

Organizational design as a strategic factor in student housing operations

La importancia del diseño organizacional para una empresa que brinda servicio de alojamiento estudiantil

Leticia Cortés Gutiérrez ^a, Arlen Cerón Islas ^b, Heidy Cerón Islas ^c

Abstract:

This research paper aims to justify the necessity of an organizational redesign in a company dedicated to student housing services, taking into account the importance of an aligned design as well as the most relevant reasons for undertaking it. This is a qualitative study in which interviews and direct observation were used as data collection methods, and only a single entity was analyzed through a case study methodology. As a result, the primary reasons for implementing a redesign within the organization were identified, with emphasis placed on the areas most likely to yield a positive impact from this initiative.

Keywords:

Organizational design, redesign, alignment, student housing, star model.

Resumen:

El presente trabajo de investigación pretende justificar la necesidad de un rediseño organizacional en una empresa dedicada al servicio de alojamiento estudiantil, tomando en cuenta la importancia de un diseño alineado. Esta investigación es cualitativa, se usó la entrevista y observación directa como medio recolección de datos, únicamente se analizó una sola entidad con la metodología de estudio de caso. Se obtuvieron las principales razones por las cuales se debe realizar un rediseño en la organización, enfatizando las temáticas que mayor impacto positivo podrían tener con esta acción.

Palabras Clave:

Diseño organizacional, re diseño, alineación, alojamiento estudiantil, modelo estrella.

Introducción

Organizational design in companies is of key importance, as it is a fundamental reason for business success. It is complex and helps organizations adapt to the dynamism of the environment, it is also used as a sort of guide in the daily actions of its members and it helps formalize processes and procedures [1].

Lack of organizational design may lead to difficulties whose causes are not evident, such as decreased work performance, absence of commitment and motivation, as well as deficiencies in processes. [2] suggest that human talent may lose its proactivity in the absence of an appropriate organizational design.

Report that organizational design can link different departments within an organization to prevent overlapping of functions or tasks and achieve consistency among processes [3].

Toro argues that having a strategic pathway minimizes the frequency of errors or risks in student housing, referring to a specific line of activity [4].

An appropriate organizational design contributes to the achievement of effective outcomes while assisting in organizing, directing, and managing processes [5].

^a Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo | Instituto de Ciencias Económico Administrativas | Pachuca-Hidalgo | México,

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5783-9469>, Email: co107297@uaeh.edu.mx

^b Profesora Investigadora de la Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo | Instituto de Ciencias Económico Administrativas | Pachuca-hidalgo | México, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3982-5053>, Email: arlenc@uaeh.edu.mx

^c Profesora Investigadora de la Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo | Escuela Superior de Tlahuelilpan | Pachuca-hidalgo | México, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3373-6949>, Email: heidy_ceron6257@uaeh.edu.mx

Received: 28/08/2025, Accepted: 30/09/2025, Published: 05/01/2026

If a company intends to plan actions to achieve major goals, it must rely on an aligned organizational design, which will also allow it to improve processes, define strategies, and set objectives [6].

This research aims to justify the importance of applying an organizational design in a company focused on student housing services in order to improve its current form of organization and provide the elements to align its organizational design by considering the star model presented in the book *Designing Dynamic Organizations* by Galbraith, Downey, and Kates.

This will assist Management in improving decision-making and achieving objectives. The proposed star model involves the alignment of five elements: strategy, structure, processes, people and rewards [7]. Companies providing student housing services must prioritize organizational design, as the absence of alignment among strategy, structure, processes, people, and rewards may result in operational flaws and compromise the standards that such companies are required to ensure.

Leal-Menegus mentioned that the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, included dormitories for professors and students in its master plan for the University City; nevertheless, unresolved obstacles resulted in the decision not to offer this service. These obstacles involved determining the number of services and planning the dormitories, with the primary concern being student supervision inside the dormitories [8].

Numerous scholars explain and demonstrate the importance of organizational design in companies. Some authors relate employee satisfaction to an adequate alignment in organizational design [9].

Within Mexico, alliances among institutions have been sought to provide student housing services, with a focus on the improvement of processes and decision-making, as highlighted in UAEH Newsletter No. 276 [10].

This analysis was conducted based on the case study methodology of Yin, highlighting that this approach enables the examination of a real situation within a specific case [11].

The Management of a company engaged in student housing services must consider an appropriate organizational design to guarantee quality service and, more importantly, to provide an orderly and safe environment.

The precedents support the need for a defined organizational design, as discussed by Vázquez and Castro in the article "Would My Boyfriend Be Capable of Killing Me? Dating Violence among Adolescents at the Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo, Mexico" [12].

Some Institutions open their doors to students who meet admission requirements; for this reason, many leave their place of origin and move to another city. These young people, who must find safe housing, often face in this situation the greatest challenge to staying focused on their studies, risking distraction or even dropping out. Some higher education institutions in Mexico offer this service as part of their programs and even make efforts to organize it more effectively [13].

In 2023, various universities in Mexico began efforts to organize the institutions that would provide student housing services. This is the most important precedent in the country regarding student housing. The meeting was held in Monterrey, with the University of Monterrey serving as the host institution. Only one public university was present, while the others were private institutions.

Then, in 2024, the efforts continued, this time with the Popular Autonomous University of Puebla as the host. On this occasion, there were already two public institutions present, while the others belonged to the private sector.

In June 2025, as a result of the previous two years, the third National Meeting of University Residences was held in Mexico. Its objective was to establish the phases for signing a general agreement that would formalize efforts to professionalize the work of those responsible and, in doing so, ensure the comprehensive and holistic service envisioned could be realized for the benefit of the users who choose them [14].

So far, these are the only documented efforts that have been made in Mexico to professionalize student housing services. There are organizations in other countries that accept members from different parts of the world.

This study seeks to justify the importance of organizational design in a company dedicated to providing student housing services, which must prioritize in order to achieve the goal for which such organizations were created.

Methodology

The present research is descriptive, explanatory, and qualitative with a cross-sectional approach; as no variables will be modified, it is considered non-experimental.

This study was initially conducted through direct observation, and subsequently through the use of the instrument referred to as 'reasons for redesign', proposed by Galbraith, Downey, and Kates (2022), which consists of an open interview with nine members of the executive and operational staff of a housing company.

The study was applied to a single company, incorporating data pertinent to a specific context in terms of time and place, as well as institutional features that set it apart with temporal and spatial boundaries. It is temporary because it analyzes a specific period and data was collected within a defined timeframe. Is spatial delimitation because the participants belong to a specific sector and have unique initial characteristics, and population-based because the individuals are part of a specific group (2017).

Direct observation was used to gain a general overview prior to the application of the mentioned instruments. The program used for interpreting the results was ATLAS.ti, which allowed for the creation of an image showing the word most frequently mentioned by the organization's collaborators.

Results and discussion

In the team of the company offhousing students there exist constant and daily communication; despite not sharing the same hours in the office, they find ways to communicate the most relevant information of the day through daily activity reports that everyone reviews.

Proper and aligned organization in companies dedicated to housing services can be seen in the article titled "Design of a Business Model for Student Housing in the City of Pereira and Proposal of a Strategic Roadmap for Its Implementation," which, using the Osterwalder and Pigneur business method, offers a proposal to increase the competitive advantage of this type of service [15].

Student housing requires an organizational design because, due to the nature of its users, it is necessary to ensure a positive goal of well-being in coexistence.

In 2013 the article "Student Housing at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León," in its article "Student Life: The City-University Relationship and Out-of-Town Students – The Case of the University City of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León, Mexico," highlighted the importance of having adequate housing during a student's professional training [16].

The direct observation made it possible to see that the staff working at the company providing student housing services does not have an exact understanding of the concepts related to organizational design; however, they are fully aware of the company's priorities, highlighting their focus on ensuring the safety of the users.

Another finding from direct observation was that the collaborators understand that safety is the top priority in all their actions, followed by service, and finally, they strive to manage proper and timely maintenance of the infrastructure.

The 'reasons for redesign' tool explain that an organizational design is needed to help them achieve the goal of ensuring safety and improving processes. It highlights two fundamental reasons that justify the need to align the organizational design

The following steps were used for the interpretation of results:

- Direct Observation
- Application of the instrument
- Transcription of results
- Creation of projects in ATLAS.ti
- Coding of the results
- Interpretation

In order to identify the areas of greatest opportunities within the company as perceived by employees, and thus determine whether a modification or improvement in the alignment of organizational design elements is required, especially which aspects should be prioritized for analysis, the instrument referred as 'reasons for design', originally proposed in the book *Designing Dynamic Organizations* by Galbraith, Downey, and Kates (2022), was applied as interpreted through the Sankey diagram displayed in Figure 1.1.

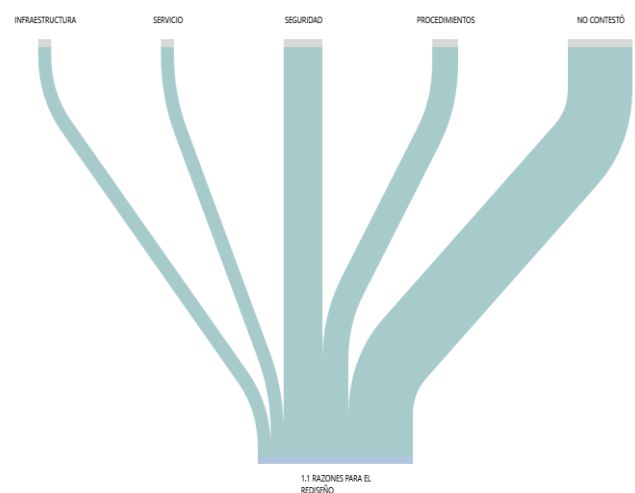


Figure 1.1 Reasons for redesign
Source: Authors' elaboration (ATLAS.ti25), using information provided by the company's staff.

It can be observed that the majority of members did not provide an answer regarding the reasons for the organizational redesign of their company; however, the second most frequent opinion concerned security, followed by procedures, whereas a minority considered service and infrastructure as issues that should be taken into account as reasons for redesign.

Based on the analysis of the specific case and the company members' opinion, it is suggested that the company focus its attention on specific aspects when initiating its redesign.

The areas of security, service, and infrastructure form part of the company's strategy, while procedures constitute a distinct element of the star model.

According to information provided by the company's leadership, the most important need of this organization is to design process for collaborators to communicate without having to use their time outside of office. In other words, to fulfill the service offered 24 hours, seven days a week, while ensuring that objectives are met within the regular working hours.

It is worth highlighting that this company must consider strategy and processes as the primary reason for its organizational redesign, which could influence the extent to which staff opinions are addressed

Tables

Tools for redesign

REASONS FOR REDESIGN			
PARTICIPANT	REASON 1 TO CHANGE	REASON 2 TO CHANGE	REASON 3 TO CHANGE
N	INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE	BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES REDUCTION	SECURITY PROTOCOLS IMPROVEMENT
A	SECURITY PROTOCOLS UPDATE	NO RESPONSE	NO RESPONSE
D	SERVICE IMPROVEMENT	PROCEDURES REDUCTION	PROTOCOLS UPDATE
M	NO RESPONSE	NO RESPONSE	NO RESPONSE

Source: Authors' elaboration (ATLAS.ti25), using information provided by the company's staff.

Employees from the executive team were asked to identify the three principal reasons they considered for implementing a redesign. The responses were subsequently following the five elements established by the star model: strategy, structure, processes, people and rewards.

The word cloud is presented in order to show that 'communication' is the most frequently mentioned word among all collaborators, providing leadership with an opportunity to focus on this area



Source: Authors' elaboration (ATLAS.ti25), using information provided by the company's staff.

Conclusions

The need to organize student housing has existed for over 100 years. Around the world and has seen many success stories, such as the Institution of Free Teaching, which created its student housing system in Madrid, Spain, Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel once lived. This project had an organizational design that included a clear strategy, with the objective of creating a space that would help students enhance their human and professional development.

The structure was established through the appointment of directors to supervise behavior, assigning a specific role to each person. This is an important precedent for student housing, as it serves as a reference for defining objectives and structures in this type of organization.

This is the reason by it is proposed that this housing company have an organizational design aligned with its needs, allowing it to achieve its objectives and provide the level of service expected by its clients.

The study concludes that this company should establish a well-defined organizational design to avoid duplication of functions, maximize its human talent, and meet its objectives; the analysis should begin with security, maintenance, service, and procedures, with a main focus on strategy and processes in order to achieve its goals.

For an aligned organizational design or redesign, the company must consider training all staff from the foundational concepts.

Employees identify the necessary topics to be considered, being aware of the priorities, but they need to know the concepts and have a greater positive impact

For understand the needs of the company's staff, it is important to consider qualitative aspects, as an aligned organizational design can be determined based on the most relevant points mentioned by persons.

This study is the propose the fundament for explain necessity your generate design organizational but this investigation ofert the topics primordy to considerer for the leadership.

The company must organize the resources they have in order to achieve their desired goals. Therefore, the student housing company should focus on making the most of all available resources to ensure its service and achieve strategic goals. Having alignment among its organizational elements will allow it to increase its competitive advantage and improve its results.

Organizational design precisely allows all individual efforts to contribute to achieving results more efficiently and within the estimated time [17.]

The use of Yin's methodology to analyze this organization as a case study provides a valid reason for the organization to consider aligning its design. Variables were combined within a real context, which were interconnected and cannot be separated from the case study.

Referencias

- [1] Bú-Alba, B. (2022). Diseño organizacional: La búsqueda del éxito. Revista Sociedad & Tecnología, 5(1), 57-72. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51247/st.v5i1.189>.
- [2] Ribagorda, A., (2007). La residencia de estudiantes y américa latina: caminos de ida y vuelta, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, (239), LXVII, p.221-250.
- [3] Ribagorda, A., (2007). La residencia de estudiantes y américa latina: caminos de ida y vuelta, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, (239), LXVII, p.221-250.
- [4] Toro Duque, J.D. (2024). Diseño de un modelo de negocio para vivienda estudiantil en la ciudad de Pereira y propuesta de una hoja de ruta estratégica para su ejecución [Tesis de maestría, Universidad EAFIT].
- [5] Pinedo-Jara, E. C., Arroyo-Rosales, E. M., Ruíz-Gómez, A. A., & Rodríguez-Román, R. (2024). Análisis y propuesta estratégica del diseño organizacional para la gestión administrativa. Revista Arbitrada Interdisciplinaria Koinonía, 9(1), 181–194. <https://doi.org/10.35381/r.k.v9i1.3683>.
- [6] Zavaleta Cabrera, E. M. (2021). Diseño organizacional de la escuela de policía - San Bartolo - Perú. Comuni@cción: Revista De Investigación En Comunicación Y Desarrollo, 12(4), 322-331. <https://doi.org/10.33595/2226-1478.12.4.575>.
- [7] Galbraith, J. Downey, D y Kates A. (2022). *Designing Dynamic Organizations*. Harper Collins.
- [8] Leal-Menegus, A., & Escamilla-Pérez, K. (2019). Unidad de habitaciones para estudiantes en Ciudad Universitaria, 1952 Del proyecto a la realidad: una comparativa. Revista Legado de Arquitectura y Diseño, (25).
- [9] Bú-Alba, B. (2022). Diseño organizacional: La búsqueda del éxito. Revista Sociedad & Tecnología, 5(1), 57-72. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51247/st.v5i1.189>.
- [10] Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo. (24 de junio de 2025). UAEH sede del Tercer Encuentro Nacional de Residencias Universitarias. <https://www.uaeh.edu.mx/noticias/9542/>.
- [11] Yacuzzi, E. (2005). El estudio de caso como metodología de investigación: teoría, mecanismos causales, validación. ECONSTOR make your publications visible, (296) 1-38. <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/84390>
- [12] Vázquez García, Verónica y Castro, Roberto. (2008). "¿Mi novio sería capaz de matarme?" Violencia en el noviazgo entre adolescentes de la Universidad Autónoma Chapingo, México. Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud, 6 (2), 709-738. Recuperado el 11 de mayo de 2024 de http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1692-715X2008000200008&lng=en&tlng=es.
- [13] UPRESS. 11 de julio de 2024. UPAEP sede compartida del Segundo Encuentro Nacional de Residencias Universitarias. <https://upress.upaep.mx/secciones/vida-universitaria/12721-upaep-sede-compartida-del-segundo-encuentro-nacional-de-residencias-universitarias>
- [14] Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo. (24 de junio de 2025). UAEH sede del Tercer Encuentro Nacional de Residencias Universitarias. <https://www.uaeh.edu.mx/noticias/9542/>.
- [15] Toro Duque, J.D. (2024). Diseño de un modelo de negocio para vivienda estudiantil en la ciudad de Pereira y propuesta de una hoja de ruta estratégica para su ejecución [Tesis de maestría, Universidad EAFIT].
- [16] Peza, E.M. (2013). Vida estudiantil: la relación ciudad - universidad y los estudiantes foráneos – caso de la ciudad universitaria de la universidad autónoma de Nuevo León, México [Tesis de maestría, Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León].
- [17] Larrosa Moran, J.J, Cruz Peredo G.G. y Sayay Guerrero, S. (2020). Las tendencias de la organización empresarial. Revista de Investigación Formativa: Innovación y Aplicaciones Técnico -Tecnológicas. 2 (1). 56-63.