

Received: 04/01/2021

Accepted: 08/24/2021

## PHILOSOPHY OF COWORKING SPACES AT NORTHEAST'S BRAZIL: OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS ANALYSIS

## FILOSOFIA DOS ESPAÇOS DE *COWORKING* NO NORDESTE BRASILEIRO: ANÁLISE DOS ELEMENTOS OPERACIONAIS

Adriana Fumi Chim-Miki<sup>1</sup>  
Karla Roberta de Oliveira Farias<sup>2</sup>  
Verônica Macário de Oliveira<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The rise of coworking as an organizational format aligned with the sharing economy generates the need to understand the factors that express its operational model that tends to a working philosophy. Thus, this study aimed to analyze the elements of coworking spaces that are aligned with the coworking philosophy in the Brazilian northeast. The research is qualitative, a descriptive-exploratory study realized from primary data with a sample of 55 coworkings, located in the nine states of northeastern Brazil. Content analysis identified the indicators of the three operational dimensions of coworking spaces. The results indicated coworking spaces require improvements since they meet on average 60% of the factors suggested by the operational elements model for coworking spaces. The best score was in the Management of coworking dimension. While, the attendance of factors related to the Management Support and Member Management dimension were lower. The least attended indicators were associated with the formation of alliances, facilities and, solutions devices to coworkers. These results indicate double losses, for the coworker and the entrepreneur of the establishment, because it puts at risk the offer of adequate services to the philosophy demanded by who seek this type of operational structure.

**Palavras-Chave:** *Coworking*. Shared Economy. Operational Elements of *coworking*.

### Resumo

A ascensão do *coworking* como formato organizacional alinhado a economia do compartilhamento gera a necessidade de compreender os fatores que expressam seu modelo operacional que tende a uma filosofia de trabalho. Assim, este trabalho objetivou analisar quais os fatores operacionais que se alinham com a filosofia de *coworking* encontrados em espaços que atuam no nordeste brasileiro.

<sup>1</sup> PhD in Tourism, Management and Economics (Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain). Professor at the Federal University of Campina Grande, Campina Grande – PB, Brazil. E-mail: adriana.c.miki@ufcg.edu.br

<sup>2</sup> Graduated in Business Administration (Federal University of Campina Grande), Campina Grande – PB, Brazil. E-mail: karlarobertafarias1@hotmail.com

<sup>3</sup> PhD in Administration (Federal University of Pernambuco), Brazil. Professor at the Federal University of Campina Grande Campina Grande – PB, Brazil. E-mail: veronicamacario@gmail.com

A pesquisa é qualitativa, sendo um estudo descritivo-exploratório com uma amostra de 55 *coworkings*, situados nos nove estados do nordeste brasileiro. Uma análise de conteúdo analisou três dimensões para o funcionamento de espaços de *coworking*. Os resultados indicaram que estes espaços exigem aprimoramentos, pois atendem na média de 60% dos fatores indicados pelo modelo de hierarquia dos elementos operacionais para *coworking*. A melhor pontuação foi na dimensão Gestão do *coworking*, enquanto que o atendimento dos fatores relacionados a dimensão Apoio a Gestão e dimensão Gestão de Membros foram mais baixos. Os indicadores menos atendidos foram relacionados a formação de alianças e, instalações e dispositivos de soluções aos *coworkers*. Estes resultados indicam duplas perdas, para o *coworker* e para o empreendedor do estabelecimento, pois coloca em risco a própria oferta de serviços adequados a filosofia demandada por quem procura este tipo de estrutura operacional.

**Palavras-Chave:** *Coworking*. Economia Compartilhada. Elementos operacionais de *coworking*.

## Introduction

The significant changes in the settings of the economic scenario in the last decades, mainly arising from the evolution of technology, capitalism, and globalization, are restructuring the conventional methods of men's work and the places used for developing their activities (ANTUNES; ALVES, 2004). Thus, new ways to operate in this competitive market emerge reasoned in the emergency of the shared economy (COHEN; KIETZMANN, 2014), which is associated with the coordinated process of distributing what is ours for the use of others (BELK, 2014; BOTSMAN; ROGERS, 2011).

Some of the new operational formats seek to establish differentiated bonds between individuals and workplaces. In this context, the *coworking* spaces emerged, proposing strengthening bonds, providing regional development and competitiveness to the business, and redefining ways of working and associated practices (UDA, 2013). Also, these workspaces are aligned with the rising of a new pattern of urban professionals, informal labor, and an emergency of a creative class (FLORIDA, 2002), which has driven its arising and diffusion. They are known as the digital nomads, freelancer workers, based on projects, or with activities developed 100% online and thus can be performed from different places. Therefore, it does not require a fixed corporate head office (CAPPELLI; KELLER, 2013).

*Coworking* is a system of shared e flexible space environments that provide an exchange of resources, information, and services; the creation of value; tutoring; the formation of friendships, business, and *networking*, among others eventualities (SPINUZZI, 2012; UDA, 2013). *Coworking* brings with it a working philosophy based on principles of collaboration and community with two aspects that stand out: 1) the attributes of individuals are not restricted to a specific job, occupation, and/or organization; 2) the workplace is physically shared by them (UDA, 2013).

The importance of this study is related to better understanding these *coworking* spaces that tend to provide the progress of new working relationships and their dynamics in the contemporary scenario in the new areas where they are emerging. Therefore, check if the *coworking* spaces meet the key characteristics that are the pillars of this philosophy and working model contributes to filling a gap in studies on the subject and understanding the issues that involve this recent option to undertake.

Thus, this research aimed to analyze which operational factors in line with the *coworking* philosophy are found in this business modality in Brazil's Northeast, so they can provide an evolution of the professionals who may adopt it. We mapped the leading *coworking* establishments in the capitals of nine Brazilian states and the main cities of each state and the capital. Based on a qualitative descriptive and exploratory methodology, a content analysis of 55 websites of northeastern *coworking* spaces was made, using as a guide the structure of the dimension model for *coworking* proposed by Seo *et al.* (2017), to which valuable indicators were assigned for the proposed empirical analysis.

## The Shared Economy and the Coworking Phenomenon

Botsman and Rogers (2011) emphasize that collaboration has become the watchword for economists, philosophers, business analysts, trendsetters, merchants, and entrepreneurs. The shared economy originated in the 1990s in the United States, driven by technological advances that reduced the costs of online peer-to-peer transactions (SHIRKY, 2012). This creation of new business models based on exchanging and sharing goods and services between unknown people (SCHOR, 2014) reduces the costs of accessing products and services and consumer demand for resources (BOTSMAN; ROGERS, 2011).

Thus, this economic model is composed of commercial standards that enable access to goods and services without necessarily purchasing a product or exchanging money (BOTSMAN; ROGERS, 2011). Gansky (2010) indicates that a socioeconomic system can be built around sharing human and physical resources, which includes the creation, production, distribution, trade, and shared consumption of goods and services by people and organizations. The shared economy generally facilitates community appropriation, localized production, sharing, cooperation, small-scale entrepreneurship, and economic and natural abundance (ORSI, 2015). Sometimes, the best way to understand the sharing economy is to analyze the phenomena and practices inserted in this new format. One of these phenomena comprises coworking.

Despite the lack of precision in the information regarding the exact appearance of coworking spaces, Isnard, Neves, and Mesquita (2017) point to three distinct origins of these practices. The first and most recurrent origin in the literature was in San Francisco, in 2005, when the American software engineer, Brad Neuberg, organized a non-profit cooperative aimed at sharing workspaces for developers (GANDINI, 2015; SOARES; SALTORATO, 2015; LEFORESTIER, 2009; SPINUZZI, 2012). This form of work, considered non-traditional, was coined by the name "coworking" without the hyphen, to indicate the practice of working individually in a shared environment - and differentiate it from "co-working" (with a hyphen), which means working together in the same project (FOST, 2008). However, Gandini (2015) points out that the two forms have been used interchangeably, and this detail used to make the difference has been lost.

Gandini (2015) explains that these spaces were considered a "third place" between home and work. They highlighted the comparative advantages between work done at home and the adoption of this new space, as despite the gain in time and greater independence achieved through the home office, interaction with other professionals was lost, leading to bad habits of not being part of it a work community.

The second historically recognized space was the Hat Factory (2007), created by Brad Neuberg, who signed an agreement with a women's community center called Spiral Muse in the Distrito Mission de São Francisco to use their space (DULLROY, 2012). Next, Chris Messina and Tara Hunt (BRODIE, 2017), together with Brad Neuberg (BARRETO; FERRAZ, 2014) in 2007, opened a third space called Citizen Space, which continues to function today.

Spinuzzi (2012) identifies the idea of coworking as a system of poorly structured environments such as offices, but quite flexible in terms of agenda and schedules, characteristics that were thought of in Brad Neuberg's original versions, adding that they are environments open to several possibilities, among which highlights: the exchange of resources, information, and services; tutoring; the formation of friendships, business, and networking. In general, approaches to coworking denote a focus on something beyond simple resource sharing.

According to Leforestier (2009), coworking is a physical space that brings together professionals outside the conventional office, generally independent entrepreneurs, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and self-employed professionals. They seek some human interaction, since in home offices usually, the work ends up being isolated. Thus, coworking materializes the social network, as they are workstations that make it possible to bring together people with affinities to develop new projects based on common interests. That is, "coworkers" pay a monthly fee to share a space with other remote workers, freelancers, with an explicit purpose of social belonging, providing a stable and functional work atmosphere and participation in a social community (GARRETT; SPREITZER; BACEVICH, 2017).

The emergence of these spaces derives from two interconnected trends: the emergence of a creative economy (FLORIDA, 2002) and the digitization of the economy (MALECKI; MORISSET, 2014), both leading to changes in the use of spaces dedicated to work, entrepreneurship, and the emergence of new profiles of workers/entrepreneurs. With the advancement of technology, there is a noticeable increase in the various adaptations of work modalities. The number of people seeking

to manage their own time, adapting to work and quality of life, grows (GANDINI, 2015). This search for dynamism, interaction, creative stimuli, integration, which builds the principle of a Cowork.

These work environments do not seek to promote the evolution and growth of their users through an act of serendipity (SUAREZ, 2016). On the contrary, several activities are promoted for coworkers to optimize their contact list, create innovative projects and strengthen partnerships that will lead them to new paths, all with the help of professionals found in these environments, who will provide support throughout the process.

The most significant capital of a coworking is people, as it is built based on the interactions of its members, of its community (SUAREZ, 2016). However, not all coworkers are open to collaboration, confirming the aspect of heterogeneity in spaces of coworking. Spinuzzi (2012) considers the existence of three coworking models: 1) the community working space, which is configured as a community workspace, with delimited conversation spaces (such as outdoor areas and lounges); 2) the un-office model, whose main objectives are the dialogue, sharing of ideas and professional exchanges, in a very flexible way; and 3) the type defined as federated workspace, which is also described as an environment designed by the owners/founders to foster working relationships, such as collaboration between teams and networking.

The first idea associated with coworking spaces is always cost, which is the main reason for choosing this system, but the advantages of adopting this type of work go beyond this benefit (SPINUZZI, 2012; SUAREZ, 2016). The spirit of being part of a community enables an environment where all people can contribute and benefit from the relationships built by the community. It also raises those efforts must be made so that the advantages are accessible to everyone, having as a principle the feedback so that the environment can develop in the most diverse perceptions and perspectives (CAMPOS et al., 2015).

From the user's point of view, these spaces go beyond workstations but constitute their own lifestyle that contributes to the individual development of the professionals involved (BUTCHER, 2018; GERDENTITSCH et al., 2016). Analyzing from the side of the entrepreneur who establishes a coworking, Moriset (2014), raises an uncertainty factor in these spaces, which is their financial sustainability since low profitability is one of the main mortality factors of the enterprises. Campos et al. (2015) present some types of activities that can contribute to improving profitability in these innovation environments, such as: training and qualification actions (lectures; workshops; courses; technical visits; seminars; forums; in-person and virtual classes; web conferences); networking generation actions (meetings, lunches, coffees, meetings, business missions; business roundtables and other events that bring people and potential closer together); and, innovation and entrepreneurship actions (startup weekends and derivatives; presentation pitch; global entrepreneurship week; meetings with mentors; innovation and entrepreneurship fairs; projects in coworking spaces, fab labs, and maker spaces, research and development, among others).

In the Brazilian context, according to the Coworking Brazil website, the most significant number of coworking spaces is concentrated in São Paulo, with 40% of the entire market. This information refers to the study by Soares and Saltorato (2015). They highlighted that these workstations are more present in large, more populous centers and in a better-located area to lower rental costs, positioning themselves strategically. For Moriset (2014), the abundance of coworking spaces in a given city has something to do with the kind of urban liveliness and vibrancy that makes the town a backdrop for knowledge-based creatives, entrepreneurs, and organizations, regardless of the presence of a high-tech ecosystem. Considerations that are also supported by the studies by Cappelli and Keller (2013), Florida (2002), Spinuzzi (2012), and Gandini (2015).

### **Critical Aspects of the Coworking Business Model**

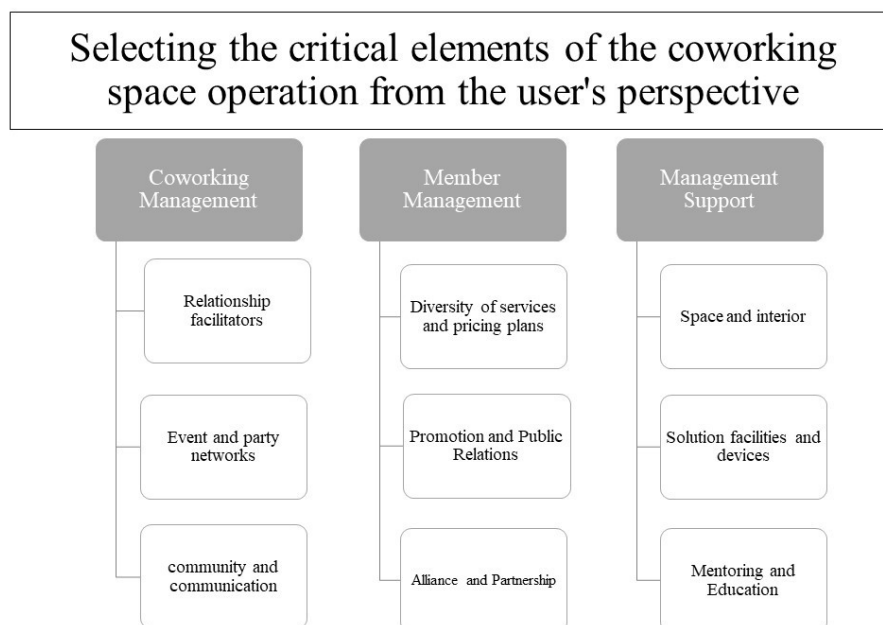
The coworking space essentially represents a new atmosphere of joint work (MORISSET, 2014). To be titled as such, Holzman (2010) indicates some assumptions that govern its operation: (1) the creation of responsibility, which discourages procrastination and encourages a rhythm of work to be created; (2) the encouragement of creativity by stimulating the exchange of knowledge between professionals from different areas; (3) interpersonal growth and the feeling of belonging; (4) the development of a community environment where help and encouragement are found; (5) the satisfaction of the human need to work with other people, to live together.

Seo et al. (2017) add that coworking refers to the practice of working side by side in a flexible and shared format, where tables can be rented on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. It associates

with the concept of coworking spaces the effect of cross-pollination, justifying that creativity and innovation are stimulated by being inserted in the environment. Moreover, as it originates as a business model of a collaborative economy nature, cooperation is a constant aspect among coworkers for the excellent performance of these workstations (CAMPOS et al., 2015).

The study developed by Seo et al. (2017) considered the two groups that compose a coworking space – users and hosts. His study used the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method to transform qualitative information into quantitative information and thus evaluate the various levels and multiple criteria of coworking spaces according to the philosophy and expectations of the groups. Their analysis resulted in three dimensions of operational elements for coworking space: (1) Space management, (2) Membership management; and, (3) Management Support (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Hierarchy of operational elements of coworking spaces



Fonte: Seo et al. (2017)

Dimension 1 of the model contemplates Space Management, seeking to identify what support is offered at workstations that encourage the development of coworkers, considering the strengthening of relationships and the feeling of belonging to root the real meaning of coworking. Dimension 2, Members Management, examines how interaction is promoted, what connections are made, the adequacy of profiles that favor networking with the right people according to the coworker's business segment. In this dimension, the strategic Management of members' needs is carried out internally and externally. Finally, the third dimension proposed by Seo et al. (2017) reports Management Support to enhance the efficiency and atmosphere of work through physical and structural arrangements and educational partnerships for training members. Table 1 presents and summarizes coworking's elements and operational levels, as proposed by SEO et al. (2017).

**Table 1:** Definitions of an operating system according to the hierarchy of operational models of the coworking space suggested by Seo et al. (2017)

COWORKING MANAGEMENT	Relationship facilitators - Activities that encourage members to form natural relationships and collaborations
	Event and party networks - Activities involving events to interact with experts in various fields and exchange information between members
	Community and Communication - Ongoing Management of online and offline communication channels for effective information exchange, interaction, and cooperative work
MEMBER MANAGEMENT	Diversity of services and pricing plan - Development and Management of strategy and revenue models for customer needs and member acquisition
	Promotion and public relations - Atividades para realizar seminários de investimento ou relações públicas; Support events and promotion of members business
	Alliance and partnership - Activities that connect and interact with other regions and brands of coworking spaces and other services such as Theaters, cafes, and cultural facilities to expand business profits and benefits of the members
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	Space and interior - Activities to improve work efficiency and coworking atmosphere through a variety of spatial arrangements and interior concepts
	Installations and solution devices - Maintenance activities for support equipment, facilities, and services for the convenience of members in the coworking space
	Mentoring and education - programs to improve members' business capabilities, such as training, courses, knowledge, and know-how.

Fonte: Seo et al. (2017, p.6)

From this theoretical review and considering the indications from the literature previously exposed, it is observed that the coworking business model has a modus operandi based on a philosophy. For this, it needs to offer its users the operational conditions to form the recommended atmosphere by the authors.

### Methodological Procedures

Seeking to analyze the coworking spaces of the Brazilian Northeast, this study followed a qualitative exploratory-descriptive approach. According to Gil (2002), descriptive research has its fundamental objective to describe the characteristics of populations and phenomena. Thus, field studies and surveys make it possible, from this methodological cut, to analyze attitudes, values, representations, and ideologies, and exploratory research seeks to provide greater familiarity with the problem (make it explicit).

The qualitative analysis depends on many factors, as the nature of the data collected, the size of the sample, the research instruments, and the theoretical assumptions that guided the investigation. One of the steps is categorizing and reducing data for interpretation and conclusions, with pairing being indicated techniques. It consists of associating the data collected with a theoretical model to compare them (GIL, 2002). Thus, in this research, was made a pairing of the theoretical assumptions of coworking spaces and the operational elements model proposed by Seo et al. (2017) to analyze whether there is an actual correspondence between the theoretical construction and the data observed in the coworking located in the main northeastern cities.

The sample was selected through the Coworking Brasil website, which was created in 2011 as a joint project of several founders of Brazilian coworking spaces to disseminate the concept across the country (Site Coworking Brasil, 2018) Google platform. The first five spaces identified on the Google search site were adopted when searching for the name of the city and the word coworking.

The criterion adopted was to select two cities in each northeastern state, being, in the first place, the capital and the most populous and/or developed city, in the second place. A total of 18 cities were evaluated, namely: in the state of Alagoas, Maceió and Arapiraca; in Bahia, Salvador and

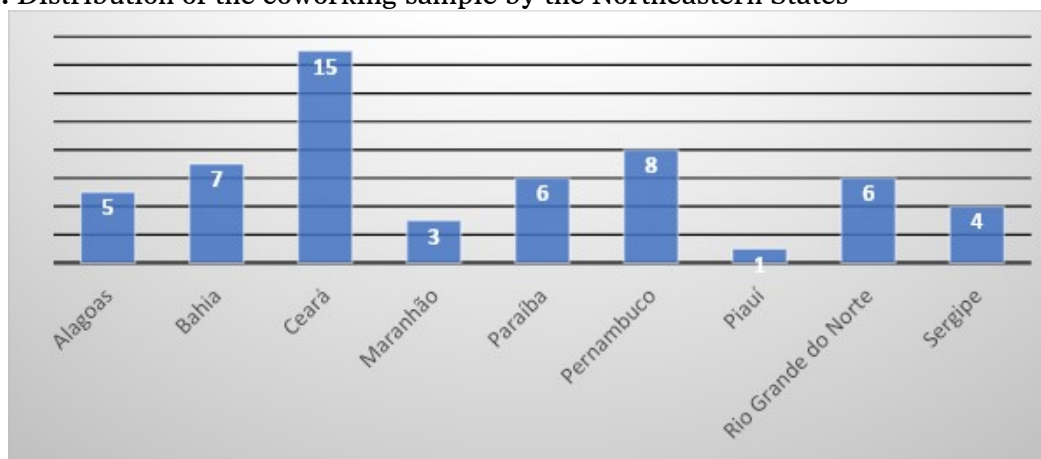
Porto Seguro; in Ceará, Fortaleza and Caucaia; in Maranhão, São Luís and Imperatriz; in Paraíba, João Pessoa and Campina Grande; in Pernambuco, Recife and Jaboatão dos Guararapes; in Rio Grande do Norte, Natal and Mossoró; finally, Sergipe, with Aracaju and Nossa Senhora do Socorro. It should be noted that some of the selected cities, despite meeting the criterion of being the most developed in the state, after the capital, did not have coworkings, which generated a final sample of 55 establishments.

The data collection tool for this research was developed considering the theoretical dimensions presented by the model by Seo et al. (2017), having proposed practical indicators observed in the results tables. The measurement instrument used was on a dichotomous scale (COOPER; SCHINDLER, 2016), also known as simple categorical, which offers two choices of mutually exclusive answers. In this research, grade 0 was assigned when the coworking did not meet the researched item, and grade 1 was met. Data extraction used the Content Analysis method of the online material on the websites of the coworking and telephone contacts. Thus, qualitative research methods are used to obtain the information, and the scale used also fits as a qualitative, dichotomous scale. However, to facilitate the demonstration of results and analyses, it was decided to tabulate the data using the Microsoft Excel program, making it possible to calculate the frequency of the items attended.

## Results

The data obtained by the survey and content analysis were grouped and analyzed according to the percentage of compliance with the items that reflect the definitions of an operating system according to the hierarchy of operational models of the coworking space suggested by Seo et al. (2017). This made it possible to understand how the activities of coworking spaces in northeastern Brazil are being developed. Nine northeastern states were part of the sample. Still, only two, Maranhão and Paraíba, have coworking spaces in the capitals and the second most populous and developed city, in Maranhão in the city of Imperatriz and Paraíba in Campina Grande. Thus, the sample consisted of 55 coworking, 53 located in northeastern capitals, and two located in the second most prominent city in the state. It is observed that the state of the Northeast with the highest presence in this sample was Ceará (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Distribution of the coworking sample by the Northeastern States



Source: The authors.

The first dimension analyzed, "Coworking Management" (Table 2), reached a level of service of 68.8% of the attributes indicated by the theoretical reference used in this analysis. In northeastern coworking, sub-attributes make up the community, and the communication factor had the highest frequency, 79.52%, emphasizing the use of social networks for communication between users and online platforms, which obtained percentages of 94.5 % and 92.7%, respectively. Which shows how the internet is absorbed in these places to contribute and facilitate the work routine. However, they had the lowest score in the sub-attribute related to sustainability, as the communication of these points in the coworker's community is not present in all verified establishments.

The Relationship Facilitators factor reached 66.8% of coworking. It was found that the establishments disseminate the philosophy of coworking, promote shared areas for both workstations and convenience. Still, they are not segmented by similar activity, which could promote better interaction between coworkers. This factor is an essential element for the learning processes related to the coworking philosophy, as highlighted by Butcher (2018). These spaces enable double learning and include learning everyday coworking practices in the business environment and learning through coworking practices. More specifically, to be collaborative so that they co-build a sense of community needed to become proficient entrepreneurs in an increasingly uncertain working environment world.

Finally, the sub-attributes of Party and Event Networks are attended by 60% of Northeastern coworking. Only 33 spaces, among the 55 evaluated, adopt practices to carry out actions that promote interaction and networking among coworkers. The sub-attributes that make up each factor of the Coworking Management dimension can be seen in Table 2.

From the results of the Coworking Management (CG) dimension, it can be extracted that although Suarez (2016) indicates that the most significant capital of a coworking are people and their interactions, variations in the provision of services provided in these spaces generate the different models previously defined by Spinuzzi (2012). In the cases analyzed, the most recurrent model is the community working space, as they have community work areas with delimited conversation spaces. Although all declare professional dialogue and sharing in their objectives, that is, a standard of an un-office model, the percentages found show that they still do not reach this model in its entirety. Therefore, they also do not get the federated workspace standard. Spinuzzi (2012) defines it as spaces that strongly encourage interaction and formal collaboration, seeking to foster more active connections between coworkers, leading to working relationships between their companies - contracts or references.

**Table 2:** Result of the Coworking Management Dimension

Factor	Yes It has	Sub-attribute
<b>Relationship facilitators (66,8%)</b>	100%	GC2 - Are there shared workstations?
	83,6%	GC4 - Does it publicize the coworking philosophy?
	74,5%	GC1 - Is there a living area?
	9,1%	GC3 - Does it have a target for a particular sector or activity (segmentation)?
<b>Event and party networks (60,0%)</b>	60,0%	GC5 - Does the website record parties and social events regularly held for participants and guests?
<b>Community and communication (79,5%)</b>	94,5%	GC6 - Does it use social networks for communication between users?
	92,7%	GC7 - Is there a space for conversation and information exchange on the website?
	74,5%	GC8 - Identify on the website the existence of any form of continuous Management of communication and exchange of information/opportunities or cooperative work?
	56,4%	GC9 - Does it promote the sustainable use of resources and sustainable management concepts?

Source: The authors.

The Management of Members dimension (Table 3) had a frequency of 55.6%, practically only half of the Northeastern coworking carry out the Management of members. This includes the following aspects related by Seo et al. (2017): the differentiated offer to the client, promotion and public relations, and the establishment of alliances and partnerships. The factor with the highest score found in this dimension is related to the differentiated offer for the customer in terms of services and plans (87.9%). But it scored low in the alliance and partnership factor (15.8%). With the frequency of promotion and public relations, these extremes made the dimension reach little more than half of the item's service (Table 3). It is noteworthy that, in the study carried out by Seo et al. (2017), the differentiated offer to the customer factor presented much higher priority weights than



the alliance and partnership factor, both from the perspective of users and hosts, which may corroborate the results of this research.

In detail, it is extracted from Table 3 that there is an offer that ranges from simple addresses for tax domiciles to differentiated plans for the client's needs, including extra services. However, the establishments are lacking regarding the promotion of coworking, which can also help to promote the coworkers installed there. Holding events is what most people do, but few maintain news and subject pages in the style of using content marketing, which could attract online and offline visitors, promoting both coworking and its coworkers. But, the lowest score was for alliances and partnerships with trade associations, other establishments, promotion of agreements, and participation in national and international networks of coworkers, items that little coworking in the Northeast are doing.

The cost and location factor has been pointed out in the literature as motivations for working in a coworking, mainly when referring to large urban centers (SOARES; SALTORATO, 2015; SPINUZZI, 2012; SUAREZ, 2016). However, when it comes to costs, it includes savings on rent and operational in general. In this case, the analyzed establishments do not fully address the issue related to the minimization of promotion costs, both directly and through their networks.

**Table 3:** Member Management Dimension result

Factor	Yes It has	Sub-attribute
Diversity of services and pricing plan (87,9%)	94,5%	GM12 - Does it offer a 'virtual offices' only plan including tax domicile service and web domicile?
	85,5%	GM11 - Offer extra services in addition to coworking space?
	83,6%	GM10 - Does the website offer differentiated plans according to the client's needs?
Promotion and public relations (63,2%)	87,3%	GM16 - It has good SEO (Search Engine Optimization). That is, do you rank among the top 10 on the google search page for the words ' coworking and the city X'?
	72,7%	GM13 - It organizes events to promote coworking and its members?
	60,0%	GM14 - It has records of reports about the coworking and its members?
	32,7%	GM15 - It maintains pages of news and reports of interest to the sector on the coworking website?
Alliance and partnership (15,8%)	29,1%	GM17 - It indicates on the website contact and interaction links with other business associations?
	12,7%	GM18 - Does the website indicate the existence of agreements with other commercial companies for discounts or facilities for coworkers?
	5,5%	GM19 - Is it part of any national or international coworking network?

Source: The authors.

Regarding the Management Support dimension (Table 4), this had an overall average frequency of 55.0% of attendance in the items analyzed in the Northeastern coworking. The biggest highlight was the Interior space (84.7%), followed by the offer of mentoring and education (53.8%). Finally, the installations and devices of solutions with the frequency of 26.6% of the coworking of the Northeast having items that respond to this factor. In this case, it is also observed that only half of the factors related to support and Management are made available by the coworking of the researched region, leaving the coworkers uncovered, especially in the items of solutions for their businesses. Analyzing the sub-criteria in detail, it appears that all sample participants have areas to receive customers (100%), spaces of different sizes to hold meetings (94.4%), and 85.5% of the analyzed coworking have areas to store products or stocks.

Also, installations can be considered creative and innovative spaces, an important fact, as coworking is related to a creative class (MORISSET, 2014). On the other hand, the subcriteria related to devising installations aimed at solutions for coworkers is low. For example, 89.1% of establishments offer a shared desk, and this was the most commonly found item. On the other hand, the availability of print documents appears only at 69.1%, although this does not require a degree of sophistication in today's technology.

Areas suitable for conference calls were only found in 21.8% of the coworking, and the offer of computer equipment available in only 12.7%. These points fall short within what is expected in the philosophy and characteristics of its members, who tend to be knowledge-based entrepreneurs seeking to form technology ecosystems (CAPPELLI; KELLER, 2013). Lastly, only 9.1% of coworking offers accounting or legal advice services, so there is still a long way to go at this support point.

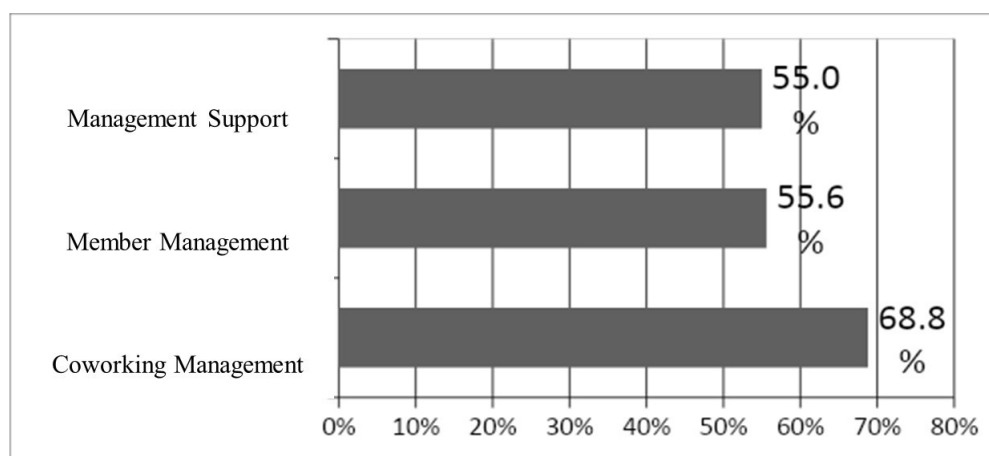
The Mentoring and Education dimension reached an average frequency of 54.5%. It emphasizes that almost all (92.7%) have training rooms for coworkers and other professionals working in the spaces. However, 63.6% offer courses regularly and 56.4% for free. It is noted that 85.5% of these same spaces have not entered into partnerships with universities or professional training centers to train people incorporated into the environment. Hackathon or other types of contests among participants that promote entrepreneurship was identified in 45.5%. The complete mentoring and education indicated by the analysis model adopted is a factor whose items are met by half of the establishments (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Result of the Management Support dimension

Factor	Yes It has	Sub-attributes
Space and interior (84,7%)	100,0%	AG23 - Identify spaces for the coworker to receive clients?
	94,5%	AG20 - Does it offer meeting rooms of different sizes?
	85,5%	AG24 - Does it offer a service/location for storage?
	72,7%	AG21- has work areas in different spaces and layouts (for example, outdoor and indoor areas, areas with standard benches, and creative spaces)?
	70,9%	AG22 - Does the decoration tend to indicate sharing and encouraging innovation?
Installations and Device (26,8%)	89,1%	AG27 - Does it use a shared desk?
	69,1%	AG31 - Does it offer a printing service?
	21,8%	AG28 - Does it offer a conference call area with adequate software for this?
	12,7%	AG25 - Is there computer equipment available?
	9,1%	AG29 - Does it offer an accounting and legal advisory service?
	5,5%	AG30 - Does it offer economic and financial feasibility studies and/or project development services?
	3,6%	AG26 - Does it offer management software within the coworking service?
	3,6%	AG32 - Does it offer a service of creation and Management of websites?
Mentoring and education (54,5%)	92,7%	AG33 - Does it have a training room?
	63,6%	AG34 - Does the website regularly offer courses and lectures?
	56,4%	AG36 - Does it hold free training events?
	45,5%	AG37 - Does it run Hackathon or other types of contests between participants (for example, Elevator Pitch sections, my project in 5 min)?
	14,5%	AG35 - Identify partnerships with universities or professional training centers?

Source: The authors.

The general results indicate that the Northeast coworking meets around 60% of the dimensions and factors of the Model by Seo et al. (2017), operationalized in this study from the incorporation of sub-criteria and indicators (Figure 3).

**Figure 3:** Frequency of dimensions of operational elements of coworking spaces in Northeast Brazil

Source: The authors.

It was observed that no individual establishment met 100% of the sub-criteria. However, the best scored among the three dimensions is Coworking Management (68.8%), followed by Membership Management and Management Support, both tied at practically 55%. Therefore, it is a result that indicates a series of sub-criteria that should be improved in coworking in this region.

However, it should be noted that the priority factors are identified, from the perspective of coworkers. For example, the study by Seo et al. (2017) facilitated relationships in the Coworking Management Dimension and costs in the Member Management Dimension. The authors suggest that hosts should focus on these elements to achieve greater efficiency in their investments. These factors, specifically, were well scored in the investigated coworking.

It should be considered that the elements related to coworking involve aspects of both entrepreneurship and socioeconomic change that enable learning processes that help both the individual and collective development of users (BUTCHER, 2018). As well as meet the current standards of organizations "lean" that are more competitive, customer-driven, and agile (TEODORA; DEVISCH, 2018). Therefore, it is considered that coworking, as stated by Gerdenitsch et al. (2016), should align flexible work infrastructure with well-constructed social support opportunities.

## Conclusions

The objective proposed by this research was to analyze which operational factors that are in line with the coworking philosophy are found in spaces that operate in northeastern Brazil. What emerges as a system of shared and flexible office environments that provide the exchange of resources, information, and services; tutoring; the formation of friendships, business, and networking, among other eventualities. According to Spinuzzi (2012), it came to complement itself with what Holzman (2010) discussed, spaces that encourage the creation of responsibility, discourage procrastination, prompt it to be created a rhythm of work, stimulating creativity, from the exchange of knowledge between professionals from different areas, enabling interpersonal growth and the feeling of belonging.

From the proposal of definitions of an operation system according to the hierarchy of operational models of the coworking space suggested by Seo et al. (2017), this work identified in the websites of establishments in the Northeast the fulfillment of the proposed criteria, considering that their existence drives the coworking philosophy, while the lack indicates the presence of a coworking. That is, they show an environment beyond what shared workstations provide the true spirit of coworking advocated by authors in the field, such as Spinuzzi (2012), Santos (2014), and Holzman (2010), among others.

This category of activity is considered non-traditional, coined by the name "coworking" without a hyphen, to indicate the practice of working individually in a shared environment - and differentiate it from "co-working" (with a hyphen). This means working inset in the same project

(FOST, 2008) to be fully attended to, and it must provide a series of amenities and environments to generate bonds between coworkers.

Although, as highlighted by Gandini (2015), the use of the two terms, coworking and coworking, has been widespread, it is necessary to return to its initial definition, as many spaces call themselves coworking. Still, few places truly commit to adopting and disseminating the philosophy implicit in this concept. In this line, the main finding of this research can be concluded, establishments in the Northeast have not yet reached their full status, being halfway through this migration from coworking to coworking.

Suarez (2016) points out that a coworking is not simply a space to share costs, exchange and trust relationships are necessary for the construction, from the interactions of its members, of the connection of the parts, which a coworking space requires. In northeastern Brazil, in 68.8% of the spaces analyzed, the predominance of the factors mentioned by Holzman (2010) is high. This makes the Coworking Management dimension the most excellent factor. These places the incentive to socialization, the generation of new contacts, and encouragement of sharing are characterized as strong points of northeastern coworking.

However, regarding the Management Support aspect, the field of installations and solution devices presented the lowest index in the survey. Only 26.6% apply to the proposed items. In this magnitude are the points that require further improvement and betterment. The support areas have inadequate software for conducting teleconferences, provision of accounting advisory services, financial planning, project development, and assistance to computer equipment. As such, coworking spaces fail to support the coworker, which has adverse effects for both sides. When the coworker is left without assistance, he will seek these services outside the coworking environment, reducing the income that the establishment could have and losing opportunities to generate business among the coworkers themselves. This is also reflected in the low rate of partnerships and alliances in the analyzed establishments.

From the analysis of the spaces installed in the northeast region, it was revealed that even populous and developing cities have not yet shown themselves to be attractive for the opening of coworking, being currently more present in state capitals. What can be judged due to the lack of knowledge and study about the potential for growth of these locations, where the rooted idea is that only in large centers, the propensity of expansion coworking is accelerated and more profitable. This study offers two indications of future research lines. First, to study the financial viability of coworking in the Northeast, and second, to expand practical attendance to the coworking philosophy.

The limitations of this study were found in analyzing the investigated spaces, if they remained inactivity, or even if those who used the coworking nomenclature reproduced activities consistent with what is associated with the concept, as the research was carried out using the information made available on the websites. Because of the questions that still exist on the subject, research that submerges to other extraction levels is recommended, with the possibility of carrying out a field study exploring these spaces more deeply.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the information and analysis generated in this study contribute doubly: as a theoretical contribution to the field and as a management tool for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the establishments, and thus, enabling a competitive growth in the market from an offer of the true coworking proposal.

## References

ALVES, S. **Avaliação da qualidade do serviço de espaços de coworking utilizando o modelo SERVQUAL**. [Trabalho de conclusão de curso]. Rio de Janeiro: Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Departamento de Administração; 2016.

ANTUNES, R.; ALVES, G. As mutações no mundo do trabalho na era da mundialização do capital. **Educação & Sociedade**, v.25, n.87, p.335-351, 2004.

ARASAKI, Paula Hidemi Kaneoya; DE CISNE, Caroline Santos; DOS SANTOS, Neri. Coworking: compartilhando mais que espaços?. **Revista Gestão Industrial**, v. 11, n. 3, 2015.

BARRETO, G.; FERRAZ, F.T. Revisão Bibliográfica Sobre Coworking Spaces. **Relatórios de pesquisa em engenharia de produção**, v.14, n. B3, p. 24-53. 2014.

- BELK, R. W.; HELLWIG, Katharina; MORHART, Felicitas. **Shared Moments of Sociality: Embedded Sharing Within Peer-To-Peer Hospitality Platforms**. NA-Advances in Consumer Research V. 43, 2014.
- BELK, Russell. You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online. **Journal of business research**, v. 67, n. 8, p. 1595-1600, 2014.
- BOTSMAN, R.; ROGERS, R. **O Que É Meu É Seu: Como o Consumo Colaborativo Vai Mudar o Nosso Mundo**. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2011.
- BRODIE, R. J. **Commentary on CoWorking consumers: Co-creation of brand identity, consumer identity, and brand community identity**. Journal of Business Research, 70, 430–431, 2017.
- BUTCHER, Tim. Learning everyday entrepreneurial practices through coworking. **Management Learning**, 2018.
- CAMPOS, João Geraldo Cardoso; TEIXEIRA, Clarissa Stefani; SCHMITZ, Ademar. Coworking Spaces: Conceitos, Tipologias e Características. In: **V Congresso Internaciona de Conhecimento e Inovação CIKI, Joinville**. 2015.
- CAPPELLI, P.; KELLER, J. R. Classifying work in the new economy. **Academy of Management Review**, v.38, n.4, p. 575-596, 2013.
- COHEN, Boyd; KIETZMANN, Jan. Ride on! Mobility business models for the sharing economy. **Organization & Environment**, v. 27, n. 3, p. 279-296, 2014.
- COOPER, D. R.; SCHINDLER, P.S. **Métodos de Pesquisa em Administração**. 12° Ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2016.
- COWORKING BRASIL. Disponível em: < <https://coworkingbrasil.org/>> Acesso em: 20 de jul. de 2018.
- DIRKS, K. T.; FERRIN, D. L. **The role of trust in organizational settings**. V.12, 2001.
- DULLROY, J. **Coworking began at Regus... but not the way they think**. Deskmag. 2012.
- FLORIDA, R. **A ascensão da classe criativa: e como ela está transformando o trabalho, o lazer, a comunidade e a vida cotidiana**. Nova Iorque: Basic Books, p.404, 2002.
- FOST, D. They're working on their own, just side by side, **New York Times**, New York, 20 fev. 2008.
- GANDINI, A. The rise of coworking spaces: A literature review. **Ephemera: theory & politics in organization**, v.15, n.1, p. 193–205, 2015.
- GANSKY, L. **The mesh: why the future of business is sharing**. New York: Penguin. 2010.
- GARRETT, Lyndon E.; SPREITZER, Gretchen M.; BACEVICH, Peter A. Co-constructing a sense of community at work: The emergence of community in coworking spaces. **Organization Studies**, v. 38, n. 6, p. 821-842, 2017.
- GERDENITSCH, Cornelia et al. Coworking spaces: A source of social support for independent professionals. **Frontiers in Psychology**, v. 7, p. 581, 2016.
- GIL, A.C. **Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa**. 4. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2002.

- GOMES, C. C. **Análise e design de trabalho aplicação de conceitos à organização do ambiente de trabalho.** Dissertação de Mestrado. Universidade Lusíada do Porto, Portugal.
- HOLZMAN, Paula. Sweet Spots - Central Penn Business Journal. **26, no. 29 (July) 3-7. Business Source Complete EBSCOhost, 2010.**
- ISNARD, P; NEVES, J. T. R.; MESQUITA, J. M. C. **COWORKING: Estudo bibliométrico no estabelecimento de um novo modelo de negócio.** VI SINGEP. São Paulo, 2017.
- KOJO, I.; NENONEN, S. **User Experience in an Academic Coworking Space: The Case of Aalto University's Design Factory.** 21 ed. CIB Facilities Management Conference. **Technical University of Denmark, Copenhagen, p.341-353, 2014.**
- LEFORESTIER, A. The coworking space concept. CINE Term Project. **Indian Institute of Management (IIMAHM).** Ahmedabad, 2009.
- MEDINA, P. F. **Carreiras de profissionais que atuam em coworking: entre os novos arranjos e os velhos hábitos de trabalho.** Dissertação (Mestrado em Psicologia) – Centro de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Florianópolis - SC, 2016.
- MESQUITA, L.A.F. **As práticas que sustentam o trabalho colaborativo em espaços de coworking e o papel das Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação: Estudo de caso da Goma.** Dissertação (Mestrado em Administração de Empresas). Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo. Fundação Getúlio Vargas. São Paulo: SP, 2016.
- MORISSET, B. **Building new places of the creative economy. The rise of coworking spaces.** In Proceedings of the 2nd Geography of Innovation International Conference, Utrecht. The Netherlands, 25 January 2014.
- OLIVEIRA, N.J.A. **Caminhos Traçados no Mercado de Trabalho: A Alternativa HUB Porto.** Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia). Faculdade de Letras. Departamento de Sociologia. Universidade do Porto. Portugal, 2010.
- ORSI, J. "The legal landscape of the sharing economy." TYL, Spring 2015. Academic OneFile, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A437508121/AONE?u=capes&sid=AONE&xid=da4e7de8>. Accessed 7 Sept. 2018.
- RODAS VERA, L.A.; GOSLING, M.S. Economia Compartilhada no Turismo: Uma Discussão Teórica sobre o Consumo Colaborativo e o Compartilhamento. **Revista Eletrônica de Estratégia & Negócios**, v.10, n.1, p.226-51, out. 2017.
- SANTOS, C.M.N. Coworking: Contribuições de um Modelo de Consumo Colaborativo e da Arquitetura Corporativa para o Gerenciamento das Cidades. **Revista Nacional de Gerenciamento de Cidades**, v. 02, n. 12, p. 84-95, 2014.
- SCHOR, J. Debating the sharing economy. **Great transition initiative.** 2014.
- SEO, Jongseok et al. Priorities of coworking space operation based on comparison of the hosts and users' perspectives. **Sustainability**, v. 9, n. 8, p. 1494, 2017.
- SHIRKY, C. L. A. Y. **Lá vem todo mundo: o poder de organizar sem organizações.** Rio de Janeiro: Zahar. 2012.

SOARES, Juliana Maria Moreira; SALTORATO, Patricia. Coworking, uma forma de organização de trabalho: conceitos e práticas na cidade de São Paulo. **AtoZ: novas práticas em informação e conhecimento**, v. 4, n. 2, p. 61-73, 2015.

SPINUZZI, C. Working Alone, Together: Coworking as Emergent Collaborative Activity. **Journal of Business and Technical Communication**, v.26, n.4, p.399-441, 2012.

SUAREZ, R. **O Manual Do Coworking: Aprenda Como Criar E Gerir Um Espaço de Coworking de Sucesso**. Serendipity Accelerator TM, 2016.

TEODORA, Constantinescu; DEVISCH, Oswald. Portraits of work: mapping emerging coworking dynamics. **Information Communication and Society**, 2018.

THOMPSON, C. J. The McDonaldization of Enchantment and Consumers: Practices of Re-enchantment: A Dialectic View of Transformative Consumption. **Advances in Consumer Research**, v. 33, p. 352, 2006.

UDA, Tadashi. **What is coworking?** A theoretical study on the concept of coworking. Discussion Paper, Series A, 2013.



*Esta obra está licenciada com uma Licença Creative Commons Atribuição 4.0 Internacional.*