at least 10% of programs with courses in English</li> </ol>
SUMA Allianz	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unified international Cooperation Strategy</li> </ol>
Foreign language Mastering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% university information in English. Website, faculties, programs, research and extension projects</li> <li>40% students with B2+ English level, 20% lecturers with B2+ English level</li> </ol>



TABLE 7. Education axis. Proposed actions

<b>Proposed Actions</b>
1. Create a SUMA committee for National Certification and International recognition to individually support each university 2. Define and implement plan for each university to apply for QS world university ranking, including a plan for Manizales as university town 3. Define common action plan with individual university execution for curriculum, teaching and research internationalization
1. Elaborate working plan for double degrees with Spanish speaking Sister cities: Buenos Aires, Puebla, Cuenca, Valencia 2. Define proposal for Lecturers mobility with English speaking Sister and learning cities: Gainesville, Cork, Bonn, Tampere
1. Formulate SUMA action framework for international cooperation with priority on : 1. Sister cities 2. Learning cities 3. Potential sister cities 2. Define and present bilateral cooperation proposals including technical assistance and financial resources as university town
1. Set up SUMA foreign language committee to define common university actions on: Oficial Tandem Program for universities, international Summer courses, Local spanish summer course, Program for international assistants on university courses

### **Infrastructure Axis – Pillars, challenges and actions**

TABLE 8. Infrastructure axis. Pillars and challenges

<b>Pillars</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<b>SUMA Allianz - Inter-university spaces</b>	1. Common university Campus. Open use of spaces and inter-university services
<b>University benefits</b>	1. Services portfolio with reduced prices for students: transport, university restaurants, inter-university services and public services 2. Special services portfolio for foreign students

TABLE 9. Infrastructure axis. Proposed actions

<b>Proposed Actions</b>
1. Set up agreements and inter-university subsidies to warrant access to common student services portfolio 2. Set up a common university ID 3. Execute infrastructure projects through the existing Campus Manizales Plan: university corridor, central university park, alternative transport means
1. Set up SUMA agreements with third parties: cable transport, bus transport network, university restaurants, bookstores, parks, cultural centers, university related shops 2. Create a foreign students services portfolio including: Spanish language courses, city and regional tours, social projects

## Differentiation and positioning Axis – Pillars, challenges and actions

TABLE 10. Differentiation and positioning axis. Pillars and challenges

Pillars	Challenges
<b>Intercultural Campus</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase students mobility on 30% per year, lecturers and researchers on 20% per year (Brain attraction policy)</li> <li>2. Create intercultural Lab</li> </ol>
<b>Biodiversity and coffee region</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect biodiversity and coffee region spaces to university strategy</li> </ol>
<b>International Positioning</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unified International Positioning Plan as University Town</li> </ol>

TABLE 11. Differentiation and positioning axis. Proposed actions

Proposed Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate unified SUMA international cooperation framework with focus on: 1. Sister cities, 2. Learning cities, 3. Potential sister cities</li> <li>2. Promote research on intercultural topics. Promote scholarships and mobility programs with focus on interculturality</li> <li>3. Document and y define the traceability of national origins and cultural groups as well as foreign population in all universities</li> <li>4. Propose and implement an agenda for international and cultural activities as SUMA allianz</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote the Biouniversity project around all universities and include green university areas into the project</li> <li>2. Propose actions to recognise the city and its universities as part of a cultural ecosystem and a coffee region ecosystem</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define a slogan and university town branding package highlighting the differentiated factors nent an unified website as university town in Spanish/ English</li> <li>3. Design and make available printed and digital audiovisual material for marketing the university town</li> <li>4. Define a framework for positioning and partnering Sister cities, learning cities and potential sister cities</li> <li>5. Develop a timeline for executing mobility programs and international partnerships, application to international associations and networks and international fairs and events</li> </ol>

As a final exercise, according to the field research, and using the coding methodology, a value proposal for the town has been set to use as a communication tool, as follows:

### **Value proposal for Manizales**

**Proposed name:** Manizales University Campus

**Proposed recognition statement:** Manizales, knowledge, biodiversity and intercultural Campus

**Shared vision of the university town:** Manizales university campus is a hub of inter-university knowledge development, recognised for its high quality of life standards, its natural, economic, and intercultural ecosystems, and the kindness of its people.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. Interview on Internationalization of Manizales as University town

Population: University Deans

Objective: to understand your perceptions of Manizales' internationalization level as university town against Internationalization factors of university towns.

The following questions are a guide to our interview discussion. Those are to be answered from your Perception and Knowledge:

1. ¿What shall be the Internationalization objective of Manizales as university town by 2032?
2. ¿Which education quality factors are there at the universities of Manizales to attract national and foreign students?
3. ¿What are the major obstacles for Manizales to achieve high proficiency on a foreign language such as English?
4. ¿What is your long term visión for SUMA? Manizales University sistem
5. ¿What other actions could be done to increase integration among the universities in Manizales?
6. ¿Which entrepreneurship/ business cluster could be promoted as an attraction factor to attract more foreign students?
7. ¿Which local government actions are needed to attract more international students to Manizales' universities?
8. In terms of infrastructure, which buildings, roads, recreation areas etc, do you think are needed to integrate students with Manizales' population?
9. ¿How would you see Manizales internationally positioned as university town? ¿Which actions are needed to achieve this vision?
10. ¿What would be the differentiated factors to position Manizales as world/ regional class university town?
11. ¿Which branding would you give to Manizales as international university town?



## APPENDIX 2. Survey on Internationalization of Manizales as University Town

Population: Visiting university students in the city of Manizales

Objective: To understand your perceptions about the internationalization level of Manizales as university town

1. What is your age range?

Under 20 years

20 to 24

25 to 29

30 to 34

35 and over

2. Which university level are you undertaking?

Pre-grade

Specialization

Masters

Doctorate

3. How many years have you lived in Manizales as student?

Less than 1 year

Btw 1 and 2

Btw 3 and 4

5 years and more

4. ¿Why did you choose Manizales to study? Choose the most important three and select 1 to the most important, 2 Medium, 3 Less important from the three options.

- a. Excellence in education (The program and/ or the university)
- b. Research opportunities
- c. Specialised studies
- d. The university town (its image, security, quality of life, university atmosphere, costs)
- e. Future professional opportunities
- f. Future Entrepreneurship opportunities
- g. City infrastructure for students (city costs, lodging, eating, transport)
- h. ¿Other reasons?

5. ¿Do you study, or have you studied a foreign language while undertaking your studies in Manizales?

¿Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_ How  
many hours/ week? \_\_\_\_\_

¿If your answer was positive, which language and what is your highest achieved level within the European framework?

English	A1	A2	B1
	B2	C1	C2
French	A1	A2	B1
	B2	C1	C2

¿Another? \_\_\_\_\_ Which one? \_\_\_\_\_

A1	A2	B1
B2	C1	C2

6. ¿What has been your main obstacle to master a foreign language?

- Lack of time
- Lack of financing
- Pedagogical structure with low access to native speakers
- ¿Others?

7. ¿How would you evaluate the internationalization level of Manizales as university town?

High \_\_\_\_\_

Medium to High \_\_\_\_\_

Medium \_\_\_\_\_

Low to Medium \_\_\_\_\_

Low \_\_\_\_\_

I do not have information.

¿Why?

8. ¿Do you know the Program "Manizales University Campus"? please tell us what you know about it:

9. ¿In your perspective, which factors would increase Manizales internationalization level as university town? Please choose the most important two alternatives

- Greater research opportunities at universities
- Higher number of foreign lecturers

- c. Higher number of international students
- d. Higher local students competence of a foreign language
- e. More marketing and publicity internationally as university town
- f. Better student infrastructure to attract more foreign students
- g. ¿Another?

10. ¿What benefits/ features would you like to find in Manizales as university town?

11. People in your place of origin (relatives, friends), ¿Would be interested in going to Manizales to pursuit university studies? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
¿Why?

12. ¿How would you name Manizales university town to promote it internationally?

13. After your university experience in Manizales, would you suggest others to live and study in the city?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_  
¿Why? Please tell us your reasons

Please share any additional comments

Thanks for your collaboration.

### APPENDIX 3. Focus Groups on internationalization of Manizales as university town

Objective: To understand participants perceptions about the internationalization level of Manizales as university town

1. What are the city's differentiated factors to attract visiting students from other regions and foreigners?
2. Which actions would increase the integration of universities as an international positioning strategy?
3. What is the attractiveness of Manizales as university town?
4. How do you envision the international positioning of Manizales as university town in the year 2032?
5. What would be the differentiated factors positioning Manizales as a world class university town?
6. Which marketing strategies would you utilise to position Manizales internationally?
7. Which Brand would you give Manizales as university town to be internationally renowned?