

Image perception of Guadalajara city by foreign exchange students of the metropolitan area of Guadalajara

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Abstract

This text discusses the importance of cities and universities in recruiting international students, emphasizing the need to consider this population in city branding efforts. International students' mobility has increased globally, leading cities like London, Tokyo, Melbourne, and Montreal to adopt active policies to recruit international students. Reasons for recruiting international students vary, including countering aging populations, addressing skill shortages, and improving cultural diversity. Universities benefit financially and culturally from international students and gain knowledge from those coming from prestigious institutions. The text highlights the need to understand what attracts foreign students into a city like Guadalajara for academic exchange programs and the importance of using these elements to create a brand strategy.

Keywords: City image; city brand; perception; exchange students; student destination; para-diplomacy; higher education program; educational hubs; globalization.

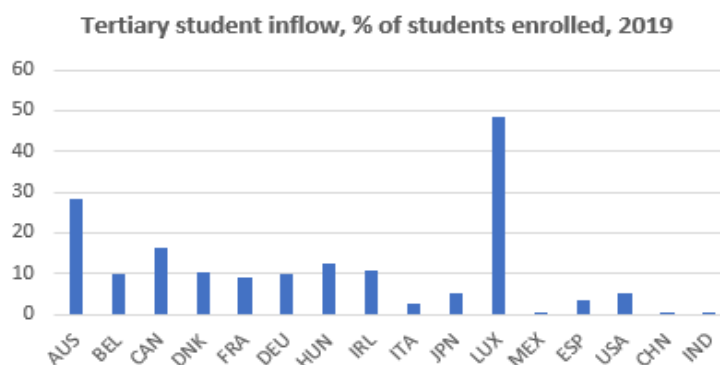
1. Summary

Cities are home to various types of public or consumers, so the efforts of the brand are created for both local citizens and tourism sector. However, many times it overlooks important groups such as foreign students, investors, residents etc.; therefore, if the aim is to catch the attention of this type of consumers, this must be reflected in the city brand.

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International students' mobility has risen in the last decades, not only in the traditional markets (Europe and United States) but also in new ones such as developing countries. A growing number of universities including, but not limited to London, Tokyo, Melbourne, and Montreal, have developed active policies to recruit international students. As globalization is one of the factors that has changed the landscape of higher education, it has caused an increase in competition among higher education institutions, as well as changes in the way they organize and collaborate with each other, leading to the establishment of higher education consortia and educational hubs. Such competition among institutions has been an essential part of the global environment.

Figure 1. International students' mobility (2017-2019)



Source. OECD (2022).

Several reasons explain the need for cities and universities to recruit international students (Van Winden, 2017):

- Cities and universities have many reasons to recruit foreign students, but they can differ from cities to universities. One of the main reasons cities recruit international students is to address the ongoing issue of an aging population.
- Furthermore, some cities are facing a lack of expertise in fields such as information technology, or research and development. Recruiting international students would be a solution to those problems if students decide to stay in the city or country after graduation. This is also a reason for a city to become more diverse in terms of culture, especially for cities or countries that have difficulties to compete on the international market.

- Finally, a city or region's image can be improved through international students (or scientists) help by being ambassadors after they move out again, in particular, for cities whose image is not optimal.

On the other hand, universities consider other reasons to recruit international students:

- There are financial reasons (only if students pay sufficiently high tuition fees, otherwise it is a loss for the receiving university).
- It reinforces cultural diversity, so that all students can benefit from the international experience, and it may improve the quality of their programs.
- In case the incoming students are coming from high level universities, they can share their knowledge to the receiving institution.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to determine the causes for foreign students to choose Guadalajara as the city of destination to conduct their academic exchange semester or year. The aim is to know those elements that are attractive to them and use them to create a branding strategy.

2. Introduction

As the world continues to globalize, the importance of individual and collective decision-making at the local level rises, resulting in the emergence of the global village² phenomenon. These decisions are structured within systems of cities, which become key units for decision-making, management, and driving economic, social, and cultural transformation. Likewise, internationalization has allowed the search for greater opportunities for international collaboration and cooperation. These have intensified and evolved over the years due to the influence of the economic, political, social, and cultural context of the different regions of our planet.

² The term "global village" was introduced in 1962 by Marshall McLuhan, in the book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. McLuhan describes the global village as the effect of electronic communication on culture. He argued that these new media technologies create a homogeneous space and eliminate information time - the time between the source of a media message and its target (Maoz, 2011, p. 4).

Globalization, as an economic, technological, social, and cultural process, has led to significant changes in the promotional and sales strategies of cities. It has also transformed the network of relationships among such strategies. As a result, it has given way to an enormous competition to attract tourists, investments, talent, intellectual capital, business location etc. This situation is pushing many cities to develop and promote themselves through marketing techniques, as a kind of brand focused on the city. Countries, cities and even regions compete for positioning and having a positive reputation that gives rise to a strong competitive advantage. As Lara mentioned, cities have developed strategies and mechanisms for attracting investment and promoting trade to sustain their attributes, which provide economic and social development opportunities for their populations in an effort to provide livelihoods and opportunities for progress (Lara, *et al.*, 2015, p. 20).

Local development is thus positioned as an alternative for the globalization of the economic space, which brings with it a context of competition among cities: competition to recruit inhabitants, workers, visitors, investors, companies, tourists, etc. This growing inter-territorial competition, which results in the emergence of a market of cities, lays the foundations for using business management tools, specifically marketing and branding, to compete in this market (Calvo, 2013, para. 1). In order to achieve internationalization, it is required the creation of actions or strategies that allow the integration of these international, intercultural or global dimensions into higher education where it is important to take into account geographical contexts due to cultural or political aspects can differ from one country to another and interfere when it comes to promoting a place or institution. To carry out this process, the participation of different actors is required, such as students, Higher Education Institutions (HEI), and governments, among others. They work together to formulate strategies focused on the implementation of actions with an international perspective that seek to improve the educational sector (Altbach *et al.*, 2009).

Educational destinations or educational hubs have emerged in different regions of the world during the last decades in response to globalization trends and internationalization of higher education. While it can be interpreted that the establishment of an international educational destination, or educational hub in a city, area or country can be favorable for

the economy, it can also be a tool to influence the development of the internationalization of higher education (Knight, 2014). It is important to mention that the internationalization of higher education can be presented as policies or programs that are promoted by governments, educational systems, or HEIs in order to face globalization.

A city brand is the very name of the city and the concept of it which is associated with a series of unique and exclusive attributes by which it is possible to identify, recognize, and differentiate that city from others. For example, its people, its streets, its art, and its urban space grouped into a symbol of identity. It communicates to the inhabitants and visitors the promise of the present and future of the city: a place to know, where one lives well and where it is easy to invest and make roots. It is the essence of a city. Elements of a brand identity include culture, visuals, symbols, slogans, values, mission, and vision (Spacey, 2016, para. 1).

For many years, the second biggest city in Mexico, Guadalajara, was left without a city brand (Wright, 2016), even though Guadalajara had identified symbols but not the concept of a city brand. An identity helps a city to increase trade and tourism and positioning itself as an attractive destination for tourism and investments. During his introduction speech to the Guadalajara city brand in 2016, Aristóteles Sandoval (2016), former mayor of Guadalajara, stated that for many years the private sector had requested the need for a city brand for Guadalajara and efforts have been made to be able to have an instrument of this type. However, there is something now that had not existed in the past, i.e., the political will to build agreements.

Moreover, during the presentation of the city brand *Guadalajara, Guadalajara*, Enrique Alfaro, former mayor of Guadalajara, Mexico, states that:

The essence of a city is part of its history and culture. A city brand is not a government slogan: it is an example of identity. With a city brand we can speak to the people, the neighborhoods, the region, the country, and the world. (2016, para. 2)

The Metropolitan Area in Guadalajara developed a new city brand strategy in 2016, its slogan is based on Pepe Guízar's famous mariachi song: "Guadalajara, Guadalajara," a mythical and internationally known musical composition that serves as example to

transmit the essence and cultural identity of this city. However, the slogan has been much criticized because it did not represent the cultural richness that the city possesses (Parra, 2018, para. 2).

According to Instituto de *Planeación y Gestión del Desarrollo del Área Metropolitana de Guadalajara* - IMEPLAN, the main intention of launching the brand was not to attract tourism, but rather serve as an element or mechanism of identity for the people of Guadalajara at a national and international level with the identification of three strategic objectives. These are named in the *Libro Blanco 2017-2021* Volume 5 of IMEPLAN; “firstly, the construction of a metropolitan identity. Secondly, local and global positioning through socialization actions that include linking with various leaders, sectors, and associations to promote and disseminate the brand. Thirdly, collaboration with public and private entities to define the construction of the brand identity” (IMEPLAN, 2021, pp. 41-45).

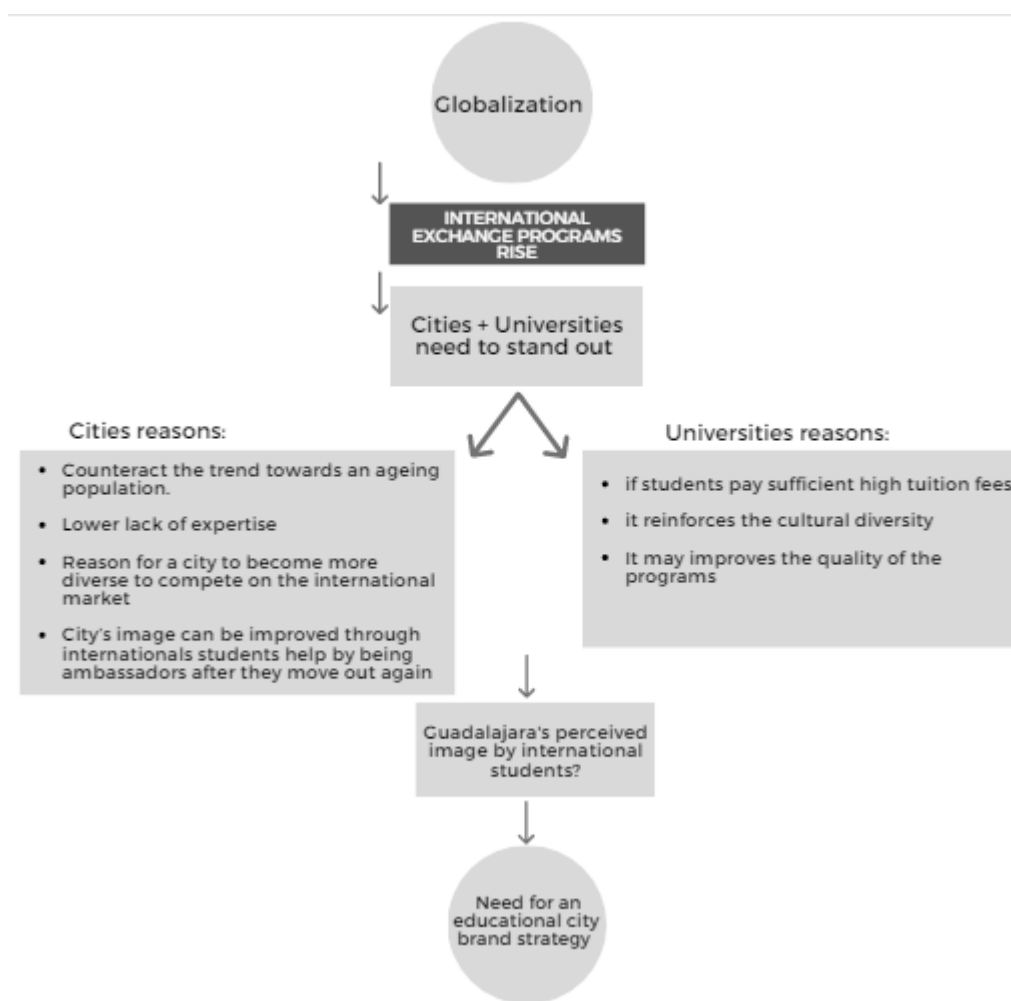
Guadalajara’s city brand is identified on pillars like the meeting point of an entire country, a place where traditions and history characterize the region. The city also has an important artistic and cultural background that is well positioned in the world like the city of tequila, *Mariachi*³ -a genre of Regional Mexican music-, and *Charrería Mexicana* – the national sport-. Guadalajara is a mix of modern and avant-garde culture that promises an attractive future for the city (Guadalajara, Guadalajara, 2016).

The focus of this research is based on the foreigner’s point of view on Guadalajara city image because they are part of understanding a city brand well. They see the city with a new eye and a different perspective than natives that have known their city since they were little. Moreover, foreigners have an important impact on “word-of-mouth strategy” when it concerns tourism (Nielsen, 2012). In a marketing context, it is initially a phenomenon of oral dissemination of information or opinions about a product, service, or organization. According to Bathelot (2019), “word of mouth” is generally spontaneous, but it can also be encouraged or rewarded through sponsorship actions. It is generally positive (recommendation effect), but it can also be a negative warning.

³ Mariachi, small Mexican musical ensemble composed of a variety of mostly stringed instruments. In addition to referring to an ensemble, the term mariachi is also used for the individual performer of mariachi music or for the music itself. Mariachi has long been considered a uniquely Mexican sound, representing a homegrown tradition that embraces both indigenous and foreign elements (Encyclopedia Britannica 2016, para. 1).

Finally, this project can provide the Guadalajara brand managers with a concrete idea of how foreign students perceive Guadalajara as a Mexican city and what its characteristics are. In this way, the brand of Guadalajara can be improved, adapted to the image that *Tapatíos* –demonym of people residing in Guadalajara– and foreigners have of this city.

Figure 2. Conceptualization study

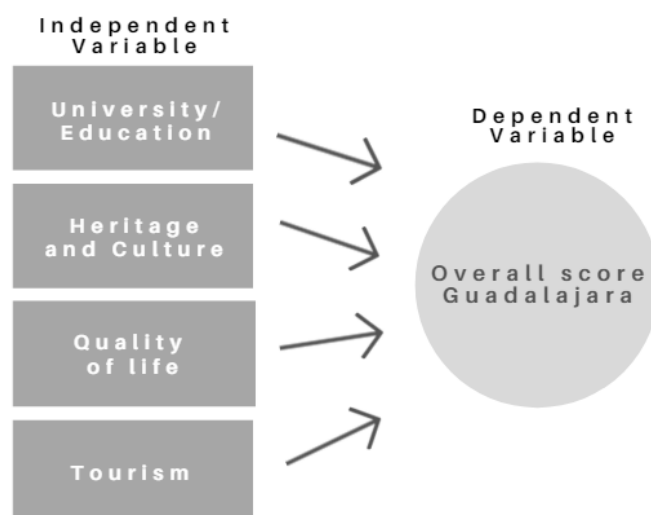


Source. Own elaboration.

3. Research method

The research is focused on a case study, a particular research method that allows the study of a phenomenon in a natural context, in an exploratory or confirmatory way, depending on the objectives of the research (Gómez *et al.*, 2010, p. 167). To deepen this approach, Rivas (2006, p. 163) says that case studies are used to understand a phenomenon. These include the results of the study, the rationale and situation for studying the case, the context of the study, the design of the research, the presentation of the data, and the findings.

Figure 3. Theoretical-methodological research model



Source. Own elaboration.

The theoretical-methodological research model will serve to explain the image that exchange students have of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area in the theoretical aspect. The theory sustains that there are 4 situational variables that influence the image of a place for international students; these are the education, heritage and culture, the quality of life, and tourism. The AMG image model will help Guadalajara define its city brand, the image it wants to project, and likeness in the future, and thus positively persuade foreigners to visit the AMG.

3.1 Universe

The universe to be considered for this research is all the exchange students that are going to study during the semester of August-December 2019 at the *Universidad de Guadalajara*, *Universidad Panamericana*, and *Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara*. There are exactly eight campuses located in the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara by the University of Guadalajara - UdeG: CUCEA, CUAAD, CUCSH, CUCS, CUCBA, CUCEI (1995), CUTONALA (2012) and the new one, CUTlajomulco (2020). From the UdeG, only those with the most exchange students were chosen for this study (CUCEA, CUAAD, CUCSH, CUCS).

3.2 Sample

Considering the conditions of the pandemic, 152 responses were received from international students from all over the world through an online survey sent via e-mail to the aforementioned universities. The total incoming students at the UdeG for January-June 2022 semester are 213 international students (Universidad de Guadalajara, 2022). The Autonomous University of Guadalajara – UAG received 22 students for the same semester. This establishes a universe of 235 international students. The required sample size would be at least 147 survey responses according to the following computation. Thus, the sample obtained is representative.

$N = 235$ (Total population).

$Z\alpha = 1.96$ to the square.

$p = 5\%$.

$q = 1 - p = 1 - 0.05 = 0.95$.

$d = 5\%$.

$$n = \frac{N * Z_{\alpha}^2 * p * q}{d^2 * (N - 1) + Z_{\alpha}^2 * p * q} = 147$$

To summarize the most relevant aspects of the proposed methodology, Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the research.

Table 1. Technical Data Sheet of the methodology employed

Subject of study	The exchange student of the Universidad de Guadalajara, Universidad Panamericana, Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara of the academic year 2019-2020
Approach	Quantitative Qualitative
Type	• Correlational • Descriptive
Method	Case study
Data collection techniques	• Online survey • Documental
Sample	152
Sources of information	Databases, scientific journals, books, websites, scientific articles, theses, among others
Software used	IBM SPSS Statistics 21.0

Source. Own elaboration.

4. Summary

A city brand has three main objectives: to reinforce the identity and sense of belonging of its inhabitants, to promote its national and international positioning, and to be a vehicle that represents the promise of the city in the world. This is possible to achieve only if the brand reflects the essence of its city and, at the same time, becomes a symbol of it. In the case of Guadalajara, there was an additional challenge: to succeed in representing the nine municipalities that gather the metropolitan area.

The principle of a metropolitan brand, unlike that of a city brand, does not necessarily need to focus on fostering a sense of belonging among residents. Given that the

metropolitan area encompasses several municipalities, it is essential to establish a connection that unites these municipalities into one cohesive entity, known as the metropolitan brand. A metropolitan brand differs from other city brands due to the tools it needs to compete at a national and international level. It must consolidate the various identities and images of several municipalities into a single brand in which all the municipalities will be identified.

4.1 Guadalajara identity

Bell & De Shalit's (2011) idea will be used as an example to understand the "identity" of a city. Bell and De Shalit argue that some cities express and prioritize different social and political values, what they call "ethos" or "spirit" of a city. The planning of cities, the design and architecture of buildings, the language of street signs, the presence of women in public streets, the presence of pedestrian and bicycle friendly-streets, and even the conversation topics of taxi-drivers reflect different social and political values. They argue that the ethos of cities also influences the way people evaluate cities, also say that people often make comparative judgments about the ways of life in different cities, almost as if cities were people with distinct personalities. These judgments are often firmer than those of countries, which tend to be more abstract and imaginary entities than cities. Cities are often more open to the affection and identification of outsiders. However, contemporary political theorists never theorize about these city-based judgments. Debates are usually about whether particular nations or the whole world should be those of normative theorizing. Nevertheless, why do not city dwellers who live in cities struggle to nurture and promote their particular ways of life in the political process?

As it can be seen, historically speaking, the identity of the city has gone through many conceptualizations, and continues to be defined over the years, aspects that perhaps at one time were not considered, now are. It should be emphasized that it is not possible to let the right someone to judge and define one single person, to identify a city, as it has already been mentioned, it is a process that will depend on the passage of time, and on a collective proposal and acceptance that frames not only the history but a whole set of variables.

The "Perla Tapatía" (Tapatian Pearl)

The city earned its title for its beauty and pleasant climate. The expression represents something almost perfect. However, the title refers to the crown jewel, in other words, the "Perla Tapatía."

According to the Metropolitan Citizen report (Jalisco Cómo Vamos, 2015: para. 7), the word "tapatio" refers to native people of Guadalajara city which is a derivation of the word "tapatíotl," meaning "worth three." The "tapatíotl" were three small sacks containing 10 cocoa beans each. These beans served as currency for the Indigenous inhabitants of the Atemajac Valley to barter merchandise in the city's Tianguis during the 17th century.

"Mexican Silicon Valley"

One of the most recent and not fully positioned identities that the city has recently adopted is the "Mexican Silicon Valley," where *Forbes* mentions that this is due to the Knapp and the Bismarck and Belsasar Lepe brothers, all of them born in Jalisco. They left *Google* to establish their online video services company called Ooyala, with the purpose of improving and personalizing the television viewing experience, reaching almost 200 million people worldwide with offices all over the world. However, they decided to put one of their offices in their homeland because the city shelters a technological and innovation cluster (Forbes, 2013).

Throughout time, the city has assumed various identities recognized both nationally and internationally, which have changed over the years. There is a reaffirmation that no identity is fixed or immovable.

4.2 Guadalajara, Guadalajara Brand

The Guadalajara city brand was officially established in 2016 by the Metropolitan Coordination Board of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, which consists of the municipalities of El Salto, Guadalajara, Ixtlahuacán de los Membrillos, Juanacatlán,

Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá, Zapopan, and Zapotlanejo. First of all, it should be said that the rights to the Guadalajara city brand belong to the Guadalajara City Council and will be transferred to the Metropolitan Planning Institute (IMEPLAN), as mentioned by the brand's director when interviewed.

Its geographic-strategic location has allowed the development of the region, as well as privileged communication and accessibility. Especially, with regard to issues related to the economy, and the establishment of large scientific and technological innovation companies, which has allowed the AMG to be identified as a pole of attraction for human talent in the region. In addition to this, it is worth mentioning that the education sector, which in recent decades has consolidated and worked together for the development of the state, has focused on the training of human resources for these large companies.

In 2016, the Government of the State of Jalisco, approved unanimously the *Guadalajara*, *Guadalajara* city brand strategy. From the beginning, it was a metropolitan project. The representatives of the nine municipalities had the political will and vision to integrate around the same identity with the common goal of recovering the sense of belonging of citizens around the idea of a city, rather than a municipality of the same (Grajeda, 2020).

Mexico is known and recognized for its music. *Cielito Lindo*, *México Lindo*, *Son de la Negra*, *Jarabe Tapatio*, *la Bamba* and *Guadalajara* are among the most emblematic songs of the Mexican culture. Precisely *Guadalajara*, composed by Pepe Guízar, is a symbol of the city that reinforces and provokes sensations and emotions well positioned inside and outside the country. The song has the characteristic rhythms of the *mariachi*, and its lyrics take up essential elements of the city and region's identity, summing them up into a single phrase: *Guadalajara, Guadalajara*. The song has been interpreted by Mexican icons such as Pedro Infante or Vicente Fernández and famous international artists such as Elvis Presley, Nat King Cole, or Plácido Domingo.

For the promotion of the city brand, the organization created a new version of Pepe Guízar's song. The new version has been well accepted by the public. The presentation of the logo not only emphasizes talking about the roots, but also about the present, about what *Tapatíos* are and what they want to become. In the video, they managed to modernize with rock guitars, drums, and artists from Jalisco without destroying the

original song “Guadalajara, Guadalajara.” They succeeded in finding a balance between traditional and modernity. The video, as some believed, was not intended to “introduce Guadalajara to foreigners,” but to socialize the brand in the city. Whether people liked it or not, the mission was a success because everyone knows it.

Why do rankings matter?

Methodologically, scientists do not agree with relying on city indexes; however, for “city marketers” these indexes do matter. According to Acuto *et al.* (2019), the city rankings represent very tangible evidence of a key data-driven trend in city leadership in the 2000s. City rankings not only embody the growing global demand for urban metrics, but also compare city performance measurement internationally. Benchmarks stimulate international thinking by informing and influencing the practice of urban governance.

Research undertaken by *Business of Cities* shows that since 2007, more than 500 different urban benchmarks have been published worldwide. City indexes and comparators have become incredibly famous and are remarkably diverse depending on the scope of the topic they cover. In an increasingly urbanized era, with increasingly competitive cities, these measures have an important impact on the way cities conceive their place in the world. Benchmarks are becoming increasingly important on how urban centers see themselves in a “world of cities,” it is becoming a determining point on how cities compare to each other. Benchmarks have taken an increasingly global perspective and can no longer afford not taking these rankings seriously. The number of cities appearing in benchmarks continues to grow so that between 2014 and 2018 the cumulative total of cities almost tripled.

Anttiroiko (2014) considers that rankings have quality problems and potential biases related to special interests, making them problematic in many ways. Yet, having access to a better understanding of the relative positions of cities according to given criteria due to increased transparency, is a positive thing.

5. Survey results

As mentioned before, statistical and qualitative treatment of data obtained from the surveys was carried out. The following results were obtained:

1. The first part of the survey describes the profile of international students by gender, country of residence, area of study and host university in the AMG. This study was conducted on the basis of an online survey sent by e-mail. A total of 152 surveys were answered. 32.20% (49) of respondents were men, 65.8% (100) women and 2% (3) preferred to remain anonymous. International students came mainly from France (17.8%), Germany (16.4%), Colombia (15.1%) and Spain (8.6%). According to the survey, the students are taking one of the following areas of study: economic and business science (46.7%), arts and design (24.3%), social science and humanities (15.1%) or subjects related to civil engineering, industrial engineering, architecture, and construction (7.2%).
2. The second part of the survey reflects the image that international students have about the city. To begin with, it was important to know if the students already knew about Guadalajara and surprisingly 73.7% of the respondents did not know the city. Then, criteria by which students have chosen their destination were evaluated and the following items emerged: more than 90% of the students emphasized the culture, food, cost of living, sightseeing, and nature. Then, it was followed by criteria by which they chose Guadalajara as their academic exchange destination. These include culture, food, climate, cost of living, nature, and sightseeing. The last question about the city image was directed to which aspects the students associate with the city after having experienced some months living in the AMG. The students do associate Guadalajara with the following aspects: alcohol: tequila (78.9%), the song Guadalajara, Guadalajara (5.2%), mariachis (80.2%), tacos (77%), the Historic Downtown (66.4%), and the Academic Quality of metropolitan schools in the city (52%).
3. In the third part of the survey, the tourism aspect of the city was examined. The first question evaluated the quality of the means of communication through which they got to know the tourist attractions. Among the most effective ones were included: through Mexican friends (88.8%), from the Internet (65.1%), from the University

(57.9%), from word of mouth (53.3%), and from social media (50%). Among the favorite places of foreign students in and around the AMG, stand: Tlaquepaque (67.1%), Tequila (60.5%), the Historical Downtown (57.9%), and the Barranca de Huentitán (57.9%). The most common means of transport used were bus (78.9%) and Uber (77.6%).

4. The fourth part of the survey was aimed at understanding how international students perceive the quality of life of the AMG. 50% of the students did feel safe using public transport, while only 44.1% felt safe walking in the streets and 32.2% did not feel safe or unsafe. 66.5% felt poverty was prominent around the city. The cost of living was affordable for 86.2% of the students. 94.7% of the students felt Mexicans being welcoming and friendly regarding foreigners. And 78.3% easily found an accommodation for their stay in the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara.
5. Then, the last criterion is related to the University and the educational aspect of the city. 79.6% of the international students felt that their host University lived up to their expectations, but only 56.6% thought that the level of education was high enough. 73% did feel part of the university life and included, so that 84.2% would also recommend their host University to future incoming students. And 71% did receive an introduction and integrity week to Mexican culture.

Finally, the survey contains some general questions. The first one asks if international students would recommend visiting Guadalajara to their friends and family, 96.7% answered yes. Their reasons vary. However, most of them describe Guadalajara as a very cultural and traditional city that represents Mexico in general. Guadalajara has a bit of everything: good food, nice landscapes, nature, exciting nightlife, and welcoming people. The last question asks whether or not the students would come back and why. The majority would come back for holidays (53.9%), 31.6% would come for living, and 11.8% would come back for studies.

6. Conclusion

The perception proposed through the presented model remains a challenge, since the model must be tested with the Guadalajara, Guadalajara city brand. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the variables that make up the model are the result of an in-depth analysis and review of the literature containing diverse authors and so different perspectives about the subject. The Four Independent Variables model seeks to demonstrate the degree of success of a city marketing strategy addressed to international students. These four variables have been determined from the collection of different city measurement tools such as Schroder Global Index, Country Brand Index, Blooming Consulting, etc.

First and foremost, it should be clarified that there is a hierarchy within the concepts of territorial and city marketing. Territorial marketing involves the use of territorial attractiveness as a tool for integrating cities into the international environment. On the other hand, city marketing encompasses four main perspectives: identity, image and reputation, urban management, attractiveness, and city branding.

City managers cannot rely solely on assumptions. What characterizes cities is a much more complex process that involves a thorough analysis of both the city's characteristics and what its inhabitants and the world in general think about it. On the other hand, while commercial brands belong to companies, territorial brands do not. Territorial brands do not belong to the government, they belong to a larger collective, which is the one that gives it the character of a brand.

Therefore, there is no strategy as such to consolidate an effective city brand, but rather it will depend on the analysis of the territory in question, the quality of the intervention of the managers and their commitment to the project but, above all, on the acceptance of the various target audiences. For this, it is necessary to incorporate marketing tools into the management of cities in order to encourage the city to develop in a competitive environment to attract investment, tourism, and international students.

Aspects such as identity, communication, and values are indispensable in the collective imagination to discover the vocation of a city and are also key elements for internal and external audiences to adopt and make a city brand their own.

The city and university both influence international students' satisfaction. It is not solely about the university's image; the city has a huge impact on students' satisfaction. For the design of an educational destination, and so to attract international students, there must be a convergence from the policy and institutionalism of the State-Nation, where a shared vision is created with the cities involved, as well as the institutions. All the elements must follow the same strategy of projection abroad and guarantee all the conditions for it to be sustainable over time. A branding strategy is born from the vision of developing an educational product that can be promoted into the foreign student market. There is a direct correlation between the city and the higher education institutions operating in its territory. Although sometimes this relationship tends to be complicated, it is clear that the coordination of efforts entails benefits of working harmoniously and always generate greater benefits for both entities understood as organizations and, therefore, potentially generating brands.

Finally, it is necessary to consider that the choice of non-traditional educational destinations is increasing, whether for academic reasons, due to the educational offer, or due to personal aspects linked to the student's objective. The aforementioned is given because there is a correlation between student, city/country, and institutions, which is illustrated below:

- Student: the intangible benefits they will receive (more global awareness, openness to diversity, international understanding); better preparation for the modern, competitive job market; proficiency in a foreign language; cultural, technical and language skills.
- City/Country: public interests, qualified workforce for the labor market; student/society relationships: international education provides the student with new skills and knowledge of other cultures, which contributes to peaceful cooperation between nations. There are also economic justifications: prepared graduates can contribute to the local/national economy.

- Institutional: expansion of knowledge through international experience, improved language and communication skills, global knowledge, maintaining a competitive advantage, improved image of the institution at a national and international level.

Thus, it is clear that the choice of an educational destination is conditioned by multiple factors. However, it is essential that institutions and the city work together in order to consolidate an attractive destination and thus, an attractive city brand.

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