

A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF CO-WORKING SPACES AS KNOWLEDGE CENTRES

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ABSTRACT

Co-working spaces have become increasingly popular among the students, employees, freelancers, and entrepreneurs in past few years. There are various internal and external factors that might influence the learning of any individual in their day-to-day life. Learning in a co-working space is also challenging to attain naturally because not every user is comfortable interacting with each other to learn new things. However, the users of co-working space do witness the various learning opportunities at the co-working space. The main purpose of the study is to examine how co-working space act a space for sharing knowledge and how learning at co-working takes place. Both primary and secondary sources of data will be used. The review of literature will help to get insights to co-working space and the benefits, learning opportunities and practices at a co-working space in general. The data will be collected from the diverse users of a co-working space such as the entrepreneurs, freelancers, and employees of a company through a questionnaire and then analysed using descriptive and inferential analysis. The SPSS software will be used for chi-square test, correlation, regression and Annova for getting the inference. We discuss the relationship between the co-working space and learning space and the user's perception towards the co-working space as a learning space. This inference will help us to focus on the future facilities to be offered to the co-working space users and thereby encourage people to use the co-working space as their new learning space.

Keywords: Co-working Space, Learning Space, Diverse Users, Learning Opportunities.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, humanity has been subjected to a variety of developments that have altered the existence. The new type of workplaces, coined co-working spaces, are one of the primary areas to experience this transition in several dimensions. Co-working spaces have progressed from an unusual office model for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and innovators to a realistic workplace for businesses (Spreitzer et al., 2015)¹. In recent years, co-working spaces have experienced remarkable expansion and transformation. It has successfully made its unique place in the society within few years by catering to various needs of the users of co-working space. Co-working spaces are interactive workspaces where independent intellectual workers come together to develop and learn from one another's work, allowing them to "working alone, together." (Spinuzzi, 2012, p. 299)². While learning is being transformed over the years, it has to be incorporated in a workspace too. Today, students prefer informal, adaptive learning spaces that can suit both independent and group work (McLaughlin and Faulkner, 2012)³. Student communities were born and nurtured in a technological advanced era, hence,

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¹ Spreitzer, G., Bacevice, P., and Garrett, L. (2015), 'Why people thrive in coworking spaces', Harvard Business Review, Vol. 93 No. 7, pp. 28–30

² Spinuzzi, C., Bodrožić, Z., Scaratti, G et al. (1 more author) (2019) "Coworking is about community" but what is "community" in coworking? Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 33 (2). pp. 112-140. ISSN 1050-651 https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651918816357

³ McLaughlin, P. and Faulkner, J. (2012), 'Flexible spaces and what students expect from university facilities', in Journal of Facilities Management, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, United Kingdom, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 140-149 ISSN: 1472-5967

require the usage of modern devices in learning environments (Prensky 2001)¹. Especially in higher education, it draws attention of a form of collective structure in learning among the new generation (Curaoğlu & Tütüncü, 2016)². This is clear evidence for how co-working space have taken an important part in the learning process.

Co-working spaces provide a platform for informal learning and fosters creativity among the users of the space. When co-workers connect with each other in a co-working environment, learning occurs in multiple ways. They provide the users of co-working space with various opportunities to interact and collaborate with one another that makes knowledge sharing happen in that informal office set-up. Despite the fact that co-working facilities foster a feeling of belonging to a community, members are self-sufficient. As today's generation lack the need to interact and build relationships with one another, the presence of a co-working space will bridge gaps between the present generation and the co-working space. The process of learning from each other in a casual atmosphere, which is facilitated by community event rooms, is one of the most important benefits of co-working spaces (Curaoğlu & Demirbaş, 2017)³. Thus, co-working spaces also serve as knowledge centres to interact, collaborate, and learn from one another in an informal setting. While many professional organisations recognise the need of a strong team and training programme, co-working space groups are even less likely to do so. Typically, spaces rely on the low-cost hiring of unskilled self-starters and the burnout of team members. After some time, the member of the team chooses to leave for a position with more opportunities for promotion. Co-working spaces may improve their organisation and retain key staff by creating a group training and development opportunities (Bouncken and Reuschl 2018)⁴. The companies also look at co-working space as their opportunity to learn, train and grow in this informal environment. Co-working spaces are a great third alternative for businesses to provide as part of any modifiable work set up (Muller, 2021)⁵. Therefore, separating the co-working space from corporate environment is nearly impossible.

Thus, further study is required to study about the learning at co-working space in a manner that it gives a clear understanding if co-working spaces do act a knowledge sharing space for the users of the space. Furthermore, The creative place host vast number of firms from a variety of industries, but the perks and desirability of the co-working phenomenon may be expanded to smaller companies as well (Leung, 2019)⁶. This paper has examined the demand of co-working space as learning spaces, the learning opportunities at co-working space that enhance learning in individuals, and its influence on the experience of individual, understand the requirements for education space users and the future requirements for co-working space that will enhance knowledge sharing.

Review of Literature

Oswald, K., Zhao, X (2022)⁷ It was discovered that cooperative learning, individual willingness to learn, and person's work performance all have a beneficial link, with collaborative learning serving as a mediator. Collaborative learning, individual's drive to gain, and individual performance level all have a beneficial association, with collaborative learning serving as a mediator. Individual learning characteristics are not studied in a collaborative setting.

Rese, A., Herbig, A (2022)⁸ investigates the inventiveness of co-workers and the networking structure of a co-working environment. examines organisational co-working spaces and networking platforms that are distinct from one another and demonstrates a balance between co-workers who work alone or in groups.

¹ Prensky, M. (2001). The Games Generations: How Learners Have Changed. *Computers in Entertainment*, 1(1), 1–26. <http://doi.org/10.1145/950566.950596>

² Curaoğlu, F., & Tütüncü, D. (2016). In This Place: Cumulus Association Biannual International Conference. In D. Higgins & V. Dhupa (Eds.), *As a future working place: coworking places* (pp. 66–74). Nottingham

³ Curaoğlu, F., Demirbaş, D (2017) From Co-Working Places to New Education Places, *The Design Journal*, 20:sup1, S4765-S4767, DOI: 10.1080/14606925.2017.1352986

⁴ Bouncken, R. B., & Reuschl, A. J. (2018). Coworking-spaces: How a phenomenon of the sharing economy builds a novel trend for the workplace and for entrepreneurship. *Review of Managerial Science*, 12(1), 317–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-016-0215-y>

⁵ Muller, J (2021), '32 surprising coworking space trends in 2021- What's changed?', *Ergonomic trends*

⁶ Leung, R (2019), 'What corporate offices can learn from coworking spaces', *cornerstone*

⁷ Oswald, K., Zhao, X. (2022) "collaborative learning in Makerspaces: A grounded theory of the role of collaborative learning in Makerspaces" *Journal of Business Economics and Management* ISSN 1611-1699/eISSN 2029-4433 2022 Volume 23 Issue 1: 162–179 <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2021.15692>

⁸ Rese, A., Görmar, L. & Herbig, A (2022). Social networks in coworking spaces and individual coworker's creativity. *Rev Manag Sci* 16, 391–428 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-021-00445-0>

Bednář, P., Danko L., Smékalová, L (2021)¹ demonstrates how co-working spaces may increase their flexibility by exchanging ideas in groups and fostering collaborative learning. It was discovered that co-working spaces enable people to work more rapidly by bringing together a varied workforce and exchanging information.

Jackson, D., Shan, H, et al., (2021)² demonstrated how synergies between small and medium enterprises and co-working spaces may assist higher education students improve their entrepreneurial skills. The findings revealed how synergies between small and medium enterprises and co-working spaces might assist higher education students improve their entrepreneurial skills.

H.R, Swapna., D, Arpana (2020)³ The concept of co-working spaces was researched, as well as why people favour and utilise them. It was discovered that co-working spaces facilitate knowledge sharing, diffusion, and exchanging thoughts, which leads to the establishment of corporate alliances.

Orel, M., Bennis, W (2020)⁴ investigates why the co-working model has taken hold in the professional sector but not in education. It was shown that scholarly co-working units, if developed on a larger scale, may strengthen the cross-regional component in academic achievement by increasing student and faculty mobility.

Rickieno, R (2020)⁵ investigated how university co-working spaces may benefit students, graduates, and workers with entrepreneurial and cooperative learning. It discusses how supporting individuals connect with one another to promote knowledge acquisition and entrepreneurial skills at a certain university. It was discovered that integrating the roles of people, place, and system improves prospects for innovation and creative production, but the influence of co-working on the learning process was assigned the least weight.

Bouncken, R., Aslam, M (2019)⁶ investigates how information exchange occurs in co-working spaces. It was discovered that by establishing knowledge management solutions, co-working spaces would be able to boost their beneficial benefits. The ability of co-working space participants to share information is crucial to achieving positive results. It was discovered that by promoting tacit knowledge exchange and domain-related information exchange, co-location can increase cross learning.

Billett S., Noble C (2017)⁷ explores how employees learn in the workplace, based on the notion that employees' participation and relationships outside of the workplace influence their continuous improvement. It demonstrates how interpersonal interaction and co-working may enhance learning process.

Hood, C (2015)⁸ studied community learning in a co-working space is formed by individuals learning via experience, having a shared attitude, and a diversified skill set. It focuses solely on business teachings and how entrepreneurship better extent communities grow

Objectives

- To analyse the influence of co-working spaces on individual/ personal experience
- To determine the specific workplace requirements of education space users

Statement of Problem

There is a clear awareness of what a co-working space are, but there is a lack of information of what individuals expect out of co-working spaces. Moreover, students, faculty, enterprises, and other co-working space users are not aware of the facilities offered by the co-working spaces. As a result, this research is critical in determining the link between learners' aspirations and a co-working space.

¹ Bednář, P., Danko, L., Smékalová, L (2021), Coworking spaces and creative communities: making resilient coworking spaces through knowledge sharing and collective learning, European Planning Studies, DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2021.1944065

² Jackson, D., Shan, H. & Meek (2021), S. Enhancing graduates' enterprise capabilities through work-integrated learning in co-working spaces. High Educ <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00756-x>

³ H.R, Swapna., D, Arpana (2020), Co-Working Space As Source Of Networking And Social Interaction. International Journal of Grid and Distributed Computing Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 1191 -1195

⁴ Orel, M. and Bennis, W. (2020), "The perspective of a coworking space model in scholarly settings", On the Horizon, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 101-111. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-10-2019-0074>

⁵ Rickieno, Rizal (2020) University coworking space as a collaborative learning space. Master of Philosophy thesis, Queensland University of Technology

⁶ Bouncken, R., Aslam, M (2019), Understanding knowledge exchange processes among diverse users of coworking-spaces. Journal of Knowledge Management, 23(10), 2067–2085. doi:10.1108/jkm-05-2018-0316

⁷ Billett S., Noble C (2017) Individuals' Mediation of Learning Professional Practice: Co-working and Learning to Prescribe. In: Goller M., Paloniemi S. (eds) Agency at Work. Professional and Practice-based Learning, vol 20. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60943-0_11

⁸ Hood, C (2015) Building communities; Lessons in co-working for the enterprise world. Corporate Real Estate Journal, Henry Stewart Publications, Volume .4, No. 3, pp. 239-248

The main aim of the study is to examine the demand of co-working as learning spaces, the learning opportunities offered at co-working space that enhance learning in individuals, and its influence on the experience of individual users and to understand the requirements for education space users and the future requirements for co-working space that will enhance knowledge sharing.

Scope of the Study

The study is restricted to a single co-working space, with the "users and learners of that particular co-working space". The study made a modest attempt to comprehend the benefits that co-working spaces provide to students, faculty, entrepreneurs, and other users eager to use the space as learning centre.

Research Methodology

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. It involves analysis of both primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected using the questionnaire to the users of the co-working space. The review of literature is used as secondary data will help to get insights to co-working space and the benefits, learning opportunities and practices at a co-working space. Descriptive research design tries to characterise the population more precisely and in a systematic fashion by describing the phenomena or population's features. Rather of asking why, it looks for what, where, when, and how.

The respondents constitute of entrepreneurs, students, faculties, freelancers, and corporate workers from various organization in a particular co-working space. A total of 113 responses were taken to collect the data using questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was used in the study to manage the questionnaire.

Hypotheses

Objective: To analyse the influence of co-working spaces on individual/ personal experience

H₀: There is no influence of co-working space on the learning individuals.

H₁: There is influence of co-working space on the learning individuals.

Objective: To determine the specific workplace requirements of education space users

H₀: There is no significant relationship between reasons for choosing co-working space and academic space user's requirement

H₂: There is a significant relationship between reasons for choosing co-working space and academic space user's requirement

Limitations

- The research is confined to a single co-working space.
- The data gathered is limited to individuals at a co-working space and their expectations of them, thus it cannot be used broadly.

Analysis

H₁: There is influence of co-working space on the learning individuals.

This hypothesis is analysed and tested using Anova and regression estimation.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.760 ^a	.578	.574	2.37671

a. Predictors: (Constant), F_SUM (factors_influencing_sum) (primary source)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	857.872	1	857.872	151.869	<.001 ^b
	Residual	627.013	111	5.649		
	Total	1484.885	112			

a. Dependent Variable: IN_SUM (influence_of_factors_sum)
 b. Predictors: (Constant), F_SUM (factors_influencing_sum) (primary source)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.441	1.228		4.429	<.001
	F_SUM	.735	.060	.760	12.324	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: IN_SUM (influence_of_factors_sum) (primary source)

In the Table 1, the R value i.e., 0.76 indicates that there is positive relationship between factors influencing learning and the influence of co-working on learning. It shows the strength of the relationship between the model and dependant variable (the influence of co-working space on learning). The R square value 0.578 i.e., 57.8% is the percentage of variance in the dependent variable (the influence of co-working space on learning) explained by the independent variable (factors influencing learning at co-working space).

The Table 1(a) shows the significant P i.e., Sig P value = 0.001 is less than 0.05, hence we accept the alternative hypothesis, which shows there is influence of co-working space on the learning individuals. From Table 1(b) the impact is studied by using $Y=a +bx$, where Y=influence on learning, a=constant, b= beta co-efficient and x = factors influencing learning. Now, the slope is $Y=5.441+0.735*x$. This shows if x increases by 1 unit, the value of Y will increase at rate of 0.735. The p value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05 so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which means there is influence of co-working space on the learning individuals.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between reasons for choosing co-working space and academic space user's requirement

This hypothesis is analysed and tested with the help of correlation estimation.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
R_SUM	.084	113	.048	.981	113	.110

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction (primary source)

		SR_SUM	R_SUM
SR_SUM	Pearson Correlation	1	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	113	113
R_SUM	Pearson Correlation	.477**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	113	113

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). (primary source)

The Table 2 depicts that the data collect is normal i.e., the sig value =0.110 is greater than 0.05 therefore, Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to test the hypothesis. Furthermore, the Table 2(a), shows the significant value for 2 tailed test which is 0.001. the p value =0.001 is less than 0.05 therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The significant P value = 0.110 which is greater than 0.005, therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which means there is a significant relationship between reasons for choosing co-working space and academic space user's requirement.

Conclusion

The co-working environments are turning into learning environment which is more informal. There are studies defining the co-working space for various benefits and as a platform to work together but there exists the gap and problem in understanding the co-working spaces as learning spaces which is done in this research by establishing relationship between co-working space and learning spaces. This study will investigate the relationship between the co-working space and learning space and the user's perception towards the co-working space as a learning space. Literature review (Sakari, I., Peltokorpi, A, et al., 2017)¹ shows that the characteristics of a co-working space reflected will be appreciated and encourage the education space user to learn at co-working space. In similar way, the learning of corporate employees learn at co-working space is also analysed. (Ackers, L., Ackers-J G. 2020)² found that co-working's learning and the training at co-working space are more successful than traditional methods of expansion and improvement. Changes in behaviour should occur at the organisational level rather than at the interpersonal basis. When organisations start believing in co-working space to be their

¹ Sakari, I., Peltokorpi, A, et al. (2017), "A call for co-working - users' expectations regarding learning spaces in higher education", Journal of Corporate Real Estate, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCRE-03-2017-0007>

² Ackers, L et al., (2020). "The Knowledge Creation and Transfer Mechanism.", Anti-microbial resistance in global perspective, 10.1007/978-3-030-62662-4_8.

training and learning space, it makes the growth of its employee better. Thus, co-working spaces are the new learning places for various individuals and new place for making employees better according to company's viewpoint. It is looked forward as a place for informal learning, to collaborate, make better networks and for better social interactions. But in order to collaborate and learn, interactions from each individual is necessary. (Neden, J., Bradbury, G. 2011)¹ used the co-workers, instructors, therapists, and live managers were placed in various roles to see how co-working environments need innovation. Co-working encourages individuals to learn from one other and participate equally. It was discovered that they had a connection in which there is knowledge exchange and assistance.

This inference after will help the co-working space managers, promoters, hosts, and investors to focus on the future facilities to be offered to the co-working space users and thereby encourage people to use the co-working space as their new learning space. The findings of the study shows that there is a clear relationship between co-working space and its view as knowledge centres.

Research Implications, Limitations and Scope for Future Study

This study focuses on one variable: learning in a co-working environment as a benefit of co-working space, with all other variables being ignored. Thus, the fellow scholars have an opportunity to examine various other variables of co-working space and the benefits from it to better understand in what different ways learning takes place. Though there is a positive understanding of the co-working spaces being the knowledge centres for the users of the co-working space, the learning factor cannot be measured completely and may differ from each individual using the space. The data cannot be generalised as it has been taken only from a particular co-working space. There are many other learning opportunities that are not completely understood or have been ignored in a co-working space that might also be a variable for knowledge centres and hence the future study may evaluate various other variables of learning in detail, and the different benefits the users derive from a co-working. These benefits would later help the co-working space managers, promoters, hosts, and investors to know the expectations from users of the space and make co-working as a better informal learning space. Future research can examine wide variety of co-working space which has different learning opportunities for the users of the space.

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