

## **Expressed hungers of Colombian Students and the inspirational paradigm.**

### **Abstract**

This study examines whether the students' hungers proposed in the Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education are reflected in the expectations of students entering a Jesuit business school in a developing-country context. Drawing on qualitative data from 187 first-year students enrolled in the International Business Management program at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), collected during welcome week, we analyze students' expressed aspirations prior to substantial institutional influence. Using a two-step inductive approach that combines lexical analysis and manual coding by two independent coders, we identify patterns in students' responses. Findings reveal partial alignment with the Inspirational Paradigm: students expressed several of the proposed hungers, including experiential learning, global perspective, community, and meaningful impact. However, additional themes emerged, such as academic success, entrepreneurship, wellbeing, life project, and professional development. The study contributes by providing empirical evidence on student aspirations and proposing a scalable method for assessing them across Jesuit institutions.

### **Introduction**

In 2020, the document *An Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education* (IAJBS Task Force, 2020) outlined a set of guiding principles for Jesuit business schools, proposing a missionary framework to inspire and orient business education across institutions within the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools (IAJBS). A central element of this framework is the concept of hungers, understood as the desires that shape students' idealism, motivation, and sense of hope as they pursue business education. These hungers are intended to capture "what

motivates students at the deepest level (...) or “desires” that drive and inspire their idealism and their sense of hope” (IAJBS Task Force, 2020, p. 4).

The Inspirational Paradigm identifies seven core hungers: experiential learning, integrated knowledge, moral compass, community, global paradigm, adult spirituality, and dignified work and meaningful impact. While these hungers are presented as central aspirations for Jesuit business education, the document does not explain how they were empirically identified or whether they reflect the expectations that students themselves bring when entering Jesuit institutions. This raises an important question for Jesuit business schools seeking to align their educational mission with students’ aspirations.

In this study, we examine the question: What are the expressed hungers of Colombian freshmen enrolled in the International Business Management program at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana? Specifically, we investigate whether the hungers proposed by the Inspirational Paradigm resemble the expectations and desires expressed by students at the beginning of their academic journey. By focusing on incoming students, our goal is to capture their aspirations before they are significantly shaped by institutional experiences or curricular exposure.

Data was collected during the freshmen welcome week of the International Business Management program at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. An anonymous survey administered through a QR code asked students an open-ended question about their expectations as they began the program. Across three academic terms (Spring 2025, Fall 2025, and Spring 2026), 187 valid responses were obtained. Because the survey was conducted during welcome week, the responses reflect students’ expectations prior to substantial institutional influence. The data were analyzed using a two-step inductive qualitative approach. Our findings show that students’ expressed aspirations partially align with the Inspirational Paradigm. Specifically, Colombian students

expressed four of the seven hungers proposed in the paradigm—experiential learning, global paradigm, community, and dignified work and meaningful impact—while five additional themes emerged from the data: academic success, entrepreneurship, wellbeing, life project, and professional development.

This study contributes to the literature on Jesuit higher education and the Inspirational Paradigm in two ways. First, it provides one of the first empirical examinations of whether the hungers proposed by the Inspirational Paradigm are reflected in the expectations of students entering a Jesuit business school, particularly in a developing-country context. By analyzing qualitative responses from 187 first-year Colombian students, we identify areas of alignment with the paradigm while also uncovering additional student aspirations. Second, we propose a methodological approach that combines traditional qualitative coding with artificial intelligence–assisted lexical analysis to examine large sets of student narratives. This approach offers a scalable method that Jesuit business schools can use to assess students’ aspirations across diverse institutional and cultural contexts.

### **Framework**

The document *An Inspirational Paradigm for Jesuit Business Education* (IAJBS Task Force, 2020) presents a renewed missionary framework for the role of Jesuit business schools in addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges. The document argues that business education should move beyond a narrow focus on profit maximization and instead focus on forming leaders committed to the common good, human dignity, and sustainable development (Francis, 2015). Within this perspective, Jesuit business schools are called to educate professionals capable of integrating ethical reflection, social responsibility, and managerial competence in their decision-making.

At the center of this framework are seven fundamental “hungers” that motivate students and should guide Jesuit business education: experiential learning, integrated knowledge, a moral compass, community, a global paradigm, adult spirituality, and dignified work with meaningful impact. These hungers represent the aspirations that Jesuit institutions seek to cultivate in their students. Together, they provide the foundation for an educational paradigm that integrates Ignatian pedagogy (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, 1993), ethical reflection, and interdisciplinary learning to shape leaders capable of addressing complex global challenges while promoting justice, sustainability, and human flourishing.

The Inspirational Paradigm was developed by a special task force convened by IAJBS. IAJBS is a global network that brings together business schools and academic units affiliated with Jesuit universities with the purpose of promoting excellence in business education grounded in the values of the Jesuit intellectual tradition. Its mission is to foster collaboration among member institutions, support research and teaching initiatives aligned with the Jesuit commitment to ethics, social justice, and the common good, and contribute to the formation of business leaders capable of addressing complex global challenges. The association connects dozens of business schools from Jesuit institutions across North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia (International Association of Jesuit Business Schools, 2020; Rapaccioli et al., 2019).

Colombia provides a particularly relevant context for examining the mission of Jesuit higher education. The country has experienced decades of political instability and internal armed conflict involving guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations, and the state, which has significantly shaped its social and economic development (Bushnell, 2013; Rettberg, 2019). Although important progress has been made in recent years, Colombia continues to face persistent challenges related to inequality, institutional strengthening, rural development, narco-trafficking,

and the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives (Rettberg, 2019). Within this complex political and social environment, universities play a crucial role in promoting democratic values, ethical leadership, and sustainable development.

One of the most influential institutions in this effort is Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, a Jesuit university founded in 1623 that has become one of the leading academic institutions in Colombia. Grounded in the Jesuit tradition of educating individuals committed to service, justice, and the common good, the university has historically contributed to public debate, social research, and the formation of leaders in business, government, and civil society. Through its academic programs and institutional mission, the university seeks to address Colombia's structural challenges while promoting integral human development (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2022).

### **Data**

Data was collected during the freshmen welcome week of the International Business Management program at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. An anonymous survey was administered via a QR code and included one open-ended question: "What expectations and desires do you have as you begin this program?" Data collection took place across three academic terms (Spring 2025, Fall 2025, and Spring 2026). A total of 187 valid responses were obtained, all of which were included in the analysis. For us it was relevant that the data was collected in the welcome week of freshmen, because we wanted to avoid previous institutional influence on the expectations and desires of the students.

### **Methods and findings**

The data was analyzed using a two-step inductive qualitative approach. First, we conducted a preliminary lexical analysis to identify themes associated with the most frequently used words across student responses. Following Minefee et al. (2020), we developed a custom dictionary to

capture key thematic categories. We identified seven main themes emerging from the analysis, and the seven keywords associated to the themes. A snowball technique was then employed to expand the dictionary through thesaurus-based searches, incorporating first- and second-degree synonyms as well as relevant semantic roots (e.g., “learn”). This procedure resulted in the seven emergent themes derived from the lexical analysis and the dictionary for content analysis. Artificial intelligence–assisted text analysis was subsequently used to detect and count the occurrence of these words in the dictionary and their semantic variants across the dataset, allowing each response to be classified into one of the seven themes. The themes identified, based on the most salient keywords, were: learning, development, performance, entrepreneurship, internationalization, connection, and growth.

In the second step, all 187 responses were manually reviewed and categorized by two coders. One coder was familiar with the research purpose, while the second coder served as a blind coder with no prior knowledge of the study. Both coders independently analyzed each student response to identify themes emerging from the data. The use of two coders with different levels of familiarity with the project allowed for complementary perspectives in the coding process. The informed coder had access to the results of the lexical analysis, which helped guide the identification of potential themes. In contrast, the blind coder did not have information about the research objectives or preliminary findings, which helped reduce potential bias in the interpretation of the responses. This procedure allowed for the identification of themes that may not have been adequately captured by the lexical analysis alone.

Coder 1, who was familiar with the research project, identified the following themes emerging from the responses: learning (quality of education), professional development, academic performance, entrepreneurship, internationalization, community, life project, transformation

(impact and personal development), and enjoyment. Coder 2, who was not familiar with the research project, identified a similar set of themes, including learning, professional development, academic success, entrepreneurship, internationalization, networks, life project, impact, and wellbeing. Although the labels used by the coders differed slightly, the themes identified showed substantial conceptual overlap.

**Table 1:** Coding results comparing the lexical analysis, coder 1 and coder 2.

<b>Lexical Analysis</b>	<b>Coder 1</b>	<b>Coder 2</b>
Learning	Learning (quality)	Learning
Development	Professional development	Professional development
Performance	Academic Performance	Academic success
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship
Internationalization	Internationalization	Internationalization
Connection	Community	Networks
Growth	Life project	Life project
	Transformation (impact and personal development)	Impact
	Enjoyment	Wellbeing

As shown in Table 1, the iterative reading and coding process resulted in an intercoder reliability of 88%. To resolve discrepancies, both coders met to review and discuss differences, focusing primarily on areas where manual coding diverged from the lexical analysis. Coders had access to the themes and the responses categorized under each, which allowed them to understand the rationale behind the variations and reach consensus as displayed in table 1.

The coders concluded that the first set of six themes was fully aligned across coders and with the lexical analysis. However, the theme labeled “growth” in the lexical analysis was considered conceptually broad by the coders. To enhance precision, the coders agreed to disaggregate this category into three more specific themes that they identified in the initial coding: transformation, life project, and well-being. Subsequently, the research team reviewed the themes and agreed on the most appropriate labels for each category, drawing on both the coders’

suggestions and the results of the lexical analysis. The labels for the nine themes are: learning, professional development, academic success, entrepreneurship, internationalization, community, life project, transformation, and well-being. From now on, we will understand these emergent themes as the nine expressed hungers for Colombian students.

The next step in the research process was the matching of the expressed hungers for Colombian Students to the hungers proposed by the inspirational paradigm. This matching was conducted by the same two coders. To ensure conceptual alignment, the second coder first familiarized themselves with the inspirational paradigm by reviewing the descriptions of the seven hungers. Each coder then independently matched the expressed hungers for Colombian Students to the hungers from the inspirational paradigm.

Table 2 presents the hungers that the two coders agreed on their overlapping overall focus. The overlap was evaluated based on the brief description that the inspirational paradigm gives to each hunger, and the description crafted by the authors about the expressed hungers for Colombian Students, based on their responses. The matching process was relatively straightforward for four dimensions: learning aligned with the hunger for experiential learning; internationalization with the hunger for a global paradigm; community with hunger for community; and transformation aligned with dignified work and meaningful impact. Consequently, the coders agreed on the matching of 100% of the pairs presented on table 2. The matching of professional development and integrated knowledge hungers was proposed by coder 2 and evaluated and discussed by both coders. After careful consideration both coders agreed there was not a significant overlap and the two hungers should not be matched. Table 2 provides the definitions of each hunger, which helps clarify the conceptual similarities underlying these matches.

**Table 2:** Matched inspirational paradigm’s hungers with expressed hungers for Colombian students.

Expressed Hungers for Colombian Students	Inspirational Paradigm Hungers
<p><b>Learning</b> Colombian students overwhelmingly emphasize “learning a lot,” acquiring new knowledge, strong foundations, and practical tools. They highlight understanding global business, commerce, and different economies through high-quality teaching and rigorous academic training. The focus is on applicable knowledge, skill development, and professional preparation, with some underlying concern about academic performance and program newness</p>	<p><b>Experiential Learning:</b> The IP states: “Jesuit business schools must adapt pedagogy to the learning styles of our 21st-century students, while remaining grounded in an Ignatian approach that emphasizes the learning process (context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation). Student learning outcomes are enhanced by immersive experiences and live cases.” (p. 4)</p>
<p><b>Internationalization:</b> Colombian students strongly emphasize exchange opportunities, studying abroad, and learning additional languages as gateways to international careers. They highlight developing a global perspective, understanding multinational firms, international markets, global dynamics, and import–export processes. The focus is on gaining practical global knowledge, cross-cultural understanding, and positioning themselves professionally in international contexts</p>	<p><b>Global Paradigm:</b> “Having seen the limitations and the dangers of ethnocentrism and even nationalism, our students will want to embrace a more cosmopolitan perspective; they will recognize that each of us dwells in many communities, from the community of our birth to the community of the human family, and believe that we have duties to each of these communities.” (p. 5)</p>
<p><b>Community:</b> Students emphasize building friendships, contacts, and meaningful relationships with peers and professors. They highlight creating support networks, study groups, and strong teams, as well as feeling accompanied and integrated into the community. The focus is on belonging, mutual support, and developing social and professional networks that enhance both personal growth and career opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Community:</b> “We want students to value building meaningful communities that have genuine connectedness and incorporate engaged civility; to display a strength of passion and commitment to use their gifts and talents for others; there can be a sense among them that they have found their voice as change agents, and now they long to participate more actively, creating more good in the world.” (p.5)</p>

**Transformation:** Students emphasize personal transformation and integrity, highlighting becoming better individuals and well-rounded professionals. They express aspirations to contribute to society, improve their country, support underserved communities, and leave a legacy. The focus is on growth, service, social impact, and aligning professional success with meaningful contribution and ethical responsibility.

**Dignified Work and Meaningful Impact:** “Work is not just about earning a living. In the words of Pope Francis, it is also “part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment.” Students today must have a greater appreciation for this dimension, and have a desire to share and spread positive change. This drives the interrelated need for communication, diplomacy, integrated thinking, and collaboration.” (p.5)

Table 3 and 4 presents the three inspirational paradigm hungers and five expressed hungers for Colombian Students that were unmatched. We will dedicate the discussion section to these findings.

**Table 3:** Unmatched inspirational paradigm’s hungers

<b>Inspirational Paradigm Hungers</b>
<p><b>Moral Compass:</b> “Students today experience the limitations that accompany a moral discourse that focuses almost exclusively on individual rights, while largely ignoring the responsibilities we have to each other. Our students do not need recipes, but instead experiences that spur them to acquire an ethical foundation and a method for moral discernment and moral courage.” (p.4)</p>
<p><b>Adult Spirituality:</b> “In the face of polarizing debates, Jesuit education sparks longings for a spirituality that sustains and empowers; spirituality with ample room for both faith and reason and that gives meaning to their lives.” (p.5)</p>
<p><b>Integrated Knowledge:</b> Students today appreciate having so much information at their fingertips, and yet they need a more purposeful formation that integrates their intellectual, affective, and volitional capacities and helps them to appreciate how the varied subjects and disciplines fit together to reach greater depth of understanding.” (p.4)</p>

**Table 4:** Unmatched expressed hungers for Colombian students.

<b>Expressed Hungers for Colombian Students</b>
<p><b>Academic Performance:</b> Students emphasize achieving strong academic performance, including high grades, excellent GPAs, scholarships, and graduating on time. They highlight passing courses, understanding material clearly, progressing successfully, and completing the program efficiently. The focus is on academic excellence, measurable achievement, and minimizing academic difficulty while maximizing results.</p>
<p><b>Entrepreneurship:</b> Students strongly emphasize creating their own business, becoming entrepreneurs, and gaining the tools and methods necessary to start and expand ventures internationally. They associate entrepreneurship with financial success, independence, leadership, and personal fulfillment, including expanding family businesses. The focus is on practical knowledge to build sustainable enterprises, avoid failure, and generate both economic and social impact.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing:</b> Students emphasize enjoyment, happiness, wellbeing and a positive university experience, wanting the program to be fun, engaging, and meaningful. They highlight enjoying the journey, feeling passionate about their studies, and maintaining a wellbeing academic environment. The focus is on emotional well-being, low stress, and experiencing university life as both fulfilling and motivating.</p>
<p><b>Life Project:</b> Students frame the program as central to their life project, emphasizing long-term goals, dreams, and future aspirations. They highlight finding their passion, defining their professional path, achieving happiness, and building a meaningful future for themselves and their families. The focus is on personal fulfillment, growth, purpose, and aligning career choice with identity and long-term life ambitions.</p>
<p><b>Professional Development:</b> Students emphasize becoming strong, high-value professionals capable of succeeding in competitive labor markets. They highlight career opportunities, employability, working in multinational firms, financial success, and positioning themselves effectively for future roles. The focus is on developing practical skills, expertise, and professional identity to achieve long-term career advancement and economic mobility.</p>

## **Discussion**

We surveyed 187 first-year students during their welcome week and asked a single open-ended question: “What expectations and desires do you have as you begin this program?” Through qualitative analysis, we identified a substantial overlap between five of the “hungers” proposed by the inspirational paradigm and the Expressed Hungers for Colombian Students. However, two of the inspirational paradigm hungers did not align with students’ expressed expectations. Instead, four new expressed hungers emerged from the data.

Among the matched hungers, first, Colombian students express a strong desire to deepen their knowledge in the major they have chosen. Consistent with the inspirational paradigm, they expect pedagogy aligned with current trends, applicable knowledge, skill development, and professional preparation. Second, internationalization clearly emerged as a shared hunger. Students recognize that no country operates in isolation and perceive the world as an interconnected global community. They expect to gain cross-cultural understanding, global exposure, and access to international professional opportunities. Third, the community dimension was strongly reflected in students’ responses. They seek to build meaningful relationships, develop a sense of belonging, and cultivate networks characterized by mutual support and professional collaboration. Fourthly, the theme of transformation also overlapped. Students arrive at the university with a sense of purpose and a desire for personal growth. They view higher education as a pathway toward meaningful impact, service, and self-development.

In contrast, we did not find explicit evidence of an expressed hunger for a moral compass, integrated knowledge, or adult spirituality. Importantly, this absence does not imply that Colombian students consider these dimensions irrelevant. Rather, it suggests that they do not explicitly associate these expectations with the academic program they are entering. This finding

raises an important institutional question. It is possible that students do possess these deeper aspirations but do not perceive the university, or the specific major, as a space that nurtures moral or spiritual development. If so, this represents a significant challenge. Universities, particularly those with explicit formative Jesuit mission, may need to communicate more clearly how they contribute to students' moral, integrated and spiritual growth. A key question for future research is whether Colombian students identify Pontificia Universidad Javeriana as a place where they can develop morally, integrally and spiritually, even if they do not initially articulate this expectation in their aspirations.

Beyond the mismatches, five new themes emerged, which can be grouped into two broader temporal categories: present-oriented and future-oriented expectations. The first category relates to students' present experience and includes academic performance and wellbeing. Students expect to perform well academically and view the major as the primary mechanism through which they will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed. At the same time, they expect the program to safeguard their wellbeing. They do not want the academic experience to become an overwhelming burden; rather, they hope the university will provide support structures that enable both achievement, balance and wellbeing.

The second category reflects future-oriented aspirations and includes professional development, entrepreneurship, and life project. Students view the university not merely as a site of academic learning, but as a space for discerning their life purpose and shaping their long-term trajectory. At the same time, they expect practical tools that enable entrepreneurial initiatives and professional growth. They perceive Universidad Javeriana as a prestigious institution and associate enrollment with improved employability and career opportunities.

The findings discussed above can be relevant for the inspirational paradigm as a missionary framework for Jesuit universities in two main ways. First, we contribute to the inspirational paradigm by empirically evaluating the suitability of the seven hungers proposed by the inspirational paradigm in the context of a Jesuit university located in a developing country. The inspirational paradigm has provided Jesuit business schools with a valuable shared framework to guide the strategic orientation and mission of our institutions. However, because the global Jesuit network operates across highly diverse cultural, economic, and institutional contexts, it is important to assess whether the hungers identified in the paradigm are similarly expressed by students in different settings. Our findings suggest that this is only partially the case. Colombian students clearly express expectations aligned with several of the paradigm's hungers, particularly those related to learning, community, meaningful impact, and global engagement. At the same time, additional hungers emerged that reflect a tendency of Colombian students to approach higher education with a dual orientation: managing immediate academic success and wellbeing while simultaneously constructing a long-term professional and existential project. Students expect the university to support the development of their life project, facilitate access to employment opportunities, and provide avenues for entrepreneurship. These findings suggest that the inspirational paradigm captures important universal aspirations, but may benefit from incorporating contextually grounded dimensions that reflect students' expectations in developing-country settings.

Second, we contribute by proposing a methodological design that can be used to evaluate the presence of these hungers across the diverse contexts in which Jesuit business schools operate. Our approach combines traditional qualitative text analysis techniques, such as the development of coding dictionaries and the use of multiple coders, with artificial intelligence tools capable of

processing large language datasets, such as students' open-ended responses. Integrating artificial intelligence into this methodological framework is particularly valuable in a global network of institutions where language diversity and large volumes of textual data can pose analytical challenges. Large language models can help overcome linguistic barriers and facilitate the systematic analysis of student narratives across countries while maintaining methodological consistency. In this way, our design provides a scalable and replicable approach that Jesuit business schools can use to assess how well their educational mission aligns with the expectations and aspirations of their students in different contexts.

### **Future research**

Our study presents several limitations that open opportunities for future research. First, the empirical setting of this study is limited to a sample of 187 Colombian students. While Colombia represents an important context within Latin America, the expectations and aspirations of students may differ substantially across other developing regions, including Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Future research could replicate this study in other developing countries to evaluate whether the hungers expressed by Colombian students are also present in other contexts or whether additional, context-specific dimensions emerge. Comparative studies across countries would be particularly valuable for understanding the extent to which students' expectations toward Jesuit business schools are universal or shaped by local socio-economic and cultural conditions.

Second, future research could further examine the variation between the hungers proposed by the inspirational paradigm and those expressed by students across different institutional contexts, regardless of their level of economic development. One promising research design would involve a coordinated effort across Jesuit business schools worldwide. In such a design, institutions could ask incoming students the same open-ended question regarding their expectations and

aspirations as they begin their programs. Responses could then be analyzed using large language models in combination with local coders, allowing researchers to identify both shared and context-specific themes while enabling systematic cross-institutional comparisons. The advantage of this approach would be that a centralized group, such as the Inspirational Paradigm task force can compare responses, and communicate commonalities and differences among countries.

Finally, future research could examine how students' expressed hungers evolve over time. Students' expectations are likely influenced by broader social, economic, and technological changes, which may reshape their priorities across cohorts. Longitudinal studies that track these hungers across multiple years and institutions could provide valuable insights into how students' expectations shift as contexts evolve. Such evidence would help Jesuit universities remain attentive and responsive to emerging student needs, allowing them to adapt their educational missions proactively rather than reactively.

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