

Effects of Alternative Work Schedule Preferences on Job Performance, Satisfaction and
Morale: Evidence from Community Colleges

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ABSTRACT

Amid the government-mandated shutdowns and work-from-home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have been forced to scramble to find ways to immediately cut costs and sustain productivity while being denied access to their facilities. Many industries, including education, were forced into alternative work schedules (AWS; telecommuting and compressed time) to prevent in-person contact and the potential spreading of the virus. Other businesses and organizations were forced into AWS to immediately cut operation costs to save the business. However, there is little research on the benefits and drawbacks of the shift to AWS. This study aimed to fill that gap in understanding the effects of an unanticipated forced shift to specific AWS: teleworking and flextime within the community college setting as employees bring with them their unique perceptions of and preferences for AWS. The population comprised employees and supervisors at three State of Alabama community colleges. The basic research design for the study was a cross-sectional survey of employees and supervisors about their experience with the benefits and drawbacks of alternative work schedules. Multiple linear regression and factor analysis were used for the data analysis. This research specifically examined the effect of a forced shift to AWS and employees' preferences for AWS on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale. Using data collected from employee surveys, each variable (job, satisfaction, performance, and morale) was measured individually and collectively to determine the impact on each resulting from the AWS shift. The results of this research will be beneficial to any community college system and may help to provide leaders of other organizations, government agencies, private businesses, or educational institutions with knowledge and insights into potential outcomes for their own institutions if they realize a need to use AWS to immediately cut cost or are faced with another government-mandated shutdown.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Alternative work schedules are any form of a compressed workweek; they are relatively new in terms of workday evolution, gaining most of their momentum in the 1970s (Owen, 1977; The Society for Human Resource Management [Society for Human Resources Management], 2008). These schedules come in many different forms depending on the organization's needs and abilities, and each has its unique advantages and disadvantages. The Society for Human Resources Management lists the most common alternative work schedules as flextime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, and job sharing (Society for Human Resources Management, 2009). This paper will refer to this increasingly important subject through the construct of AWS.

AWS have become increasingly more popular in recent years as private corporations such as Google, Facebook, and many public organizations seek to gain efficiencies and retain employees for less pay by creating a better work environment (Baltes et al., 1999; Wadsworth & Facer, 2016). Organizations are often enticed by AWS to decrease their energy costs and office space usage or decrease transportation and fuel costs for employees (Wadsworth et al., 2016). After the recent phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, 40% of companies stated that they have increased remote work options in order to alleviate strain on their labor budget in the past year. Furthermore, a comparable number of companies anticipate continuing this trend in the next twelve months (Boyle, 2022). These developments have emerged as a significant

incentive for businesses exploring AWS as they navigate the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic (Anderson, 2022).

Following the most recent last phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, 33% of businesses could not pay their May 2022 rent in full and on time, up from 28% in April 2022 (Anderson, 2022). Moreover, 52% of businesses reported that their rent increased over the past six months (Anderson, 2022). Not only do businesses realize real savings when using AWS, but employees perceive AWS as an unpaid benefit, which entices workers to work for less pay, further enticing their use in organizations to realize savings and efficiencies or be competitive in compensation offerings (Mas & Pallais, 2020; Nanji, 2021; Peeples, 2009; Ressler & Thompson, 2008; Wadsworth et al., 2016).

Wadsworth et al. (2016) reported that businesses, industries, and federal, state, and local governments are converting to alternative work schedules. More than a passing trend, AWS have shifted into workplace culture and are now becoming a permanent offering (Mas & Pallais, 2020). The use of AWS has been fueled further by millennials' arrival to the workforce and the COVID-19 pandemic. Sundar Pichai, the chief executive of Google's parent company, Alphabet, wrote in an announcement to staff on May 5, 2021, "The future of work is flexibility" (Pichai, 2021, p. 3). Google recognized the need for and embraced this shift to alternative work schedules. Moreover, according to Google, "About 20% of its employees will permanently work fully remotely after its offices reopen this fall, and about 60% will work a hybrid flextime schedule - about three days in the office and two days remotely wherever they want" (Uhler, 2021, p. 5).

On April 19, 2021, Brynn Harrington, vice president of Facebook's Human Resources team, informed the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that some employees have been "really thriving" at home during the pandemic and that remote work is "the future," adding that people in eligible roles at Facebook can apply for permanent remote telework working,

subject to approval from managers (Nanji, 2021). Earlier, in May 2020, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg predicted that 50% of the company's employees could be working remotely within the next five to ten years. During the same time, Twitter's Jack Dorsey announced that his employees "can now work from home forever" (Nanji, 2021, p. 3). As more companies look toward a permanent flexible workplace, many are deciding they need to appoint a specific person to manage it (Schwab, 2021). For example, Facebook now has a director of remote work, LinkedIn has a V.P. of flex work, and Dropbox has a head of virtual first (Schwab, 2021). Moreover, Ashley Rader became The Cleveland Clinic's first hire to oversee remote work in February of 2021, a year into the pandemic. Currently, more than 10% of the medical center's employees (8,000 people) work hybrid or remote schedules (Schwab, 2021). For these organizations, this is not just a temporary solution; it is the future.

The current climate has also shaped "The Great Resignation," a term coined by Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at the University College of London, in May 2021 to describe the sudden wave of people quitting their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which led many to re-think where, how and why we work (Thier, 2023). The Great Resignation trend led to a record 4.5 million workers resigning from their jobs in November 2021, bringing the 12-month total resignations to 68.7 million (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). This record-setting movement inspired other terms, such as "The Great Reimagination," "The Great Reset," and "The Great Realization," all used to describe the trend of workers re-examining the role of work in their lives and how workers are now seeking to create a better work-life balance (M. Smith, 2022). Furthermore, Cohen (2021) reported that Americans quit their jobs at a record pace during the second half of 2021, with an additional estimated 23% of workers seeking a new job in 2022.

Klotz explained that workers have re-examined the role of work in their lives and what it means for the individual worker. Klotz further explained that "The Great Resignation"

involved not only leaving the workforce or getting another job but rather taking control of their work and personal life and taking the large step of resigning to accomplish that. According to Currie (2022), one-third of workers who changed jobs during the pandemic took less pay in exchange for better work-life balance through flexible work schedules. Additionally, the near-record unemployment rate of 3.6% allows for nearly two available jobs for every job seeker; this extremely tight labor market has pushed companies to offer better benefits, compensation, and more flexible work schedules to meet workers' demands (Cohen, 2021). David Lewis, CEO of Operations Inc., a human resource consulting company, best surmised the present work environment when he stated, "If you are the company that requires everyone to come in all the time, you are a pariah" (Durbin, 2022, p. 2).

Community colleges, in particular, have significantly been affected by the pandemic and will directly benefit from these findings as they are forced to find ways to cut costs while maintaining performance and morale. Specifically, community colleges have faced steep declines in enrollment, with enrollment decreasing by 13% from pre-pandemic levels, as the National Student Clearinghouse [NSC] (2022) reported. This steep decrease in enrollment and the financial burden it created on community colleges caused the federal government to commit an additional \$198 million from the American Rescue Plan for community colleges and other institutions on January 13, 2022 (Hughes, 2022). This new federal aid is in addition to the nearly \$10 billion community colleges received from the stimulus last spring (Hughes, 2022).

As the effects of the pandemic continue to ripple through the economy, and community colleges face more decreases in enrolment and revenue, along with federal aid expiring, having other tools such as AWS to maintain performance, retention, and morale while cutting costs could prove vital. Community colleges and education as a whole have been harshly affected by resignations, retirement, and a lack of new applicants that the State

of Alabama has been forced to lower the teaching certificate requirements and even allow for certificate waivers in areas with critical shortages, all in an effort to gain more applicants (Will, 2022). Nationwide stories of schools shortening weeks, canceling classes, increasing class sizes, and placing underprepared and underqualified substitutes in teaching roles because of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing teacher shortages resulted in the creation of The American Teacher Act, which was introduced by Rep. Federica Wilson, D-Fla., on Dec. 14, 2022 (Stanford, 2022). The American Teacher Act establishes federal grants that incentivize states and school districts to establish a minimum teacher salary of \$60,000 and provide annual adjustments for inflation (Stanford, 2022).

Many active teaching job posting positions remain relisted and have no applicants (Will, 2022). Thus, a greater focus on the morale and retention of current employee educators would prove vital. The research will provide insight into the expected outcomes if they shift immediately to AWS to reduce costs as pandemic funding ends while also incentivizing employees to maintain performance levels while working for less pay.

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, states, cities, and other public administrations were forced to immediately increase spending on public health while also shutting down nearly all economic activity, therefore halting most revenues (Maher, 2022). While the federal government has stepped in with aid, these federal aid programs and monies will expire, leaving cities with changed and smaller budgets (Maher, 2022). As states, cities, and other public administrations are faced with declining revenue from the impact of the economic crisis and are asked to continue to provide the same level of services with less revenue; these organizations may choose to use AWS as a way to entice and retain workers to work for less pay and benefit from this study's findings.

Many organizations currently use AWS, not by choice but out of requirement, due to government mandates and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic (Josephs, 2021).

Effective leaders across all sectors have quickly become aware that they can no longer rely on traditional 9 to 5, Monday through Friday work schedules if they wish to retain high-performing employees (Uhler, 2021). Although many organizations offer AWS, there is little research on the benefits and drawbacks of these schedules (Wadsworth et al., 2016). As such, research in this area is needed. Most of the existing research studied employees hired into existing AWS or industries that chose to implement AWS and, therefore, had the employee training, knowledge, and infrastructure to optimize its implementation and maintain employee performance and satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2016). Wadsworth et al. (2016) noted:

With the increasing prevalence of AWS, clearly, there is a need for further research. Specifically, research is needed with responses directly from employees to understand how they perceive and experience AWS. This research might be supplemented with survey responses from managers/supervisors based on their experience with AWS, particularly the day-to-day management of employees. (p. 15)

Problem Statement

The implementation of alternative work schedules has gained significant traction in recent years as organizations seek to enhance efficiency, retain employees, and reduce costs (Wadsworth et al., 2016). However, despite the increasing adoption of AWS, there is a conspicuous research gap in comprehensively examining the advantages and disadvantages of these schedules, particularly when implemented immediately during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Wadsworth et al., 2016). Community colleges have faced substantial challenges due to the pandemic, including declining enrollment, financial burdens, and workforce shortages (Will, 2022). With the expiration of federal aid programs and shrinking budgets for states and cities, organizations are actively seeking solutions, and AWS offers a

promising opportunity to reduce costs and retain employees amid financial constraints (Maher, 2022).

Moreover, the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic have expedited the need for organizations, including community colleges, to swiftly adapt their work practices to ensure operational continuity and address the exigencies of remote work, social distancing measures, and evolving student needs. The pandemic has underscored the significance of flexible work arrangements and the potential benefits of AWS in terms of maintaining operational efficiency, promoting employee well-being, and optimizing cost management (Wadsworth et al., 2016). However, despite the burgeoning interest in AWS, limited research exists that specifically investigates the immediate implementation and impact of AWS during crises within the context of community colleges. Understanding the effects of AWS during crisis situations is crucial for community colleges, given their challenges of declining enrollment, financial strains, and workforce shortages. In addition, as federal aid programs approach their expiration dates and budgets diminish for states and cities, community colleges must explore innovative strategies to reduce costs while effectively retaining employees and ensuring their satisfaction and performance (Maher, 2022). Therefore, there was an urgent need to address this research gap by thoroughly examining the immediate implementation of AWS and the impact of AWS preference within community colleges during crises.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of alternative work schedules preference on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within community colleges during crisis situations, particularly in the context of declining enrolment, financial strains, and workforce shortages. The study aimed to understand how the implementation of AWS during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, could address the unique challenges

community colleges face and contribute to their operational resilience, cost optimization, and employee well-being. By examining the effects preference of AWS have on community colleges, this research could provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for community college leaders and decision-makers in effectively implementing and managing AWS to enhance organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and overall success.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent does the preference for alternative work schedules (AWS) correlate with changes in job performance?

RQ2: How does the preference for AWS influence employees' levels of job satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the preference of AWS and employees' job morale?

Based on research from Amin et al. (2017a, 2017b), Jaksic (2014), Law (2009), Riratanaphong et al. (2020), and Singhvi et al. (2018), employee performance, satisfaction, morale, and other performance and satisfaction variables were expected to decrease when employees are forced to adapt to a change in their work schedule, environment, techniques, or locations. Therefore, the hypotheses were as follows:

H1: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job performance.

H2: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job satisfaction.

H3: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job morale.

Significance

This study examined the unique, new realm of AWS, dealing with the immediate shift during an unexpected pandemic along with employees preferences for AWS and how this shift impacted employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within community colleges. Specifically, the study explored the forced use of AWS regardless of employees' perceptions or preferences for AWS in three State of Alabama community colleges. The data gathered will prove useful to any community college faced with a crisis or seeking to understand the impacts of shifting to AWS to realize savings or efficiencies. The findings may also benefit leaders of other organizations, whether public or private, large or small, union or non-union, that wish to understand the impact of an immediate shift to AWS. In addition, the findings may also be useful to those organizations seeking ways to realize savings or efficiencies by providing leaders with knowledge and insights, which may be beneficial in establishing and maintaining their own effective AWS and maintaining employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale.

Overview of the Chapters

The following chapters present a comprehensive overview of the background and context surrounding alternative work schedules in the workplace. First, a historical perspective on the development of AWS, tracing its momentum back to the 1970s, was presented. Next, various forms of AWS, such as flextime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, and job sharing, were discussed, highlighting their increasing popularity as organizations recognized their potential to enhance efficiency, retain employees, and reduce costs. In addition, the chapter addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work practices, with a particular focus on the notable surge in remote work options and the financial benefits associated with AWS implementation. Last, the challenges community

colleges face in the aftermath of the pandemic, such as declining enrollment, financial burdens, and workforce shortages, were discussed.

Chapter 1 laid a robust foundation for the research study, offering a comprehensive background and rationale for investigating the implementation and impact of AWS in community colleges during crisis situations. Chapter 2 will present the literature review for this study and provide a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing employee job performance in public organizations and education sectors. In addition, Chapter 2 will highlight the importance of factors such as organizational support, job satisfaction, training and development, leadership style, and employee motivation in shaping employee performance. Lastly, the chapter emphasizes the need for effective performance management systems, a positive work environment, and alignment with organizational goals to enhance job performance.

Building upon the insights gained from the literature review, Chapter 3 will address the research approach and procedures employed in this study. It will detail the methodology, including the data collection methods, instrumentation, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and limitations employed in the study. By rigorously examining these aspects, the chapter will provide a clear framework for conducting the study and ensure the integrity and validity of the findings. The research approach involved quantitative methods, utilizing surveys to gather participant data. Data collection was carried out by distributing survey instruments to a selected sample of participants. The study utilized a structured questionnaire to measure various variables related to employee job performance, satisfaction, and morale. The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques, including regression analysis and exploratory factor analysis. Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the study, with IRB certification obtained, informed consent obtained from participants, confidentiality and anonymity maintained, and each participant's right to withdraw from the study respected.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study, which aimed to investigate the impact of alternative work schedules (AWS) preference on employee job satisfaction, morale, and performance, analyzing the data collected and examining the relationships between the variables of interest. The chapter discusses the findings, highlighting their implications for organizations implementing AWS and the potential benefits for employee well-being and organizational performance. The findings will shed light on the impact of alternative work schedules preference on employee job performance, satisfaction, and morale. In addition, the results will contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence these outcomes and provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and performance. These findings contribute to the existing literature on AWS and provide valuable insights for organizational leaders and policymakers.

Chapter 5 will provide a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the results. The chapter will explore the implications of the findings, address the research questions, compare the results to previous studies, and offer recommendations for practice and future research. The aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of AWS preference on employee job satisfaction, morale, and performance and to shed light on the practical implications for organizations in implementing and managing AWS effectively.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The first laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 in the United States was on January 20, 2020; it was reported to the Centers for Disease and Prevention Control (CDC) on January 22, 2020 (Stokes et al., 2020). The CDC recognized that there is usually a 15-day lag in reporting; therefore, the actual date of entry to the United States could have been earlier (Stokes et al., 2020). Since the first COVID-19 case in the United States (population 328.2 million), the virus has inflicted significant economic and public health damage, with 32,267,958 cases and 574,679 deaths (CDC, 2021) at the time of this writing.

Overall, the impact of the virus and the corresponding government-mandated shutdowns have been severe. In fact, the impact has resulted in the most severe decline in the U.S. economy in the nation's history, surpassing even the worst decline during the Great Recession (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ("Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary," January 2022), the nation was down 22 million payroll jobs with a 14.8 percent unemployment rate in April 2020. Nationally, the recovery process has been slow, with only 1.4 million jobs added back to the economy in August 2020. Reportedly, 238,000 of those jobs were marked as temporary federal government positions for the decennial census ("Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary," January 2022). As a result, as of March 2021, the United States still showed a reduction of 11.5 million jobs, or 7.6% of the pre-recession/COVID total (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). In addition, unemployment insurance claims continued at highly elevated levels, indicating that many people are still losing their jobs or unable to find work

and confirming that progress in returning to a healthy labor market is continuing at a slow pace (“Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary,” January 2022).

Amid all the government-mandated shutdowns and work-from-home orders, businesses have been forced to scramble to find ways to immediately cut costs and sustain productivity while being denied access to their facilities and observing increasing declines in revenues. Many industries, including education, were forced into AWS (telecommuting and compressed time) to prevent in-person contact and the potential spreading of the virus. Other industries were forced into AWS in an effort to immediately cut costs and save the business (Boyle, 2022). To this end, it can be reasoned that the vital importance of AWS will become increasingly apparent as the aforementioned trends continue to develop and firms seek ways to prevent in-person contact and cut costs while maintaining or improving employee performance (Boyle, 2022).

The five-day workweek, often considered the standard workweek, results from centuries of scheduling evolution. Philadelphia carpenters were credited as the first group to successfully and consistently limit the workday length (Brody, 1989; Kossek & Michel, 2011). In 1791, they were able to secure a 10-hour workday, which was a dramatic improvement to the sunrise-to-sunset schedule, which normally required 12- to 14-hour workdays (Brody, 1989; Kossek & Michel, 2011). Throughout the 19th century, the workweek continued to compress, and by 1840, the average workweek was reduced to 78 hours per week (Baltes et al., 1999; Bird, 2010; Fleuter, 1975). While the hours per day decreased, most industries still worked six days per week (Baltes et al., 1999; Bird, 2010). Various labor unions fought for a reduction in working hours; this fight aimed to reduce working hours to 48 hours a week over five days. In 1927, Bird (2010) noted that the working hours in Henry Ford’s company had been successfully reduced and that the workers were subjected to only five-day work weeks.

This push for shorter workdays and weeks continued until the first years of the Great Depression when the United States reduced the hours and number of workdays for employees to create more jobs for people (Bird, 2010). Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) to further encourage this shift, which required that any employee who worked more than 40 hours per week be paid overtime. This Act passed by Congress caused the average hours worked per week to decline to 40 (Golden, 2009; Grossman, 1978), which has remained nearly unchanged.

Over the past half-century, a growing number of workers have voiced their dissatisfaction with the traditional 40-hour workweek. As a result, a general drive toward new and alternative work arrangements began (Bird, 2010), further fueled by increased female workforce participation, new lifestyles, an increase in two-paycheck households, new relationships between education and work, and the aging workforce (Kossek & Michel, 2011; Olmsted, 1983). As evidenced by movements termed “The Great Resignation,” “The Great Reimagination,” “The Great Reset,” and “The Great Realization” (M. Smith, 2022), employees today feel more entitled to determine how and for how long they should work and are even willing to forgo presearch quesay raises for time away from work and control over their work schedule (Best, 1980; Bird, 2010; Currie, 2022; Sider, 2020; M. Smith, 2022). The movement by employers to adapt to the changing desires of employees by offering AWS has gained significance and prevalence in the workplace as it allows the employees some choice in how, when, and where they work (Currie, 2022; Sider, 2020; Wadsworth et al., 2010). Although many organizations offer alternative work schedules, there is little research on the benefits and drawbacks of these schedules; thus, research in this area is needed (Wadsworth et al., 2016). Also, nearly all of the existing research has studied employees who were hired into AWS or industries that had chosen to implement AWS and, therefore, had the training,

knowledge, and infrastructure in place to optimize the implementation of AWS and maintain employee performance and satisfaction (Wadsworth et al., 2016).

On March 18, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the state of Alabama community colleges to shift immediately to AWS without any training, infrastructure changes, or notice to employees (Ivey, 2020). This created a natural experiment, an opportunity to study how this dynamic shift to AWS affected employee performance, satisfaction, and other key efficiency indicators. This information would prove useful for organizations facing crises in the future, whether financial, a pandemic, or another crisis that could be mitigated by an immediate shift to AWS.

During the pandemic, the ability to work from anywhere has become the single most sought-after benefit, with workers valuing this benefit as much as a 10% pay raise (Cohen, 2021). Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at the University College of London, who in May 2021 coined the phrase “The Great Resignation” to describe the sudden wave of people quitting their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic as workers began to re-think where, how and why we work, argued that more companies would embrace this change to attract and retain talent in the new tightened labor market (Thier, 2023; Cohen, 2021). In addition, leaders are beginning to question how they can give workers more power over their schedules and how their organizations can be more flexible (Cohen, 2021). This renewed push to a more flexible working culture is expected to lead to better work-life balance and improved mental health for employees, as work will fit around the workers’ personal lives rather than their personal lives being forced to fit around work (Cohen, 2021).

American Airlines faced an unexpected financial crisis and was forced to lay off 30% of its workforce on October 1, 2020; the airline required many remaining workers to take a 40% pay cut (Sider, 2020). In December 2020, Congress approved a 25-billion-dollar airline relief package that required airlines to recall all furloughed workers and agree not to furlough

workers or cut pay and benefits through March 31, 2021. This initial aid was followed by another 15 billion dollars (Oliver, 2020). Despite these massive aid packages, on February 3, 2021, American Airlines reported that they would send furlough notices to roughly 13,000 employees as the second round of federal payroll aid was set to expire; United Airlines also sent the same notification to 14,000 employees (Josephs, 2021).

Essentially, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a historic impact on state and local governments' fiscal conditions. As a solution, states were forced to immediately increase spending on public health while also shutting down nearly all economic activity (Maher, 2022); this halted most state revenues. Fearing economic collapse, the federal government passed several stimulus packages to provide direct and flexible funding to the states (Maher, 2022). The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) was enacted in March 2020 and included \$150 billion in direct, flexible funding to state, local, and tribal governments known as the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) (Maher, 2022). The deadline to spend the CRF was Dec. 31, 2021.

One year later, Congress provided more aid to states with the passage of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, which created the \$350 billion Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for states, counties, cities, and tribal governments (Maher, 2022). Under the State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF), states received \$195.3 billion with the obligation to commit the SFRF funds by 2024 and spend them by 2026 (Maher, 2022). Terminating these programs and financial resources will result in cities experiencing modified and diminished budgets (Maher, 2022). Concurrently, the Federal Reserve's existing Federal Open Market Committee policy entails a deliberate escalation of interest rates by a minimum of 0.5% per quarter until the conclusion of 2023. This proactive approach aims to substantially curtail demand and mitigate the pervasive inflationary pressures currently afflicting the U.S. economy (Horsley, 2022). By deliberately curbing spending and demand, the Federal

Reserve's policy is intentionally poised to steer the U.S. economy toward or even into a recession, consequently exacerbating the adverse repercussions on businesses, organizations, and governments (Horsley, 2022).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic kicked off the largest drop in education employment to date (Lurye, 2022). Currently, the state of Alabama faces a massive teacher shortage; therefore, lawmakers' only solution is to reduce the requirements for teachers to renew and gain their teaching certificates (Lurye, 2022; R. Smith, 2022). Moreover, certain areas of Alabama's Black Belt regions had no certified math teachers in their middle schools in the previous year (Lurye, 2022). The U.S. education secretary has called for investment to keep teachers from quitting, as the teachers union leadership describes it as a five-alarm emergency (Lurye, 2022; R. Smith, 2022).

Organizations have struggled to fill positions during a period of record unemployment and intense competition. Thus, offering AWS may entice more workers to consider teaching, as a flexible work schedule is currently the number one desire among job seekers (Cohen, 2021).

Alabama community colleges were also impacted, and enrollment declined by 13 percent during the pandemic (NSC, 2022). As a result, on January 13, 2022, the federal government took action and committed an additional \$198 million for community colleges from the American Rescue Plan (Hughes, 2022). This new federal aid was in addition to the nearly \$10 billion community colleges received from the stimulus last spring (Hughes, 2022). The current research could help these organizations when faced with a financial crisis and the need to cut pay as the federal relief funding expires for the state, counties, cities, and tribal governments, and they are forced to continue to provide service with decreased budgets. It could provide insight into the expected outcomes if they choose or are forced to shift immediately to AWS to reduce costs while incentivizing employees to maintain performance levels while working for less pay.

As cities and other public administrations grapple with declining revenue due to the ongoing economic crisis, expiration of aid programs, and the Federal Reserve's implementation of a tightening monetary policy, they are simultaneously being tasked with maintaining the same level of services with reduced funding. In response to these challenges, these organizations may opt to leverage AWS as a means to attract and retain workers willing to accept lower wages. This research could prove useful for these organizations. According to Wadsworth et al. (2016), "With the increasing prevalence of AWS, there is clearly a need for further research, specifically, with responses directly from employees to understand how they perceive and experience AWS" (p. 15). The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature pertaining to the variables of interest in this study of AWS's impact on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale. As such, the literature reviewed pertains to the variables: employee job satisfaction, job performance, job morale, and AWS.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction is the level of happiness or contentment an employee feels for their particular job and is an essential aspect of any public or private organization (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). When employees are happy and satisfied with an organization's management and work culture, they put their best efforts into making the organization successful. Conversely, employees who are unsatisfied with their job roles, duties, or their organization have low productivity levels (Amin et al., 2017a, 2017b). Essentially, employee job satisfaction drives performance, morale, and retention, making this a critical metric to measure organizational success (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). As such, employee job satisfaction has become a key metric used by organizations in assessing overall economic health and sustainability.

An important factor of job satisfaction is that it is not necessarily an indicator of an organization's performance and productivity; rather, it indicates an individual's passion for

fulfilling their roles and responsibilities and their willingness to give their best efforts in the performance of their duties and their desires to see the organization as a whole succeed (Kawiana et al., 2018). Kawiana et al. (2018) asserted that organizations that fail to monitor, measure, and improve employee satisfaction tend to have complacent teams, negatively affecting overall productivity. The researcher also put forth that motivated, talented, high-productivity employees expect more from their organizations and organizational leadership today to remain satisfied and work under a culture of continuous improvement (Kawiana et al., 2018).

Organizations began evaluating job satisfaction in the early 1930s (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). These evaluations were motivated by the employment and economic crises of the great depression (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). The dire economic situation provided organizations with a critical reason to evaluate job satisfaction. The organizations started by studying their employees' daily rhythms and routines and how they related to their productivity, motivation, and physiological states (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). Ćulibrk et al. (2018) attempted to examine the causes of employee attitudes, as these attitudes greatly influenced job satisfaction. These early investigatory studies laid the foundation for current job evaluation techniques such as surveys and questionnaires. Examining employee attitudes and psychological states became a significant indicator of their motivation and organizational productivity, and job satisfaction became the primary way of assessing employee experiences and overall performance (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). The researchers recommended that further studies focus on identifying and measuring the workplace and personal characteristics that influence the level of job satisfaction (Ćulibrk et al., 2018).

Measuring employee job satisfaction is critical as it enables organizations to make necessary adjustments where needed to increase employee job satisfaction and create a positive work culture with satisfied employees who put their best efforts into making the

organization successful and are less likely to quit or leave for different organizations (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). Using the right employee job satisfaction measurement tool to capture this data is critical (Amin et al., 2017a, 2017b). When properly utilized, these data will help improve job satisfaction and productivity levels for that employee (Kawiana et al., 2018).

Effective organizations conduct regular surveys and interviews to measure employee job satisfaction and determine how motivated their staff members are to achieve organizational goals and targets (Kawiana et al., 2018). These surveys allow organizations to understand what measures can be taken to improve satisfaction levels and what training needs may exist to prepare employees for higher-level roles (Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). Currently, the most common methods of assessing employee job satisfaction include surveys, one-on-one interviews, and suggestion boxes (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020).

Conducting Employee Satisfaction Interviews

Employee job satisfaction surveys effectively assess the perspectives of employees in relation to their individual satisfaction with their direct and indirect managers, the organization as a whole, and the motivations of employees in achieving organizational goals and targets (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Surveys can uniquely measure aspects of job satisfaction, such as organizational expectations, worker relationships, psychological issues, and career progression (Kawiana et al., 2018). Effective employee job satisfaction surveys should be easy to understand and allow staff members to express themselves accurately (Amin et al., 2017a, 2017b; Jaksic, 2014). Organizational leaders collect and analyze the surveyed data to identify factors affecting employee job satisfaction. Accordingly, the organization then devises effective strategies to improve job satisfaction and promptly implement them (Kawiana et al., 2018). Furthermore, effective managers play an essential role by sharing the survey data with team members, encouraging active

participation, and soliciting their opinions and perspectives on improving employee job satisfaction (Amin et al., 2017a; Jaksic, 2014).

One-on-One Meetings

Face-to-face meetings are another effective method for collecting employee job satisfaction data (Jaksic, 2014). When held regularly, such meetings enable organizations to directly understand the concerns and needs of individual employees (Singhvi et al., 2018). According to Jaksic (2014), some of the issues discussed in these meetings should include employees' psychological state, progression toward career goals, and potential obstacles preventing them from realizing their objectives. Many organizations conduct such meetings to determine employees' satisfaction with their roles and responsibilities (Singhvi et al., 2018). Therefore, leaders should be encouraged to engage in such conversations without agendas and listen to employee concerns without judgment or consequence (Singhvi et al., 2018).

Suggestion Boxes

Many employees do not feel comfortable sharing information publicly despite having many issues, concerns, complaints, or dissatisfactions within or about the workplace or organization (Boswell et al., 2005). Installing employee suggestion boxes can encourage employees to voice their concerns and opinions without fearing repercussions. This strategy will help companies gain the information needed to improve employee job satisfaction. Suggestion boxes also help bridge communication between management and employees, facilitating innovation and problem-solving (Boswell et al., 2005). Today, companies can use virtual suggestion boxes through digital platforms or dedicated apps. This data, once collected, can help organizations address problem areas that affect job satisfaction and address some of the common problem areas that yield employee job dissatisfaction (Boswell et al., 2005).

Recognizing and Rewarding Employees' Achievements

Employees enjoy praise and rewards for their efforts to achieve organizational goals; therefore, recognizing such achievements makes them feel valued and appreciated for their roles (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019). Also, such recognitions create a sense of shared prosperity for all members of the organization and significantly increase employee job satisfaction (Boswell et al., 2005). Therefore, to improve job satisfaction, organization leaders should be creative in rewarding employees and demonstrating their appreciation for employees' efforts and dedication (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019).

Avoid Micromanagement

Avoiding micromanagement is another way to improve employee job satisfaction (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019). Employees tend to develop a mistrust of leaders and organizations that micromanage them, increasing their stress levels and negatively affecting their work relationships (Amin et al., 2017a, 2017b). Instead, leaders should encourage team building and work to create a positive organizational culture and environment as a way to increase job satisfaction (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019).

Provide Opportunities for Career Progression

Generally, employees who are not satisfied with their job roles or duties assigned tend to have low productivity levels (Abuhashesh et al., 2019). By employing suitable employee job satisfaction survey techniques, organizations can effectively assess the satisfaction levels of their employees and determine the necessary measures to improve job satisfaction (Abuhashesh et al., 2019). One effective way to enhance job satisfaction is through implementing training and learning programs for employees (Abuhashesh et al., 2019). Employees will often be required to recertify or upskill, especially in the current dynamic economy. Organizations that lack or do not provide employee development, education, or training programs tend to have higher employee dissatisfaction rates and turnover

(Abuhashesh et al., 2019). Therefore, ensuring adequate training programs and professional development availability helps employees advance and step into higher-level roles with better skills and preparation (Ahmed, 2020). Ultimately, these efforts will create a more productive workplace and improve job satisfaction.

Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) studied employee job satisfaction within public service institutions, seeking to discover what factors contributed to increasing employee job satisfaction in public institutions. The researcher found that 24% of the variance in employee satisfaction was accounted for by working environments and that positive work environments that support employees' health and well-being are essential for businesses that want to increase employee job satisfaction (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Furthermore, the researcher concluded that a worker's well-being at work is a multidimensional notion that involves how much a person enjoys and benefits from their employment and whether or not it generates stress or other harmful impacts on their life and work/life balance. Mafini and Dlodlo highlighted that many employees are unsatisfied and overwhelmed because they are unable to maximize their skills and abilities in the workplace due to the work environment's limitations. As such, employers should create positive work environments that support employees' health and well-being to create the necessary conditions for employees to effectively use and develop their skills and thus increase overall employee satisfaction (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). AWS is a tool that would help create these working conditions, improving overall well-being if properly utilized (Cohen, 2021).

Karyotakis and Barda (2020) found that employee job satisfaction has become more important in today's dynamic economy. The researchers observed a shift in job seekers' priorities, emphasizing personal job satisfaction rather than solely focusing on monetary gain (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). In their survey of 679 government employees, the authors discovered that employee happiness can be enhanced through various factors. These include

increased job involvement, the nature of the work itself, the significance of recognition, performance appraisal, opportunities for promotion, and positive relationships between coworkers and managers (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). The findings underscore the significance of creating a supportive work environment that fosters employee satisfaction and positive interpersonal dynamics.

The recurring variable in these studies surrounding job satisfaction was the need for proper implementation, participation, and communication. Job satisfaction is increased when there is a competent manager who provides answers, enables employees to make decisions, and develops mutual aid and support among employees (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Managers are obligated to be forthright about roles and responsibilities, provide clarity on ambiguous points, and demonstrate enthusiasm while being assertive regarding a shared vision, which will benefit both the organization and the employee (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). The current study evaluated the impact of forced alternative work schedules on employee job satisfaction within community colleges.

Employee Job Performance

Employee job performance is defined as how an employee fulfills their job duties and executes their required tasks; it refers to the effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of their output (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Employees are the force that drives organizations forward. The overall performance of a company's workforce influences the productivity and success of an organization. Therefore, organizations must develop effective strategies to bring out the best performance from their workforce to stay competitive in today's economy (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018). Proper performance measurements and strategies help hire and develop the best talent and help employees advance within their roles and responsibilities, which yields long-lasting, high-output employees and greater success for organizations (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018). Improving employee job

performance is a continuous process that involves planning, evaluation, and measurement of the quality and efficiency of work (Rostam, 2020).

Employee job performance was first explored in the early 20th century as a source of income justification for the varying pay scales within an organization (Rostam, 2020). This performance appraisal was widely used to determine employee incomes based on the quality and efficiency of work (Rostam, 2020). Organizations would communicate the performance factors to be measured in the performance appraisals and use these metrics to motivate their employees to perform optimally and improve overall organizational performance (Hasanuddin et al., 2019). This strategy proved successful and seemed to work for employees who were motivated by financial gains (Rostam, 2020). However, it failed to motivate employees driven by career progression and the development of skills to take with them in their pursuits within other organizations or fields (Hasanuddin et al., 2019).

The gap between career progression and justification of wages became a significant challenge for organizations that used job performance appraisal methods (Rostam, 2020). Some organizations abandoned the practice of performance appraisals altogether but found that in the absence of an effective appraisal structure, individuals tended to judge subordinates' performance negatively, and this innate inclination to judge others negatively created legal and ethical challenges within the workplace (Hasanuddin et al., 2019). Without a structured performance appraisal system, there is little chance of conducting lawful, accurate, and defensible appraisals (Rostam, 2020). The metrics used to measure employee job performance depend on the individual characteristics and type of business the organization operates (Rostam, 2020). Generally, the primary elements for measuring job performance in all organizations include assessing the quality of work, speed, efficiency, and competence of the employee (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020).

Quality of Work

The standard or quality of work produced within an organization is a significant indicator of employee job performance since it measurably demonstrates the level of effort put forth by employees to produce high-quality results (Rostam, 2020). Poor standards of work can result in additional operational costs to organizations through loss of time, loss of resources due to reworks, and loss of customers due to poor quality or delays (Rostam, 2020). Therefore, it is important to address concerns about the quality of employee output to protect the company from these additional costs (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018). If not used regularly, formal job performance appraisal procedures should be initiated when an employee's work is consistently below the required standards (Jaksic, 2014). Discussions should be held with such employees to provide them with suitable training or a timeframe to make improvements before further actions are considered (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018).

Speed and Efficiency

Employee job performance is also measured by what employees accomplish within a specified time (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Efficiency demonstrates alignment between employees' unique skills and experiences for which they were hired and the expectations set by the organization (Jaksic, 2014). In addition, it reflects the effort put forth by employees to achieve organizational expectations (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Often, business entities will set employee performance goals and targets to meet within a specified time (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). These timelines are usually in line with the expectations set forth during recruitment, such as for employees to meet or exceed the specified goals and targets to improve organizational performance (Jaksic, 2014). Setting reasonable and achievable goals will motivate employees to achieve these expectations (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Goals are useful in measuring employee job performance

because they provide employees with clearly defined objective targets, measurable by the organization, leaving less room for ambiguity (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Before implementing formal performance appraisal processes, organizations should ensure that employees are aware of their expectations and targets (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019).

Competence

Measuring employee competence is another often-used metric for measuring employee job performance (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Competence refers to the skills or behaviors that employees need to demonstrate to perform their roles effectively (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). It embodies the unique skills and attitudes that staff members are expected to show while fulfilling their roles within the organization (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Organizations widely use competence to assess training and development effectiveness as well as in pay and job performance reviews (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Once competence frameworks are established and implemented, employees can then be assessed for organizational competence in their job performance and how they use the skills required to accomplish assigned tasks (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019).

Generally, the most effective strategies to measure and improve employee job performance include clear and consistent communication of expectations, regular evaluation of the expectations, and consistent feedback to allow employees to work to improve (Ratnasari et al., 2019). Providing employees with regular feedback on their progress enables them to address identified problems, improve their performance, and align their efforts with organizational expectations (Jaksic, 2014). If employees are not meeting expectations, leaders should initiate frank discussions to determine whether employees can identify anything that could be affecting their work performance (Ratnasari et al., 2019). These conversations can provide a basis for companies to provide more effective support to improve job performance.

Organizational Goals

Zeidan and Itani (2020) identified a framework that highlights the importance of organizational goals, employee motivation, and the external environment in shaping employee job performance in public organizations. The framework emphasizes the need for managers to align employees' individual goals with the organization's mission and objectives, provide adequate training and resources, and create a supportive work environment that fosters employee motivation and job satisfaction. According to their findings, managers play a crucial role in aligning employees' individual goals with the organization's overarching goals. By establishing clear connections between individual contributions and the mission and objectives of the organization, managers can enhance employee engagement and commitment (Zeidan & Itani, 2020).

Performance Management Systems and Tools

Hashmi and Al Maazmi (2022) conducted a case study on the Dubai Police and revealed that factors including job satisfaction, organizational culture, leadership style, and employee motivation have a significant impact on employee job performance in public organizations. The study also showed that using job performance management systems and providing training and development opportunities were effective strategies for enhancing employee performance. Moreover, Jamali et al. (2022) examined the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in education and found that transformational leadership was positively associated with employee performance, while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were negatively related to employee performance. The study also highlighted the importance of effective communication, employee empowerment, and feedback in enhancing employee job performance in education.

Furthermore, Tuffaha (2020) revealed that factors such as job satisfaction, training and development, organizational culture, leadership style, and employee motivation

significantly influence employee job performance in public organizations. The researcher also emphasized the need for public sector organizations to implement effective performance management systems and to create a supportive work environment that promotes employee motivation and job satisfaction. Additionally, organizations should create a positive work environment to motivate and pave the way for higher employee engagement (Ratnasari et al., 2019). Organizations wishing to increase employee job performance should consider the personal well-being and mental health of employees, which increases their job performance (Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). As organizations seek to increase employees' well-being, they engage in ongoing research, experimentation, and implementation of various policies and work adjustments to facilitate this improvement (Ratnasari et al., 2019). AWS is one such policy that can be used to increase employees' well-being and job performance. The current study evaluated the impact of forced AWS on employee well-being and job performance within community colleges.

Guan et al. (2014) examined the relationship between employee job performance and organizational support in university faculty members. Although several studies have investigated and linked relationships between organizational support and employee job performance, it was unclear if a relationship existed for university faculty members (Guan et al., 2014; Van der Kolk et al., 2018). By employing a rigorous cross-sectional survey methodology, the study collected, validated and examined questionnaire data to ascertain a positive relationship between organizational support and job performance among faculty members. The findings underscore the significance of organizational support in enhancing faculty job performance, thereby emphasizing the need for institutions to proactively pursue strategies to augment organizational support to promote optimal job performance outcomes (Guan et al., 2014).

Moreover, a recent study by Johari et al. (2018) assessed employee job satisfaction and performance after Malaysia's Government implemented a Transformation Program focused on quantifiable job results. The study included 208 Public Service Employees (PSEs) from northern Peninsular Malaysia, including 50 public sector organizations: 18 departments and agencies in Kedah, 15 in Perlis, and 17 in Penang (Johari et al., 2018). Johari et al. (2018) found that feedback, which could occur during employee job satisfaction interviews and one-on-one meetings and by recognizing and rewarding employees' achievements, positively enhanced employee job satisfaction and work performance. In addition, Johari et al. found that job variables accounted for 26.4% of employee job satisfaction and that job satisfaction was the main driver of employee job performance, accounting for 41.8% of job performance. These findings suggest that using AWS to increase employee job satisfaction would benefit organizations.

Johari et al. (2018) also demonstrated that managers should continually and consistently use feedback to positively impact employee self-improvement. Since the organization used key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine pay increases and punishment, public sector personnel should receive timely and effective feedback to enhance their performance and well-being, as demonstrated by Johari et al. Consistent feedback assists employees in self-regulating, making them more accountable and devoted while also improving employee well-being, which boosts workplace performance (Johari et al., 2018).

Nwosu et al. (2018) examined employee job performance management techniques in two Nigerian government agencies for successes, challenges, and impacts on public service delivery. Data were collected from municipal chiefs, directors, and managers where department managers were currently utilizing varying employee performance management techniques and approaches (Nwosu et al., 2018). Nwosu found that while managers understood the different employee job performance management techniques, they were not

being correctly or successfully utilized within the organizations. The ineffective utilization resulted from poor employee monitoring and assessment by managers (Nwosu, 2018).

Additionally, the study discovered various barriers to successfully implementing employee job performance management systems. Most importantly, the study demonstrated that any potential lack of proper governance mechanisms, proper training, proper monitoring and evaluating of employee job performance, and the proper connecting of employee review outcomes with personal growth objectives would negatively impact employee job performance (Nwosu, 2018). This study may also reflect this outcome, as there was no training or preparation before the COVID-19 state of Alabama's forced shift to AWS.

Measurement Tools

Job performance measurement is essential in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of employee job performance. In their study, Keefer and Vlaicu (2022) discussed using job performance appraisals as a tool for improving employee performance. They found that job performance appraisal provides a mechanism for setting performance goals, providing feedback on performance, and identifying training and development needs. As a result, they recommended that public organizations should adopt a consistent performance appraisal system that is fair, objective, and transparent to enhance employee job performance.

The authors also discussed using job performance management as a tool to improve employee job performance in public organizations. They emphasized that performance management provides a framework for setting performance goals, providing feedback on job performance, and linking individual performance to organizational goals. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that public organizations adopt a performance management system aligned with the organization's strategic objectives, involve employees in the performance management process, and provide regular performance feedback.

In education, job performance measurement and improvement techniques are essential in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Jamali et al., 2022). The institutions examined in this study of State of Alabama Community Colleges used student learning objectives as one job performance measurement tool (Alabama Community College System, 2021). Job performance measurement tools provide clear communication of learning expectations, enable the evaluation of student progress, and facilitate data-driven decision-making within organizations to improve teaching and learning effectiveness (Jamali et al., 2022). Feedback as a job performance improvement technique is also critical in education. Jamali and colleagues found that feedback provides a mechanism for identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, setting performance goals, and enhancing student motivation (Jamali et al., 2022). As a result, they recommended that educational institutions adopt a feedback system that provides timely and specific feedback, involves students in the feedback process, and links feedback to job performance goals (Jamali et al., 2022).

The literature reviewed in this study offers a comprehensive overview of the factors that influence employee performance within public organizations and education sectors. Common themes and findings emerge from an analysis of various studies, shedding light on effective strategies for enhancing, managing, and monitoring employee job performance. The primary variable measured in this study is employee job performance, which is assessed by the institutions through annual survey evaluations conducted by instructors. These evaluations gather data on job performance based on the courses taught during the academic year (Alabama Community College System, 2021). Student withdrawal rate, pass rate, student evaluation of instructor score, and student learning outcomes (SLO) are each measured for employee job performance evaluations, with a target or success rate of 70% or higher (Alabama Community College System, 2021). These data are tracked as student learning outcomes and are seen as a critical component of the Alabama Community Colleges

Effectiveness Plan to improve student learning (Alabama Community College System, 2021).

The SLOs measured by the institutions are:

- **Communication:** Effective communication in academic, work, and community settings occurs when the intended message is successfully delivered, received, and understood between two or more persons (Alabama Community College System, 2021).
- **Critical thinking:** A competent critical thinker evaluates evidence carefully and applies reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act (Alabama Community College System, 2021).
- **Quantitative reasoning:** Mathematical reasoning and the use of quantitative/ mathematical tools are used to successfully solve problems occurring in daily life (Alabama Community College System, 2021).

To effectively measure the impact of AWS on employee job performance within the institutions of interest, this study included questions to determine how the shift to AWS impacted instructor's student withdrawal rates, pass rates, student evaluation of instructor scores, and SLO evaluation scores.

Employee Job Morale

Employee job morale describes the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction, and confidence that employees feel at work (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). According to Patil et al. (2019), improving employee job morale will significantly increase an employee's job performance and retention. In addition, when an employee is helped and encouraged to grow in their personal life with more time for family and a professional life with opportunities for promotion and advancement, it improves their morale and commitment to and within an organization (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). Therefore, the positive impact AWS have on work-life balance would effectively increase job morale and

create a more positive organizational culture, help to increase employee engagement, and therefore play a critical role in employees having higher job morale (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020).

Organizations started to recognize the importance of employee job morale and its link to job performance at the start of the 20th century (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Initial studies surrounding job morale examined how it translated into employee job productivity (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Later, companies embraced job morale research and techniques in efforts to prevent labor unrest and sit-out strikes (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). The employee attitude and job morale surveys effectively assessed employee job morale and general motivation to work and focused on matters concerning working conditions, salaries, and local management, thus allowing companies to identify problems and initiate corrective, effective action (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Currently, the primary methods used to measure employee job morale include observation, administering job morale surveys, and tracking morale indicators linked to the various organizational morale indicators (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017).

Observation

Leaders can measure employee job morale by observing the behaviors and attitudes of employees toward their work (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Scholars have argued that productivity and employee job morale are directly related; therefore, many organizational leaders tend to measure job morale simply by observing the extent to which their employees and organizations perform (Larasati & Martono, 2020). High productivity often results from employees being happy and motivated to perform to the best of their abilities and attain organizational goals (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Leaders perceive high employee job morale by observing employees who are visibly happy and engaged in their duties, witnessing the successful achievement of organizational goals, and attributing these factors to positive

morale (Larasati & Martono, 2020). However, this measure can be unreliable, as many factors can allow an organization to remain productive even when employee job morale is low (Larasati & Martono, 2020). For example, changes in technology can influence productivity without impacting employee job morale and, therefore, skew this observation-based measurement of employee morale (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). It becomes critical that organizations utilize more than just the observation technique to monitor job morale (Larasati & Martono, 2020).

Employee Morale Surveys

Employee morale surveys, also known as employee engagement surveys, have a long history in the workplace and are an effective tool to measure employee job morale within organizations (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Managers administer either direct interviews or, more appropriately, anonymous questionnaires to determine the attitude of their employees (Larasati & Martono, 2020). These can help organizations assess all employees' perspectives about working conditions, leadership, organizational objectives, and co-workers.

The concept of measuring employee attitudes and satisfaction dates back to the early 20th century when management theorists began to recognize the importance of understanding employee morale in achieving organizational goals (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). One of the earliest attempts to measure employee attitudes was undertaken by the Hawthorne Works, a factory in Chicago, in the 1920s (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Researchers from Harvard University conducted a series of experiments to investigate the effect of various working conditions on employee productivity. The experiments included surveys to gauge employee attitudes toward work and the workplace. The results of the experiments showed that employee morale was a critical factor in determining productivity (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017).

During the 1930s and 1940s, several management theorists started to develop survey instruments to measure employee attitudes and satisfaction (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). For example, the Gallup Organization, founded in 1935, developed the Gallup Q12 survey, which measures 12 key factors related to employee engagement, including communication, recognition, and opportunities for growth (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). In the 1950s, the focus on employee morale surveys shifted towards measuring job satisfaction. Research by Frederick Herzberg, a psychologist, led to the development of the two-factor theory, which identified two distinct factors that affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction: hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions) and motivators (e.g., recognition and growth opportunities) (Herzberg et al., 1959). This theory provided the basis for many employee morale surveys in subsequent decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a growing interest in measuring employee attitudes and satisfaction as part of broader efforts to improve organizational effectiveness (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Employee morale surveys became more widespread, and many organizations began to develop their own survey instruments to suit their specific needs.

In recent years, there has been a shift toward using technology to conduct employee morale surveys (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Anonymous surveys are considered the most reliable as employees feel free to express negative feelings or perspectives (Larasati & Martono, 2020). The responses from employees are compiled so that managers can draw accurate inferences about their job morale. Online surveys and mobile apps have made it easier for organizations to collect and analyze employee feedback quickly and efficiently. There is also an increasing emphasis on using data analytics to understand employee attitudes and develop targeted interventions to improve engagement and morale (Larasati & Martono, 2020).

Morale Indicators

Morale indicators refer to the organizational factors that show employees' perspectives toward the company and its leadership (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Some indicators managers track using this method for employee job morale measurement include labor turnover, absenteeism, complaints, and productivity (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Assessment of these factors helps organizational managers identify possible changes in employee job morale. For example, increasing numbers in these areas likely indicate a decline in job morale. If these increases occur, managers should effectively examine the factors affecting employee job morale, including organizational culture and leadership (Larasati & Martono, 2020).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is one of the most important factors affecting job morale and influences employees' motivation and attitude toward work (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Workplace culture is a growing consideration for organizations seeking to hire and retain highly efficient and top-performing employees (Larasati & Martono, 2020). For example, Google allows employees to bring their pets to work, offers free dry-cleaning services, daycare, and free food and drink, and encourages using nap pods and entertainment rooms while at the office (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). A company's culture and good reputation make it a desirable place for employees to work and will positively affect employees' attitudes towards it (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Moreover, fostering a culture that embraces alternative work schedules (AWS) would greatly enhance the employee experience, as the ability to work from anywhere has emerged as the most highly desired benefit in today's workplace (Cohen, 2021).

Employees who perceived their organization's culture as supportive, innovative, and respectful reported higher levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and well-being (Aydintug

Myrvang, 2020). Conversely, employees who perceived their organization's culture as bureaucratic, hierarchical, and rigid reported lower levels of well-being and job satisfaction, which subsequently contributed to burnout and high turnover rates (Aydintug Myrvang, 2020). In addition, Aydintug Myrvang (2020) found that a positive organizational culture, characterized by open communication, supportive leadership, and recognition of employee contributions, is positively related to employee job morale. It was also determined that a negative organizational culture, characterized by a lack of communication, low trust, and poor management practices, was negatively related to employee morale (Aydintug Myrvang, 2020).

These studies demonstrate that organizational culture is an important determinant of employee job morale in public and private sector organizations. To promote high morale and engagement, organizations should cultivate a culture that values employee well-being, fosters open communication and collaboration, and recognizes and rewards employee contributions. By doing so, organizations can create a more positive and supportive work environment that encourages employees to thrive and contribute to the organization's success.

Leadership

Organizational leadership is one of the primary drivers of employee job morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Leaders are responsible for creating a positive work environment that fosters motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction among employees. Leaders set the tone for the entire organization; they establish the values, culture, and norms that guide how work is done. When leaders prioritize employee well-being and create a supportive culture, employees are more likely to feel valued and engaged, which, in turn, boosts employee job morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017).

Moreover, leaders who support their employees help build trust, which is essential for positive job morale. Support can come in many forms, including listening to employee

concerns, providing resources to help employees do their jobs, and recognizing employee accomplishments (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Leaders who provide a clear sense of purpose help employees understand how their work contributes to the organization's overall goals. When employees feel that their work is meaningful and important, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged, which can positively impact employee job morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Furthermore, leaders who provide development opportunities, such as training and mentoring, help employees grow professionally. Employees who feel that their skills and knowledge are valued are more likely to be engaged and motivated, which can improve job morale. Finally, leaders who recognize and reward employee efforts help to foster a culture of appreciation and positive feedback.

Organizational leadership has a significant impact on employee job morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Leaders who prioritize employee well-being, provide support, create a sense of purpose, offer development opportunities, and recognize and reward employee efforts can help to build a positive work environment that fosters motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction among employees (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Effective leaders build competent teams and manage them in such a way that keeps them excited and motivated about their roles and responsibilities (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). These leaders demonstrate an appreciation of and for employees' efforts, motivating, empowering, and encouraging them to continuously improve efficiency and productivity (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Research shows that effective leaders seek ways to continually promote and improve job morale (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021).

A growing trend or strategy leaders use to improve employee job morale is promoting a better work-life balance among staff members (Kundu & Lata, 2017). This promotion of work-life balance helps employees be more energized and upbeat in accomplishing their organizational roles (Kundu & Lata, 2017). To accommodate this, organizations are finding

ways to limit late-night shifts that potentially burn out employees or make them resent their organizational roles and responsibilities (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Much like the abandonment of the swing shift, this strategy helps to alleviate fatigue and burnout concerns, improving employee job morale (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). AWS is another way to accomplish a better work-life balance (Wadsworth et al., 2016). When organizations actively work to improve employees' work-life balance, this action helps build trust with employees and improve employee job morale, as they feel more respected, appreciated, and confident that their feelings and opinions matter (Kundu & Lata, 2017).

Effective leaders aiming to boost job morale actively support employee-led initiatives that foster career progression and growth opportunities (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). Empowering employees to advance their careers gives them confidence in the organization and its desire to retain them in the long term. Investing in such initiatives demonstrates the company's willingness to advance the employees within the organization and continuously improve their lives, and it improves job morale (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021).

Organizations that do not focus on increasing employee morale often face additional costs due to high employee turnover (Hur & Hawley, 2020). Depending on the nature of each industry, nominal turnover is both healthy and beneficial; however, low employee job morale creates higher turnover percentages and can be expensive in terms of money, productivity, morale, and time (Kossivi et al., 2016). In addition, replacing an employee can be expensive, costing approximately 6 to 9 months' salary based on the position (Kossivi et al., 2016). The loss of high-performing employees due to low job morale can also have a detrimental impact on team productivity and employee morale, requiring adjustments to daily organizational functioning, workflows, and team dynamics (Kundu & Lata, 2017).

Organizations need multipronged strategies to improve employee morale (Hom et al., 2017). These strategies to increase morale should include understanding the psychology of employees staying with an organization and the psychology of employees leaving an organization (Hom et al., 2017). With that psychology in mind, current research demonstrates that one-third of workers who changed jobs during the pandemic took less pay in exchange for better work-life balance through flexible work schedules, with flexible work schedules being the number one sought-after benefit of job seekers (Cohen, 2021; Currie, 2022; M. Smith, 2022). During the pandemic, the ability to work from anywhere has become the single most sought-after benefit, with workers valuing this benefit as much as a 10% pay raise (Cohen, 2021). In light of this shift in employee preferences, organizations will need to seriously consider adding AWS to their job morale strategies. Effective job morale strategies should include hiring qualified personnel, optimizing the onboarding experience, and creating a positive organizational culture that includes work-life balance, meaningful benefits, and opportunities to grow (Hom et al., 2017).

Hiring Qualified Personnel

Research suggests that organizations should invest enough resources in recruiting and training to attract and retain the most qualified personnel (Hom et al., 2017). Effective hiring strategies help to ensure the company avoids mismatches in skills, organizational roles, and culture (Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). Thus, hiring managers should clearly communicate the organization's goals and vision to avoid possible misalignments during recruitment.

Optimizing the Onboarding Experience

According to Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), human resource managers should provide appropriate training to new employees once they have identified the right match for the roles. Properly training employees for their job duties and responsibilities is vital to the job satisfaction performance and morale process; it gives new employees the skills, confidence,

and understanding necessary to achieve the organization's goals and be successful (Kundu & Lata, 2017). The training process should aim to reinforce the organization's expectations for new staff members and ensure the skills and understanding of expected outcomes and how the job duties are to be performed (Kundu & Lata, 2017). In addition, new employees should be introduced to the team to help them build effective workplace relationships with their colleagues.

Creating a Positive Organizational Culture

Employees enjoy being valued and appreciated for their role in achieving organizational success. Pawirosumarto et al. (2017) claimed that building a positive workplace culture that encourages feedback and employee recognition will improve employee satisfaction and morale. In organizations wishing to improve satisfaction and morale rates, leaders should practice continuous listening and holding regular meetings with staff members; they should also work to quickly address problematic issues in the workplace (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017).

Employee Happiness

Measuring employee happiness and satisfaction is important for organizations as it is vital to the economic health of their organizations and the morale and retention of workers (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Satisfied workers are more likely to stay within the organization for a long time and possess the valuable skills and experience necessary to perform duties at a high level (Khalid & Nawab, 2018). To assess employee happiness, organizations should create a positive and open work environment that encourages employees to provide feedback directly or anonymously (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Leaders should also be authentic in their interactions with subordinate employees, offering praise, encouragement, and the opportunity to freely discuss their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with organizational roles and responsibilities, as this allows leaders to accurately track the level of employee satisfaction

and morale (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). These personal interactions facilitate the direct collection of employee satisfaction data, enabling organizations to gather valuable insights into employee happiness, satisfaction, and morale (Khalid & Nawab, 2018).

Employee Turnover Rate

Voluntary and involuntary employee turnover rates indicate the number of employees that leave an organization over a specific period and are among the simplest metrics used to measure employee job morale (Ma et al., 2022). Voluntary turnover refers to when an employee chooses to leave an organization, and involuntary turnover describes when the organization chooses to terminate the employee's terms of employment (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Voluntary terminations often occur when employees are dissatisfied with certain aspects of the organization, including compensation, workplace culture, management, or professional development (Ma et al., 2022). Voluntary terminations are also the most costly to organizations as they are unexpected losses of needed labor, skills, training, and organizational experience (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Therefore, companies should first track voluntary turnover rates to identify problems that compel valued employees to voluntarily quit their roles and responsibilities within the organization (Ma et al., 2022).

Involuntary terminations often occur when employees are consistently underperforming or undermining the organization's productivity and may result from poor recruitment, onboarding, or employee training practices (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Higher levels of involuntary turnover rates indicate a problem within the organization's hiring, recruitment, or training process, suggesting a misalignment between employees and the organizational culture or inadequate training that leads to low job morale (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Low employee job morale will increase organizational costs by increasing both voluntary and involuntary turnover rates (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017).

Types of AWS

This study evaluated the impact of a preference for AWS when forced alternative work schedules were implemented on employee job satisfaction, job performance, and job morale within community colleges. As noted, AWS encompass various forms of a compressed workweek or telework and have emerged relatively recently in the evolution of work practices, with their momentum primarily gaining traction in the 1970s (Owen, 1977; Society for Human Resources Management, 2008; Souppaya & Scarfone, 2016). AWS come in many different forms depending on the organization's needs and abilities. Each alternative work schedule has its unique advantages and disadvantages. The Society for Human Resources Management lists the most common AWS as flextime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, and job sharing (Society for Human Resources Management, 2007).

Flextime

Flextime schedules allow workers to get their 8-hour workday during flexible time periods with specific restrictions, such as starting their workday by 10:00 am and ending their workday no earlier than 2:00 pm (Lutz, 2012). This also allows for face-to-face meetings and common working interaction time for employees. Flextime schedules are the most common AWS, with 54% of organizations offering them (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Flextime AWS originated in Germany in the 1970s (Kossek & Michel, 2011). As they gained popularity among workers and employers, they spread to Northern and Western Europe and later to the United States by the late 1970s (Kossek & Michel, 2011). The main driver for the implementation, utilization, and success of flextime schedules in both Europe and the United States was their effectiveness in reducing the amount of absenteeism in the workplace, vehicle congestion, and time lost in commute (Lingard et al., 2007; Lutz, 2012). Accordingly, employees would be permitted the freedom to adjust their schedules to attend to personal matters outside of work, resulting in decreased absenteeism (Lutz, 2012). The

employer-set core band hours, normally between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., were the most crucial in workplace performance; therefore, flextime ensured that the employees had fully used these hours to maximize productivity while allowing them to balance work life and family life (Lingard et al., 2007; Lutz, 2012). According to Lucas and Heady (2002), there is a high correlation between work-life balance and flextime work schedules. Essentially, an employee with a flextime job has a better work-life balance.

Another benefit of flextime AWS is that they reduce the time and stress spent commuting. According to Lucas and Heady (2002), Americans dedicate a greater portion of their time to commuting than people in any other country. Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) reported that the majority of people who commute preferred flextime schedules as they allow them the flexibility to avoid the most congested traffic times and, therefore, reduce their overall time spent away from work and home, which reduces their overall stress level. Fundamentally, having less stress while commuting to work results in greater improvement in working attitudes and overall performance by the employees. Additionally, Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard explained that fostering a positive attitude toward work can lead to increased employee productivity, morale, and overall performance. When employers demonstrate trust in their employees by allowing them the opportunity to set their own schedule and come to work according to their will, employee morale and job satisfaction increase, and employees are more dedicated and driven in their commitment to the organization's success (Lucas & Heady, 2002).

While the aforementioned studies demonstrate increases in work-life balance, overall job performance, and decreased stress levels, there is a potential downside to flextime schedules. A study by Travis (2010) showed that fathers with unemployed or stay-at-home wives and men without children benefitted the most from flextime schedules as they were not beholden to the normal schedules offered by childcare providers. This could pose a challenge,

especially when attempting to argue for or switch to flextime schedules, as these schedules favor men with stay-at-home or unemployed wives (Baltes et al., 1999). Another issue with flextime is its impact on teamwork. Lutz (2012) explained that because there is no fixed time when everyone starts or finishes work, teamwork becomes more difficult under these circumstances.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting allows workers to work remotely, typically from a home office (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Prior to COVID-19, 19% of cities surveyed offered telecommuting on a full-time basis and 34% on a part-time basis (Wadsworth et al., 2016). The history of and research into telework predates the terminology, as a case-by-case policy existed that allowed federal employees to work from home was in place as early as 1957 (United States Merit Systems Protection Board, 2011). In 1972, Jack Nilles devised the term telework when he used it to explain how he was able to work on his NASA communication system remotely while coordinating with the NASA team located at the office (Gan, 2015). The term gained significant momentum after an article in the Washington Post discussed flexible work schedules in the workplace, and telework began to circulate widely. The 1979 article authored by Frank Schiff was in response to the national fuel shortage and was titled “Working from Home Can Save Gasoline” (Schiff, 1979). The author highlighted many benefits of embracing flexible work schedules, such as telework, which allows employees to partly work from home and only go to the office during critical functions such as meetings with clients.

Schiff (1979) stated that millions of Americans used various means of transport to commute to work, including buses and cars, and consumed gasoline, which was in short supply and being rationed. Schiff also noted the increased stress from commuting among employees, many of whom never needed to go into the office to work effectively (Schiff,

1979). Today, there would be an added benefit to the decreased fuel consumption discussed in 1979, as it is now known that fuel consumption emits pollution into the atmosphere, which could accelerate global warming due to the erosion effects on the protective layers in the atmosphere (Dasgupta & Srikanth, 2020). Implementing AWS, such as telework, would reduce these emissions by decreasing commuting. During 2020 alone, carbon emissions decreased by 4.6% as workers were forced to work from home (Bhanumati et al., 2022).

In 1996, the U.S. government introduced the National Telecommuting Initiative, whose primary objective was to encourage more federal workers to telework (Ahmed et al., 2020; Telework.gov, 2011). The Department of Transport spearheaded the pilot program in collaboration with the General Service Administration. The target was to have at least 60,000 federal workers teleworking. However, by 1998, they were only able to facilitate 25,000 employees. While failing to meet its goal, this program was successful in spreading awareness about teleworking and its benefits to traffic congestion and fuel consumption in the country and globally (Telework.gov, 2011). In the final year of the Clinton administration, the Department of Labor published a 272-page book entitled *Telework: The New Workplace of the 21st Century*. The guide evaluated the impact of telecommuting on the economy, society, and organizational behavior and laid the foundation for additional research. After years of subsequent studies, in 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Telework Enhancement Act, describing it as the culmination of years of legislative activity to advance Federal telework (Ahmed et al., 2020; Telework.gov, 2011). The act mandated the heads of each executive agency to establish policies under which employees could be authorized to telework, determine the eligibility of existing employees to perform telework, and notify employees of their eligibility.

By 2009, telecommuting had increased in popularity and use in the United States due in part to increased access to and use of high-speed broadband internet and the signing of the

Telework Enhancement Act by President Obama (Uhler, 2021). Uhler's (2021) research demonstrated teleworkers' significant increases in employees' productivity and noted the savings to both employers and employees in terms of monies spent on commuting by an employee, time lost during commuting, power usage, office space, and increased productivity to the employer. For example, Best Buy measured a 35% improvement in employee productivity after implementing telecommuting (Ahmed et al., 2020). American Express had similar findings, which showed that remote teleworkers had better productivity by handling more calls and more business, with an increase of 26% and 43%, respectively (Ahmed et al., 2020). In addition to teleworking's positive impact on work-life balance, organizations that offered telework showed positive effects on recruitment and retention (Ahmed et al., 2020).

However, telework is not without conflict. In 2011, the United States Merit Systems Protection Board (MPSB) issued a report to both the President and Congress regarding the use of telework within the government. The report was based on a survey of 9,773 federal employees, supervisors, managers, and executives. The MPSB study found that while telework could directly benefit organizations, their missions, and individual employees, it raised numerous concerns, especially in work unit performance, work unit dynamics, and teleworker responsiveness and availability (MPSB, 2017). Some federal supervisors surveyed by the MPSB cited concerns, including an understanding of how work units could function remotely, the lack of responsiveness from some teleworkers, and a perception that telework had a negative impact on work outcomes (MPSB, 2017).

Job Sharing

Job sharing is a schedule that splits one job between two workers, allowing them to effectively split or share the duties assigned and compensation (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). This option benefits organizations seeking or needing to attract senior workers. Sixteen percent of cities surveyed offer job sharing (Wadsworth et al., 2016), which

essentially gained momentum in the early 2000s as baby boomers began to reach retirement age but were not ready to completely leave the workforce (Branine, 2004). Furthermore, job sharing is used as a work-life balance option for employees who prefer to change to part-time work and for organizations to continue to use the equity of knowledge and experience from long-term valued employees (Branine, 2004). If the duties can be split, there are opportunities for success for the employee to have a better work-life balance and the employer to maintain a highly qualified and knowledgeable employee without the expense and efficiency lost due to training (Society for Human Resources Management, 2009). However, the major difficulty with job sharing and why it is seldom used revolves around the difficulties in communication and coordination of activities and duties and the increased administrative workload to maintain the job-sharing positions (Branine, 2004).

Compressed Workweeks

Compressed workweeks allow workers to fulfill their 40-hour workweek in a compressed number of days (normally 3 to 4 days; Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). The extra day off is usually on a Friday or Monday, allowing for a longer weekend. Many organizations choose to close completely on the fifth day of the week to benefit from decreased overhead costs. As such, this is the most often used AWS when a significant cost reduction is needed. Of the cities surveyed, 21% offered this option to employees (Wadsworth et al., 2016). The authors noted this to be the most beneficial AWS to the organization and employees, as it demonstrated the highest increase in productivity and job satisfaction. Compressed workweeks are a popular form of AWS as they can easily be applied across a broad range of organizations and production techniques (Kossek & Michel, 2011).

The concept of a compressed work schedule is not a new phenomenon; it has been developing over the centuries. According to Bird (2010), in the early 1940s, Mobil Oil and

Gulf Oil companies used compressed work schedules for their truck drivers. Bird further stated that in the mid-1970s, this form of AWS became widely recognized to the point where many believed that the five-day workweek might be replaced, as companies using the compressed workweek witnessed enormous positive impacts as a result. While there have been many case studies and much research into the compressed workweek, most of which have shown the benefit to both the organizations and employees (Kossek & Michel, 2011), some have noted shortcomings with this type of AWS.

Researchers have extensively discussed fatigue as one of the significant issues (Dembe & Conversation, 2016). Many industries restrict maximum shift times due to fatigue and the declining performance that follows (Dembe & Conversation, 2016). For example, truck drivers, pilots, doctors, nurses, and others have strict restrictions on maximum allowable hours at work without mandatory downtime. With the increased length of working hours per day (generally 10 hours), some employees who have been studied in research on compressed workweeks were shown to be fatigued, less alert, less productive, and less efficient toward the end of their shift, therefore decreasing the productivity in companies (Hom et al., 2017; Ronen & Primps, 1981). However, other studies have shown that fatigue may not always be a factor. For example, Ninaus et al., (2021) concluded that fatigue was not an issue for those who adopted the compressed work schedule; the authors noted that employees in the compressed workweek AWS had the same fatigue issues as those who worked the traditional five days a week for 40 hours. Ninaus et al., (2021) also demonstrated no measurable difference in the level of fatigue in a compressed work schedule.

While fatigue was proven to be an issue within compressed workweeks, along with those in traditional work schedules, research shows that in those organizations using compressed workweeks, employees were less likely to have conflicts at home when compared to those with traditional schedules (Bird, 2010). Bird (2010) also noted that while

compressed workweeks have various benefits, there is an issue with managers perceiving employees as not committing to their work. This perception could have an impact on employees within compressed workweeks being offered or awarded promotions within the organization and, therefore, unknowingly affect employee retention and satisfaction.

Despite all the challenges and shortcomings, a compressed workweek AWS gives greater overall employee satisfaction and performance to the organization when compared to the traditional work schedule (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). The evolving research in the area of AWS is limited but growing as more organizations view AWS as a means to lower costs and increase productivity, employee satisfaction, and performance (Wadsworth et al., 2010). Wadsworth et al. (2016) played a critical role in the motivation of this study by laying the foundation for the research of modern AWS within public organizations. The authors randomly selected 355 cities to survey and received data from 115 of the cities surveyed. Of the cities surveyed, the authors found that 48.2% reported improvement in employee job morale due to allowing AWS, 43.5% observed increases in job productivity, 31% observed reductions in cost, and 29% had decreases in absenteeism. This study will apply similar techniques in measuring AWS within public Alabama Community Colleges.

Mas & Pallais (2020) added to the literature on the growth of AWS. The authors used a discrete choice experiment in the employment process for a national call center to estimate the willingness of pay distribution for alternative work arrangements relative to traditional office positions. For example, the study found that most workers are not willing to pay for scheduling flexibility but that the average worker is willing to give up 20% of wages to avoid a schedule set by an employer on short notice and 8% for the option to work from home. In essence, workers are willing to earn less money if allowed to use AWS. This is a critical concept for any organization facing a crisis that needs to cut costs while maintaining productivity (Wadsworth et al., 2016).

These studies examined different aspects of AWS and their impact on employees' performance and attitudes in both public and private organizations. However, in each case, the AWS were already in place when these studies were conducted. Therefore, the researchers did not examine the impacts on employee job satisfaction, job performance, and job morale when AWS are implemented without notice, training, or infrastructure as would be necessary during a crisis, whether financial or pandemic-related. As a result, the variable of a shift to AWS without notice, preparation, or training was omitted from the previous research and will prove to be a valuable addition to the literature and critical to all organizations—public and private—that wish or must shift to AWS due to crisis, whether financial, pandemic, or other.

Perception and Preference

The human aspect of perspective is a final factor to consider when examining a forced shift into AWS. As previously noted, the importance of organizational aid in adaptability to workplace changes; however, each person brings into this forced shift into AWS their own unique perspective on AWS and how they will perform, enjoy, or prefer working in AWS (Cohen, 2021; Hom et al., 2017; Oreg, 2003). An individual's perception of alternative work schedules significantly impacts both their performance and preference when forced into AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021). Initially, individuals forced into alternative work schedules due to external factors such as pandemics, organizational changes, or economic shifts often experience a mix of apprehension, uncertainty, and adaptability (Hom et al., 2017; Ninaus et al., 2021). This initial perception, which workers carry into the forced AWS, lays the groundwork for the cognitive and emotional processes that shape their performance and preferences for AWS over time (Ninaus et al., 2021).

Moreover, cognitive responses such as cognitive dissonance may occur as individuals reconcile their pre-existing beliefs and perceptions about traditional and alternative work

schedules with the reality of the new forced AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021; Riratanaphong et al., 2020). Overcoming this dissonance involves a process of cognitive adjustment and acceptance (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). The perception of control also plays a pivotal role. If individuals perceive a degree of autonomy in managing their work schedules, it can positively influence their cognitive appraisal, leading to a more favorable view of alternative work schedules (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

Emotional responses to the forced change to AWS also play a significant role in shaping individuals' perspectives, preferences, and performance in AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). The emotional impact of forced adoption is profound, with negative emotions such as stress and anxiety dominating initially (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). However, as individuals acclimate to the new AWS and experience its potential benefits, emotional well-being can improve, influencing their preference for the new forced AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). Job satisfaction, performance, and morale are other crucial aspects influenced by emotional responses to being forced into AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). If individuals find that alternative work schedules enhance their work-life balance or reduce commuting stress, their overall perception of AWS may change along with increasing job satisfaction, performance and morale, further reinforcing their preference for the new schedule (Ninaus et al., 2021).

Several situational factors also contribute to the relationship between perception and preference for alternative work schedules (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). Organizational support during the transition period is critical (Guan et al., 2014; Van der Kolk et al., 2018). Adequate communication, training, and resources can positively shape individuals' perceptions and, consequently, their preferences for the new AWS (Guan et al., 2014; Van der Kolk et al., 2018). The flexibility and adaptability of the alternative work schedule to individual needs and preferences play a pivotal role in shaping perspectives and preferences

(Huber & Bartunek, 2019). A schedule that accommodates personal responsibilities and preferences fosters a positive perception and increases the likelihood of preference for retaining AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

Over time, individuals' perceptions of and preferences for alternative work schedules evolve based on their experiences and perceived benefits or drawbacks of the new forced AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). The nature of this process results in a dynamic relationship between initial perception and preference, with adjustments occurring over time (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). Ultimately, recognizing and addressing employees' perceptions and concerns is essential for organizations seeking to successfully implement alternative work schedules and minimize adverse effects on performance, satisfaction, and morale (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). By understanding the delicate balance between employee perception and preference, organizations can effectively support individuals in navigating forced transitions and foster a conducive work environment conducive to productivity, job satisfaction, performance, morale, and overall well-being (Ninaus et al., 2021; Ogbonna & Harris, 2000).

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing employee job performance, employee job satisfaction, and employee morale in public organizations and education sectors. These represent the three variables of interest in this study and the impact a shift to and preference for AWS will have on them. This overview showed that employee job satisfaction is a crucial aspect of any organization, both in the public and private sectors, and refers to the level of contentment and happiness that employees feel toward their jobs (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). When employees are satisfied with their work environment, management, and culture, they are more likely to be productive and contribute to the organization's success (Amin et al., 2017a, 2017b; Karyotakis & Barda,

2020; Kawiana et al., 2018). Conversely, unsatisfied employees tend to have lower productivity levels, affecting overall performance, morale, and retention (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020).

Job satisfaction is not merely an indicator of organizational performance and productivity but reflects an individual's passion for their work and their willingness to contribute their best efforts to the organization's success (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Motivated and high-performing employees expect more from their organizations, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement and consideration of employees' needs and desires (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Measuring job satisfaction is essential for organizations to identify areas that need improvement and increase overall satisfaction, leading to higher productivity and reduced employee turnover (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Common methods for measuring job satisfaction include surveys, one-on-one interviews, and suggestion boxes (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020).

Furthermore, employee job satisfaction surveys provide insights into employees' perspectives regarding their managers, the organization as a whole, and their motivation toward organizational goals (Kawiana et al., 2018). One-on-one meetings allow direct understanding of individual concerns and needs. Suggestion boxes provide a private avenue for employees to voice their opinions and bridge communication between management and staff. Recognizing and rewarding employees' achievements, avoiding micromanagement, and providing opportunities for career progression are effective strategies to enhance job satisfaction (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019).

The studies reviewed show that positive work environments that support employees' health and well-being are crucial for increasing job satisfaction. Factors such as job involvement, the nature of the work, recognition, performance appraisal, promotion opportunities, and positive relationships with coworkers and managers also influence

employee happiness. These studies demonstrated that employee job satisfaction is vital to organizational success, making it a critical variable to measure and study. By implementing effective measurement techniques and strategies to improve job satisfaction, organizations can create a positive work culture with motivated and engaged employees, leading to higher productivity and retention rates (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020).

Employee job performance refers to how effectively and efficiently employees fulfill their duties and execute required tasks (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). It is a crucial aspect of organizational success, as the overall performance of the workforce significantly influences productivity and outcomes. Organizations must develop effective strategies to bring out the best performance from their employees to remain competitive in today's economy (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). The studies reviewed demonstrated that employee performance measurement and evaluation are essential in identifying the quality and efficiency of work and are worthy of being included as a variable of interest in this study (Rostam, 2020). Poor quality of work can lead to additional costs and customer dissatisfaction, making it crucial for organizations to address performance concerns promptly (Rostam, 2020; Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Setting clear and achievable performance goals and providing regular feedback can motivate employees to perform optimally and improve their performance (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018).

Moreover, employee job performance management techniques, such as setting performance goals, providing feedback, and linking individual performance to organizational goals, play a vital role in enhancing employee job performance (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llugar, 2018; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Organizations should adopt consistent and fair performance appraisal systems that involve employees in the process and provide regular feedback (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019; Keefer & Vlaicu, 2022; Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). The studies reviewed showed that in education, performance

measurement and improvement techniques are critical for evaluating teaching and learning effectiveness (Jamali et al., 2022). Using student learning objectives and feedback as measurement tools can help identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching, set performance goals, and enhance student motivation (Jamali et al., 2022).

The literature emphasizes the importance of aligning individual goals with organizational objectives, providing adequate training and resources, and creating a supportive work environment to enhance employee engagement and commitment (Zeidan & Itani, 2020). Effective performance management systems and tools, regular feedback, and employee involvement are crucial to improving job performance (Zeidan & Itani, 2020). Employee job performance was found to be a key determinant of organizational success, making it a critical variable to include in this study to measure and study the impact that shifting into AWS may have on job performance (Jamali et al., 2022; Society for Human Resources Management, 2020; Zeidan & Itani, 2020).

Additionally, employee job morale is a critical factor that influences the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction, and commitment that employees feel toward their work (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021; Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Organizations have recognized the significance of job morale since the early 20th century and have since used various methods to measure and improve it (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). One of the primary methods to gauge job morale is through employee morale surveys or engagement surveys. These surveys allow organizations to gather anonymous employee feedback about their working conditions, leadership, and overall job satisfaction (Larasati & Martono, 2020). The data collected from these surveys helped managers identify potential problems and take corrective actions (Larasati & Martono, 2020).

Observation is another technique used to measure employee job morale. Leaders can observe employee behaviors and attitudes to gauge their level of engagement and happiness

at work (Larasati & Martono, 2020; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). However, this method has limitations, as productivity and morale do not always directly correlate (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Morale indicators, such as labor turnover, absenteeism, complaints, and productivity, provide additional insights into employee job morale (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). A significant increase in these indicators may indicate a decline in morale and prompt organizations to investigate and address the underlying issues (Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021).

Furthermore, organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping employee job morale (Kennedy & Garewell, 2020). A positive and supportive culture that values employee well-being, open communication, and recognition fosters higher morale and engagement (Kennedy & Garewell, 2020). In contrast, a negative culture marked by poor communication and lack of trust can negatively impact morale and lead to burnout and high turnover rates (Kennedy & Garewell, 2020). Leadership is another important factor influencing employee job morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Supportive leaders who prioritize employee well-being, provide growth opportunities and recognize employee efforts contribute to a positive work environment and higher morale (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Leaders who promote work-life balance, such as through AWS, are also likely to boost employee job morale (Cohen, 2021).

With the growing importance of work-life balance in employees' preferences, organizations that offer flexible AWS are more likely to attract and retain talented employees (Cohen, 2021). The studies examined demonstrated that employee job morale is a crucial factor that significantly impacts an organization's success and an important variable worthy of inclusion in this study and the impact that shifting to AWS may have on it (Kennedy & Garewell, 2020; Patil et al., 2019; Pattnaik & Jena, 2021). Organizations can create a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity by employing various methods to measure and improve job morale. Implementing alternative

work schedules, in particular, can be a valuable tool in boosting job morale and attracting and retaining talented employees (Cohen, 2021).

The four common AWS explored in the chapter are flextime, telecommuting, job sharing, and compressed workweeks. Each has its benefits and drawbacks, making them suitable for different scenarios and work environments.

- **Flextime:** Flextime schedules allow workers to have more control over their work hours within certain restrictions set by employers (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). It originated in Germany in the 1970s and has become the most common AWS, with 54% of organizations offering it (Kossek & Michel, 2011). Flextime is effective in reducing absenteeism and commuting-related stress. It also enhances work-life balance, leading to increased employee morale and job satisfaction (Cohen, 2021). However, some studies have shown that it may favor certain demographics, such as men with stay-at-home wives (Travis, 2010).
- **Telecommuting:** Telecommuting enables employees to work remotely, typically from a home office (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). It gained popularity due to advancements in technology and was further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Telecommuting reduces fuel consumption and carbon emissions associated with commuting and has been shown to increase employee productivity and job satisfaction (O’Leary, 2013). However, some concerns have been raised about teleworker responsiveness and availability, especially in government organizations (MPSB, 2017).
- **Job Sharing:** Job sharing allows two employees to split one full-time position, providing work-life balance options for both employees and organizations seeking to retain experienced workers (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020).

It is particularly attractive to senior workers approaching retirement age (Branine, 2004). However, job sharing requires effective communication and coordination between the two employees sharing the role, which can increase the administrative workload (Branine, 2004).

- **Compressed Workweeks:** Compressed workweeks enable employees to complete their 40-hour workweek in fewer days, often resulting in a longer weekend (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). This AWS is widely used when cost reduction is a priority, as it can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction (Kossek & Michel, 2011). However, compressed workweeks may lead to employee fatigue, and some managers might perceive employees as less committed to their work, potentially affecting promotions and retention (Dembe & Conversation, 2016).

This overview also showed that the human aspect of perspective must be considered when examining a forced shift into AWS. As previously noted, the importance of organizational aid in adaptability to workplace changes; however, each person brings into this forced shift into AWS their own unique perspective on AWS and how they will perform, enjoy, or prefer working in AWS (Cohen, 2021; Oreg, 2003). An individual's perception of alternative work schedules significantly impacts both their performance and preference when forced into AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021). Initially, individuals forced into alternative work schedules due to external factors such as pandemics, organizational changes, or economic shifts often experience a mix of apprehension, uncertainty, and adaptability (Ninaus et al., 2021). This initial perception, which workers carry into the forced AWS, lays the groundwork for the cognitive and emotional processes that shape their performance and preferences for AWS over time (Ninaus et al., 2021).

Moreover, cognitive responses such as cognitive dissonance may occur as individuals reconcile their pre-existing beliefs and perceptions about traditional and alternative work schedules with the reality of the new forced AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021; Riratanaphong et al., 2020). Overcoming this dissonance involves a process of cognitive adjustment and acceptance (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). The perception of control also plays a pivotal role. If individuals perceive a degree of autonomy in managing their work schedules, it can positively influence their cognitive appraisal, leading to a more favorable view of alternative work schedules (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

Emotional responses to the forced change to AWS also play a significant role in shaping individuals' perspectives, preferences, and performance in AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). The emotional impact of forced adoption is profound, with negative emotions such as stress and anxiety dominating initially (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). However, as individuals acclimate to the new AWS and experience its potential benefits, emotional well-being can improve, influencing their preference for the new forced AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). Job satisfaction, performance, and morale are other crucial aspects influenced by emotional responses to being forced into AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). If individuals find that alternative work schedules enhance their work-life balance or reduce commuting stress, their overall perception of AWS may change along with increasing job satisfaction, performance and morale, further reinforcing their preference for the new schedule (Ninaus et al., 2021).

Several situational factors also contribute to the relationship between perception and preference for alternative work schedules (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). Organizational support during the transition period is critical (Guan et al., 2014; Van der Kolk et al., 2018). Adequate communication, training, and resources can positively shape individuals' perceptions and, consequently, their preferences for the new AWS (Guan et al., 2014; Van

der Kolk et al., 2018). Over time, individuals' perceptions of and preferences for alternative work schedules evolve based on their experiences and perceived benefits or drawbacks of the new forced AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). The nature of this process results in a dynamic relationship between initial perception and preference, with adjustments occurring over time (Huber & Bartunek, 2019; Ninaus et al., 2021). Ultimately, recognizing and addressing employees' perceptions and concerns is essential for organizations seeking to successfully implement alternative work schedules and minimize adverse effects on performance, satisfaction, and morale (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

The chapter highlights various studies that show the benefits and challenges of implementing AWS. While they offer significant advantages, AWS require careful planning and consideration for successful implementation (Cohen, 2021). Employees bring with them their preferences and perceptions of AWS, and these must be considered in order to address potential drawbacks effectively (Cohen, 2021). This study will benefit organizations needing to shift to AWS and understand the impact of such changes and of perceptions and preferences on employee job satisfaction, job performance, and job morale, as well as for successful AWS implementation (Wadsworth et al., 2016).

Chapter III

Methodology

This chapter will present the methodology employed to investigate the factors influencing employee job performance in public organizations. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research approach, data collection methods, instrumentation, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and study limitations employed in the study. By providing a transparent and systematic account of the methodology, this chapter aims to ensure the rigor and validity of the research findings. A quantitative data analysis method was used to examine data collected using a cross-sectional electronic survey of faculty and administrators.

The purpose of this program evaluation of the State of Alabama's immediate shift to AWS for the employees and supervisors of the Alabama Community College System was to investigate the impact of AWS preference on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within community colleges during crisis situations, particularly in the context of declining enrolment, financial strains, and workforce shortages. Thus, a Likert scale electronic survey instrument was the best choice for this study as it allowed for gathering information across many variables related to employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale (Brase, 2016; Rea, 2005).

Researchers have stated that a survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population or tests for associations among variables of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). However, Brase (2016) noted that while this type of analysis allows for many questions and a measure of many variables to be included in a survey instrument, care must be taken in constructing

and administering the survey instrument to avoid bias. Also, Rea & Parker (2005) advised that care must be taken to ensure the overall length is sufficient to examine the variables in question but not so long as to fatigue the participants.

This cross-sectional study measures the correlation between an immediate shift to AWS as employees bring with them their preferences and perceptions of AWS and job satisfaction, performance, and morale. The primary aim of this program evaluation study was to empirically evaluate whether a shift to AWS for community college faculty and administrators impacts employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale in a sample of community college faculty and administrators positively or negatively (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). The study sought to detect a significant relationship between the variables of interest; therefore, a power analysis was used to determine the appropriate target sample size using a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of 5% (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study answered the following questions:

RQ1: To what extent does the preference for alternative work schedules (AWS) correlate with changes in job performance?

RQ2: How does the preference for AWS influence employees' levels of job satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the preference of AWS and employees' job morale?

As demonstrated in the literature review, the modern workplace is characterized by dynamic environments and evolving business needs, resulting in increased organizational demands for flexibility and adaptability by both employees and organizations (Society for Human Resources Management, 2020). Consequently, employers frequently introduce sudden changes in work schedules to optimize resource allocation and meet operational

requirements (Boyle, 2022). However, these abrupt changes in work schedules, along with the perceptions of and preferences for AWS that workers bring with them into the new forced work schedule, can significantly impact employee job performance, leading to a range of negative consequences for both individuals and organizations (Singhvi et al., 2018).

Sudden changes in work schedules can profoundly impact employee job performance due to their disruptive nature on employees (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Employees often rely on routine and predictability to effectively manage their professional and personal lives. Abrupt alterations in work schedules can disrupt this balance, leading to heightened stress levels, reduced job satisfaction, and impaired psychological well-being (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). The perceptions of these changes, along with the uncertainty and unpredictability associated with sudden work changes can create feelings of instability, making it challenging for employees to plan and allocate time efficiently, resulting in decreased productivity and increased errors (Singhvi et al., 2018). Moreover, employees may experience difficulties as changes in schedules can interfere with personal commitments, such as childcare arrangements, education, and social engagements (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Consequently, these disruptions can lead to increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover rates, adversely affecting the overall employee job performance and functioning of the organization (Larasati & Martono, 2020).

Sudden changes in work schedules can also negatively impact employee job performance by disrupting physiological and psychological well-being (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Sudden changes in work schedules can contribute to increased levels of job-related stress and burnout. The uncertainty and lack of control associated with these changes can trigger feelings of anxiety and frustration among employees, eroding their motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Individuals also bring a perception of alternative work schedules, which significantly impacts their performance and

preference when forced into AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021). Initially, individuals forced into alternative work schedules due to external factors such as a pandemic, organizational change, or economic shift often experience a mix of apprehension, uncertainty, and adaptability (Ninaus et al., 2021). This initial perception, which workers carry into the forced AWS, lays the groundwork for the cognitive and emotional processes that shape their performance and preferences for AWS over time (Ninaus et al., 2021). Cognitive responses such as cognitive dissonance may occur as individuals reconcile their pre-existing beliefs and perceptions about traditional and alternative work schedules with the reality of the new forced AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021; Riratanaphong et al., 2020). Overcoming this dissonance involves a process of cognitive adjustment and acceptance (Huber & Bartunek, 2019). The perception of control also plays a pivotal role. When people feel they have some control over their work schedules, it can enhance their cognitive evaluation, resulting in a more favorable attitude and perception toward different work schedules (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

Based on these and the additional research from Jaksic (2014), Singhvi et al. (2018), Riratanaphong et al. (2020), and Law (2009), employee performance, satisfaction, morale, and other performance and satisfaction variables are expected to decrease when employees are forced to adapt to a change in their work schedule, environment, techniques, or locations. Therefore, the hypotheses were as follows:

H1: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job performance.

Sudden changes in work schedules can profoundly impact employee job satisfaction due to their disruptive nature and the preferences and perceptions of the changes that employees bring with them (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Job satisfaction is closely tied to individuals' sense of control, predictability, and autonomy in their work environment (Singhvi et al., 2018). When employees experience sudden changes in their schedules, it

disrupts their established routines and erodes their sense of control and predictability (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). This lack of control can lead to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and job dissatisfaction among employees (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). The resulting imbalance can leave employees feeling overwhelmed, resentful, and dissatisfied with their work situation (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020).

Sudden changes in work schedules can impact employee job satisfaction by affecting overall well-being. Employees rely on stable and predictable schedules to plan their personal activities, fulfill family commitments, and engage in leisure pursuits (Larasati & Martono, 2020). When sudden changes occur, employees may find it difficult to adjust and maintain their desired balance between work and personal life, resulting in feelings of job dissatisfaction and frustration (Larasati & Martono, 2020). Additionally, employees may experience fatigue and burnout due to the irregular and inconsistent nature of their work schedules, leading to decreased job satisfaction (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Sudden changes in work schedules have significant implications for employee job satisfaction (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Disrupting routines and eroding a sense of control can lead to increased stress, reduced autonomy, and overall job dissatisfaction among employees (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Individuals' perception of alternative work schedules also significantly impacts their performance and preference when forced into AWS (Ninaus et al., 2021). Individuals shift into the forced new work schedule with a perception of how they will perform in the new AWS. This initial perception, which workers carry into the forced AWS, may negatively impact their performance and preference for AWS (Huber & Bartunek, 2019).

H2: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job satisfaction.

Employee job morale is a vital aspect of organizational dynamics, directly influencing employee engagement, motivation, and overall satisfaction (Society for Human Resources

Management, 2020). Work schedules play a significant role in shaping employee morale by providing a sense of stability, predictability, and control (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Sudden changes in work schedules can significantly impact employee job morale due to the disruption they introduce. When employees experience sudden changes in their work schedules, it disrupts their established routines and erodes their sense of stability and predictability (Larasati & Martono, 2020). This lack of stability and predictability can lead to increased stress levels and reduced job satisfaction, negatively impacting employee job morale (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Moreover, sudden changes in work schedules can convey a sense of disregard for employee well-being, which can foster feelings of resentment and demoralization (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Employees may perceive such changes as an indicator of a lack of consideration for their needs and preferences, resulting in decreased loyalty, commitment, and motivation toward their work. Consequently, employee morale can significantly decline, affecting team dynamics, productivity, and overall organizational performance (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020).

Employees value having a degree of control over their work environment and the ability to plan their time tasks and schedules (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Sudden changes in schedules take away this sense of control, leaving employees feeling powerless and disengaged. The lack of involvement in decision-making processes and the inability to anticipate and plan for changes can create a sense of frustration and demotivation. Employees may perceive the sudden changes as a lack of trust or a devaluation of their contributions, leading to a decline in job morale (Karyotakis & Barda, 2020). Sudden changes in work schedules can disrupt social connections and collaborative efforts among employees, reducing morale and negatively impacting teamwork and cohesion (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Also, employees may already have negative perceptions of AWS, adding to the negative impacts (Oreg, 2003). The resulting decline in employee job morale can lead to

decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, and a negative impact on the overall organizational culture and performance.

H3: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job morale.

Data

The sample of this study consisted of 1,120 public sector employees belonging to the faculty and administration of the State of Alabama Community College sector who were involved in the March 18, 2020, immediate shift to AWS due to COVID-19 restrictions. To collect the range of data necessary, the sample included senior management, leadership officials, and faculty personnel from the colleges. Capturing enough of these perspectives helped achieve data saturation (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018).

Using survey questions from prior research, along with survey questions created for this study, a five-point Likert Scale survey with items of the instrument ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was created and distributed to all faculty and supervisors (department heads and deans) at three State of Alabama community colleges: Gadsden State, Trenholm State, and Southern Union. Care was taken in creating the survey instrument to ensure the instrument was thorough yet not too extensive, allowing for thorough respondent attention (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). Questionnaires were distributed electronically among the respondents through Qualtrics.

The data collection was expected to be completed in two phases. In the first phase, which was not included in the final sample, the questionnaire was administered to 10 respondents as a pilot study, and the data from the pilot study were used to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument under actual survey conditions. During the course of the pretest, poorly worded questions were identified, and overall quality was examined. Additionally, the pilot participants assessed the overall length and completion time and

whether the questionnaire left them with any potential concerns or participant fatigue (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). After the survey instrument adjustment, the pilot participants were asked to complete the survey again, but by completing only half of it. This was done to determine if these individuals perceived the instrument could be split in half and still retain meaning to the potential respondents. Typically, 2 to 10 survey questions per variable of interest are sufficient to be scientifically accurate yet not overwhelming to participants (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). Therefore, this length was the target of this instrument. The Likert Scale questions are listed in Appendix A. The remainder of the survey instrument questions were adjusted to fit within the dissertation document and are shown in Appendix B.

In phase two, the questionnaire was electronically administered to the sample after the necessary adjustments based on the pilot study. The surveys generated quantitative data, which were then analyzed. In addition, background information on the sample respondents was collected to understand the nature of the sample and if there were any meaningful correlations. This information related to five aspects of the respondents' employment: gender, age, educational background, job experience, and tenure.

Methods

The study focused on data analysis techniques for illustrating how organizations can best anticipate their individual results when reacting to dynamic shifts in economic or environmental conditions, which may be mitigated by the use of AWS. Data analysis of the data collected from questionnaires generated reliable and significant findings. The use of quantitative data and valid data analysis techniques ensured scientific accuracy and the minimization of any human bias through proper statistical treatment (Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018).

Before data analysis, the data were aggregated and inspected to ensure organization, arrangement, and classification (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005). Then, any data with qualitative

attributes were quantified by allocating a weighted numeral based on the severity level of the attributes (Dahbur et al., 2017), for example, the employees' perceived job performance levels following the forced change to AWS. In this case, its value was determined by calculating the percentage number of employees in the college that had the same response to the question's significance (Queirós et al., 2017). This assisted in enhancing understanding and discovering vital information to derive a significant, meaningful conclusion that could be used in making decisions for organizations in the future.

A preliminary understanding of the nature of the data set collected was further gained by looking at the frequency and central tendencies of the data to demonstrate if they are normally distributed and fit for the analytical purpose (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018). After verification of normal distribution and fit, preliminary correlation analysis was done to identify whether a satisfactory level of correlation exists between the variables to proceed with further analysis. From this preliminary correlation analysis, it was expected that the variables would correlate with each other so that they could be analyzed further to test the hypothesis (Wertz, 2018).

After creating and examining frequency tables and data cross-tabulation, Chi-Square tests and other tests of significance were used to qualify the data further (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018). Using frequency tables, histograms, charts, ANOVA tables, and other described descriptive statistics, employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale were measured for future consideration of organizations, both public and private, faced with any financial crisis, pandemic, or other crises that may benefit from an unannounced, forced, dynamic shift to AWS.

A multiple linear regression analysis of the data was conducted to predict the future impact of AWS on the variables of interest (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018).

By conducting a regression analysis, organizations can effectively identify the most

influential factors, disregard insignificant factors, and understand the interrelationships among these factors (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018). Through this regression analysis, organizations can establish a dependable approach to determine the impact of AWS on specific dependent variables and the extent to which they are affected.

Exploratory factor analysis was also used to determine if any hidden constructs or correlations exist that may not have been apparent from the direct analysis. This analysis aimed to identify the relationships among all the variables included in the dataset (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018). Researchers have claimed that the use of factor analysis could result in the ability to further reduce the number of variables by combining two or more variables into a single variable, should the factor analysis justify the combination (Creswell, 2018; Rea, 2005; Wertz, 2018). The findings of this study were compared to those in existing research where AWS were studied in already existing formats to determine if employee job satisfaction, performance, morale efficiencies, and other factors varied or had a positive or negative linear relationship.

Ethical Considerations and IRB Process

Several ethical considerations were taken into account during this research (Wertz, 2018). To ensure ethical standards were met, the researcher obtained IRB certification as mandated by the IRB guidelines (see Appendix C). Moreover, the researcher completed CITI training and certification, demonstrating a thorough understanding of ethical research practices. Before the research commenced, informed consent was obtained from all participants, highlighting their voluntary participation and right to withdraw at any point. Measures were implemented to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants throughout the study, and deceptive practices were strictly avoided. The researcher adhered to established research protocols, as highlighted by Wertz (2018), which included providing the

participants with the right to withdraw from the research at any time if they needed to ensure the integrity and ethicality of the study.

Limitations

Certain limitations and potential issues were encountered during this study. Firstly, financial constraints affected the research process. Additionally, a few participants failed to submit their survey feedback, which reduced the overall sample size. Another limitation of this study was the availability of quantitative data, as it focused on examining the impact of the ongoing and evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the sample size may not have been as comprehensive as desired (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018).

Furthermore, the survey instrument used in this study had certain limitations. Although efforts were made to include a wide range of questions, it is possible that some important aspects were not adequately addressed. The questionnaire itself was quite extensive, which may have affected respondents' attention and the thoroughness of their responses. In terms of response rate, approximately 66% of the distributed survey instruments were received. These limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings, and future research should strive to address these limitations by considering additional funding sources, improving survey instrument design, and ensuring a higher response rate for a more representative sample.

Summary

This chapter elucidated the comprehensive methodology employed to investigate the influence of AWS on employee job performance, satisfaction, and morale in the context of the immediate shift to AWS for the Alabama Community College System during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study addressed three research questions, exploring the correlation between AWS preference and changes in job performance, the impact on job satisfaction, and the relationship with employees' job morale. The research used quantitative data analysis

techniques to uncover significant findings, leveraging a Likert scale electronic survey distributed to a sample of 1,120 public sector employees, including faculty and administrators. The data analysis involved a thorough examination of correlations, regression analysis, and exploratory factor analysis. Ethical considerations were carefully adhered to, and limitations, such as financial constraints and a lower-than-desired response rate, were acknowledged. Despite these limitations, this study contributes valuable insights into the complex dynamics of implementing AWS in crisis situations and provides a foundation for future research.

Chapter IV

Results and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of alternative work schedules preference on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within community colleges during crisis situations, particularly in the context of declining enrolment, financial strains, and workforce shortages. To determine the relationship, a Likert scale survey was electronically distributed to 1,120 full-time faculty and administrators at three State of Alabama community colleges. Employees of Gadsden State, Trenholm State, and Southern Union were included in the survey. The data from the survey were analyzed using statistical inferences through IBM SPSS. The statistical tests include descriptive and frequency analysis, factor analysis, multivariate regression, and independent samples T-test.

Demographic Characteristics

In order to define and understand the sample, the study used frequency analysis on the demographic variables of education, age, gender, race, field, and years of experience in the industry. The results highlighted that most respondents have a graduate degree as the highest level of education (55.2%), while only 22.4% of participants have a doctoral degree. Figure 1 shows the participants' education level.

The majority of the sample respondents, accounting for 67% of the total sample, fell within the age range of 40 to 59 years old. Specifically, 34.5% of the sample consisted of respondents aged 40 to 49 years, while 32.8% were in the age group of 50 to 59 years. Figure 2 shows the participants' ages.

Figure 1

Education Level

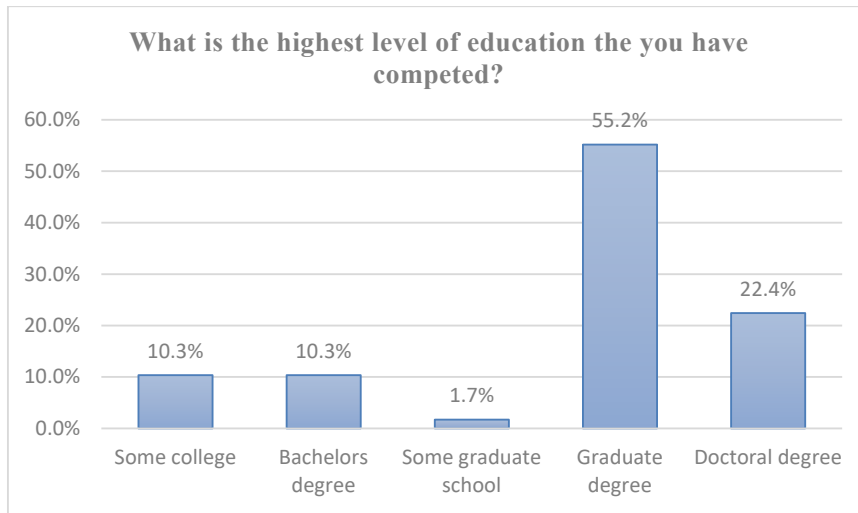
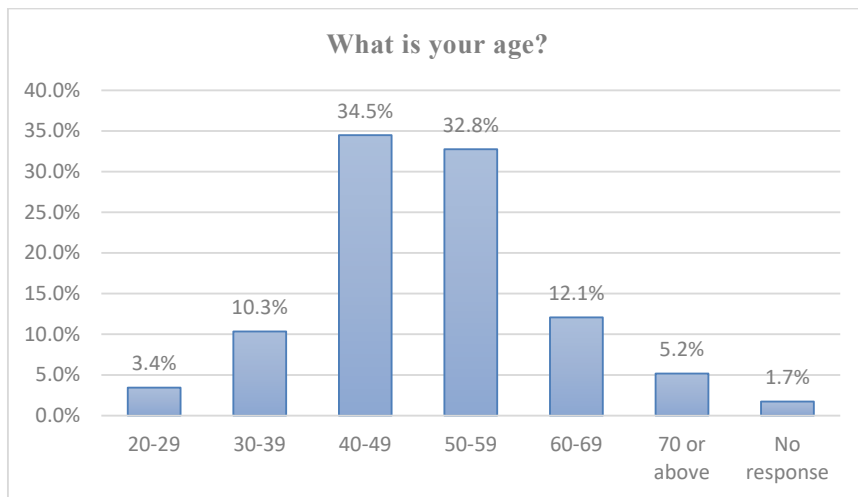


Figure 2

Age



In the case of gender, most of the employees who completed the survey were females, accounting for 60.3% of the sample size. Figure 3 shows this breakdown. In the case of race or ethnicity, more than half of the sample size is White/non-Hispanic employees, equalling 75.9%. On the other hand, only 1.7% were Asian. Figure 4 shows the participants' ethnicities.

Figure 3

Gender

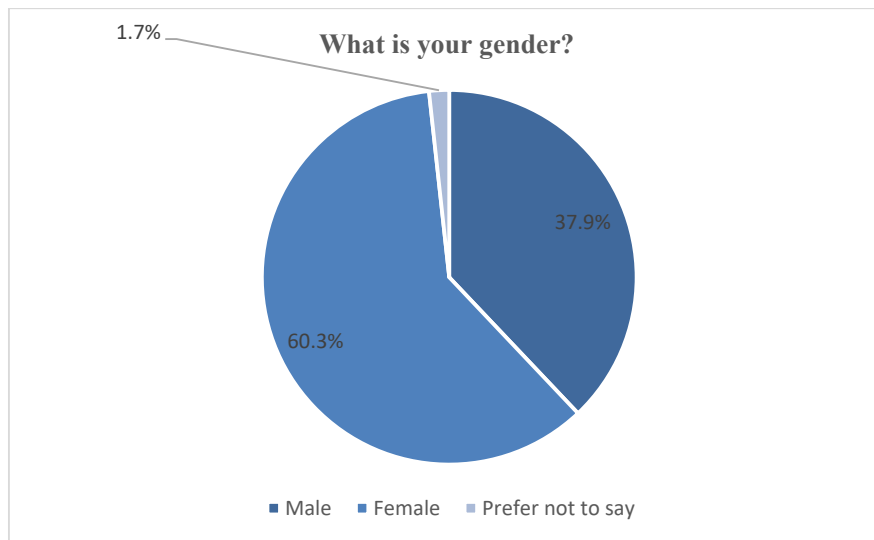
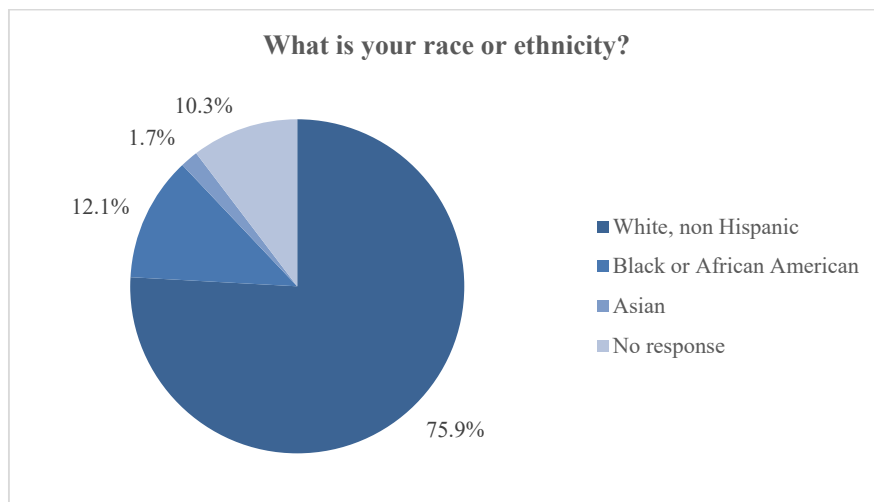


Figure 4

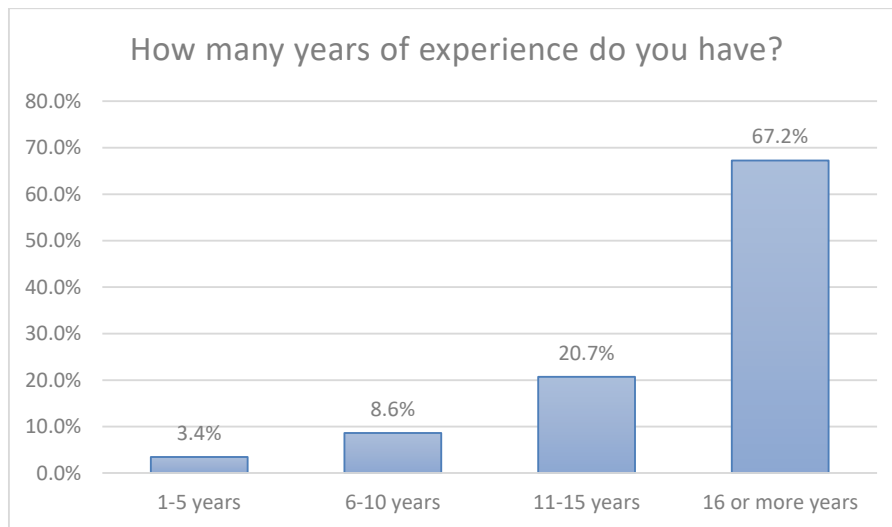
Ethnicity



The data also indicated that most survey participants have 16 or more years of experience, accounting for 67.2% of the sample size. Figure 5 shows the participants' years of experience.

Figure 5

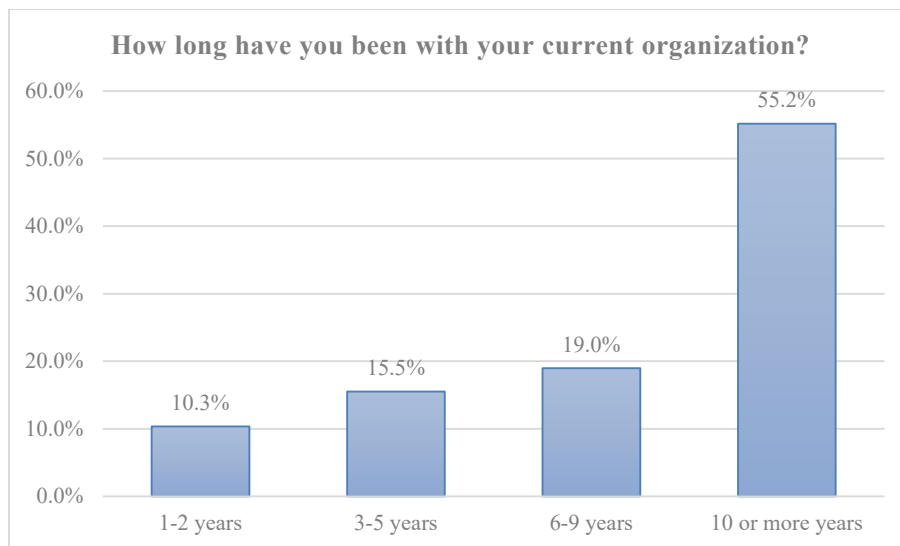
Experience



The majority of employees have worked in the same organization for ten or more years, accounting for 55.2% of the sample size. Figure 6 provides information on the participants' time with their current organization.

Figure 6

Current Organization



In terms of which field or department, 20.7% of participants selected “other,” while 17.2% selected technical/skills training programs, followed by health (15.5%) and science (13.8%), as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Department

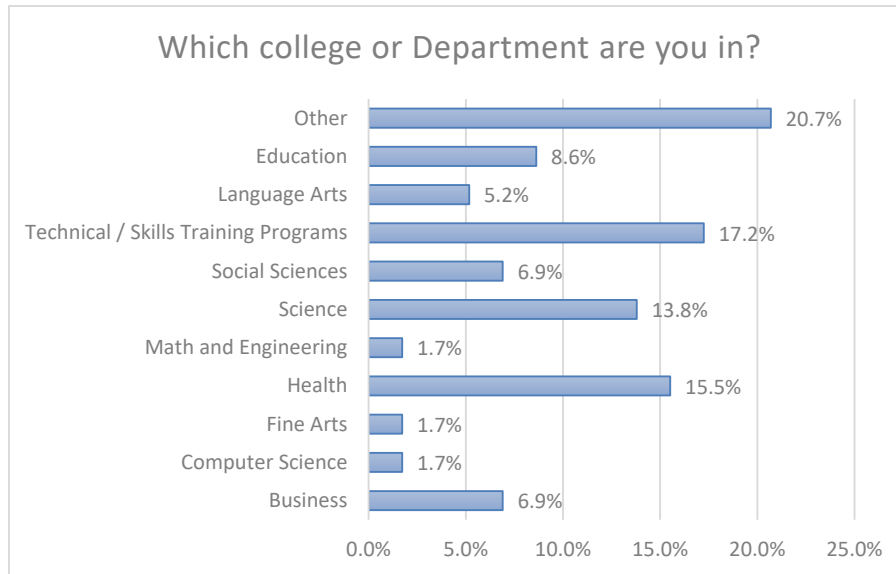


Table 1 shows the main variables of interest in this study. Job morale had the highest mean score of 3.62, confirming that, on average, most respondents either agreed or remained neutral about having high job morale due to being forced to shift to AWS. Conversely, job performance had the least mean value of 3.31 with a 0.80 standard deviation. The survey also inquired about the factors considered to be the benefits and drawbacks of AWS. When asked to select “all drawbacks to AWS,” the most selected drawback of AWS was the aspect of “decreased face time with colleagues/employees,” which was selected 400 times.

Additionally, the second most selected drawback was “increased isolation from colleagues,” with 350 selections, which correlates with decreased face time. A noteworthy finding is that none of the respondents identified the personal "increased overhead cost" as a drawback of AWS. This suggests that the participants in the study did not perceive additional

expenses as a negative aspect of adopting alternative work schedules. Table 2 presents the sum of the drawbacks.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction	690	1.56	5.00	3.5625	0.70850
Job Performance	680	1.80	5.00	3.3176	0.80736
Job Morale	610	1.40	4.80	3.6279	0.62413
Valid N (listwise)	580				

Table 2

Sum of Drawbacks

Drawbacks of AWS	Sum	Percentage
Decreased employee morale	180	8.18%
Increased absenteeism	130	5.91%
Decreased productivity	150	6.82%
Increased overhead cost	0	0.00%
Decreased face time with colleagues/employees	400	18.18%
Increased scheduling difficulty	140	6.36%
Increased customer/student complaints	190	8.64%
None	160	7.27%
Longer workdays	230	10.45%
Decreased face time with employer	250	11.36%
Increased isolation from colleagues	350	15.91%
Increased limitations on career advancement	40	1.82%
Increased daycare cost	10	0.45%

Regarding the benefits of being forced into AWS, the most selected benefit was “improved work-life (work-family) balance,” which was selected 450 times. Other

advantages that respondents saw to being forced into AWS were decreased stress (310), increased job satisfaction (290), and reduced personal cost (350). On the other hand, the least selected benefit was “reduced daycare cost,” which was only selected 90 times by respondents. This low selection of reduction in daycare cost may be explained by the fact that 67% of participants are 40-59 years old and likely do not have children in daycare. Notably, the lowest selected benefit was “none,” indicating that most, over 90%, found some benefit to AWS. Table 3 shows the sum of benefits.

Table 3

Sum of Benefits

Benefits of AWS	Sum	Percentage
Improved work-life (work-family) balance	450	28.66%
Decreased stress	310	19.75%
Increased job satisfaction	290	18.47%
Reduced daycare costs	90	5.73%
Reduced personal costs	350	22.29%
None	80	5.10%

Frequency Analysis

The survey also inquired specifically about job performance measures that were in place and currently used by the institutions studied to evaluate and measure employees’ job performance and the impact of being forced into AWS on these factors. For example, the first question asked respondents whether their student learning outcomes (SLOs) increased or decreased during AWS. Most respondents reported that it remained the same, equalling 54.2%, while 17% reported increased (10.2%) or significantly increased (6.8%) SLOs. This demonstrates that 71.2% of SLOs were either the same or improved during AWS, while only 28.8% were decreased or significantly decreased, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4*Frequency Analysis Student Learning Outcomes*

During Alternative Work Schedules, my student learning outcomes (SLOs) performance were:				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significantly decreased	70	11.9	11.9
	Decreased	100	16.9	28.8
	About the same	320	54.2	83.1
	Increased	60	10.2	93.2
	Significantly increased	40	6.8	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

Another measure of employee job performance used by the institutions studied was student evaluations. During AWS, the majority of respondents confirmed that their student evaluation scores remained the same, as 62.7% selected “about the same,” while 18.7% of respondents reported increased (11.9%) or significantly increased (6.8%) student evaluations. This demonstrates that 81.4% of student evaluations were either the same or improved during AWS, while 18.7% were decreased (11.9%) or significantly decreased (6.8%) in their student evaluation scores. This information is shown in Table 5.

Table 5*Frequency Analysis Student Evaluation Scores*

During Alternative Work Schedules, my student evaluation scores were:				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Significantly decreased	40	6.8	6.8
	Decreased	70	11.9	18.6
	About the same	370	62.7	81.4
	Increased	70	11.9	93.2
	Significantly increased	40	6.8	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

The institutions studied also used supervisor performance evaluations to measure employee job performance. When asked to describe their most recent performance evaluation during AWS, 72.9% of respondents reported that their supervisor’s job performance evaluation scores “met their expectations.” An additional 22% received scores of “exceeds expectations” on their supervisor job evaluation score, as shown in Table 6. This data indicate that 92.9% of employees met or exceeded supervisor job expectations while on AWS.

Table 6

Frequency Analysis Supervisor Job Performance Evaluation

Which of the following most closely describes your most recent performance evaluation during Alternative Work Schedules?				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Exceeds expectations	130	22.0	22.0
	Meets expectations	430	72.9	94.9
	Have not received a performance evaluation	30	5.1	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

Prior to the COVID-19 forced AWS, most of the respondents worked 1 to 5 hours (i.e., 45.8%) as overtime hours, 13.6% worked 6-10 hours of overtime, while 30.5% worked overtime rarely or never. Table 7 shows the frequency of overtime hours worked.

Table 7*Frequency Analysis Overtime Hours Before COVID-19*

Prior to the COVID-19 forced Alternative Work Schedules, how much overtime did you work?				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely or never	180	30.5	30.5
	1-5 hours	270	45.8	76.3
	6-10 hours	60	10.2	86.4
	More than 10 hours	80	13.6	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

During the COVID-19 forced AWS, most respondents (40.7%) reported working overtime for 1 to 5 hours. There was an increase in respondents working 6 to 10 hours of overtime, rising from 13.6% to 20.3%. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who rarely or never worked overtime decreased from 30.5% to 25.4%. These findings suggest that employees exhibited higher job satisfaction while on AWS and were also willing to work additional hours beyond their regular schedules. Table 8 demonstrates this information.

Table 8*Frequency Analysis Overtime Hours During COVID-19*

During the forced COVID-19 Alternative Work Schedules, how much overtime do/did you work?				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely or never	150	25.4	25.4
	1-5 hours	240	40.7	66.1
	6-10 hours	120	20.3	86.4
	More than 10 hours	80	13.6	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

It is important to note that many respondents reported that AWS have helped them improve their technical skills, with more than half of the sample size (i.e., 64.4%) reporting that their technical skills improved, while only 35.6% felt their technical skills remained the same. This information is shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Frequency Analysis Technical Skills

During the Alternative Work Schedule, my technical skills have:				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Improved	380	64.4	64.4
	Stayed the same	210	35.6	100.0
	Total	590	100.0	
Missing	System	210		
Total		800		

The survey also inquired about employee communication with colleagues during AWS. Many respondents highlighted that communication decreased, equalling 37.9% of the respondents. However, 62.1% felt that communication stayed the same (32.8%) or increased (29.3%). Table 10 details participants' communication with their colleagues.

Table 10

Frequency Analysis Communication

During the Alternative Work Schedule, my communication with my colleagues:				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Increased	170	29.3	29.3
	Decreased	220	37.9	67.2
	Stayed the same	190	32.8	100.0
	Total	580	100.0	
Missing	System	220		
Total		800		

The survey also inquired about communication in the context of the supervisor. Most respondents highlighted that their communication with their supervisor increased (36.2%) or stayed the same (36.2%). Only 27.6% felt that communication with their supervisor decreased during AWS. The frequency of participants' communication with their supervisors is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Frequency Analysis Communication with Supervisors

During the Alternative Work Schedule, my communication with my supervisors:				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Increased	210	36.2	36.2
	Decreased	160	27.6	63.8
	Stayed the same	210	36.2	100.0
	Total	580	100.0	
Missing	System	220		
Total		800		

Reliability Test

Data reliability testing is an important data quality and validation check. In this case, internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha. Table 12 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 12

Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Job Satisfaction	0.888	8
Job Performance	0.815	3
Job Morale	0.834	6

The internal consistency reliability of the job satisfaction, performance, and morale items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha statistics. The results indicate that each Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, as Taber (2018) recommended, demonstrating high internal consistency reliability for these measures.

Factor Analysis

In this study, factor analysis was conducted to summarize a large number of observed items into latent constructs or factors. Then, principal component analysis (PCA), a method of factor analysis, was used to develop composite variables from the observed items. This procedure not only facilitated the development of latent constructs but also assessed construct validity, as highlighted by Shrestha (2021). Before conducting factor analysis, Bartlett's test was performed to assess whether the groups had equal variances, following the recommendation by Snedecor and Cochran (2014). In each case, statistically significant results ($p < .05$) were obtained, indicating that factor analysis could be carried out. Principal component analysis (PCA) was subsequently conducted to calculate the composite variables for employee performance, employee morale, employee satisfaction, and employee retention. Table 13 shows the PCA of job satisfaction.

According to Table 13, the component matrix items ($> .03$) load into component/factor 1 and could help build the job satisfaction scale. However, based on face validity and lower component score, some variables were eliminated, with the following items finalized for the employee job satisfaction scale and a final PCA factor analysis conducted for the selected final variables. Therefore, the final "job satisfaction" composite construct was formed using the following items (Table 14).

Table 13*PCA of Job Satisfaction*

Component Matrix	Component
I enjoy my company's culture more.	0.684
I find my work meaningful.	0.817
My organization gives me the tools and technologies I need to do my job well.	0.470
I feel connected to my coworkers.	0.747
I am happier at work.	0.759
In general, employees interact well with each other.	0.559
I would encourage friends to work here.	0.502
My job satisfaction has improved.	0.827
My job satisfaction would increase if some version of the alternative work schedule became permanent.	0.721
I am more satisfied with my firm as an employer.	0.767
I find my work more interesting and challenging.	0.578
I am treated with trust and respect.	0.581
I am more satisfied with the level of support and guidance provided by my supervisor.	0.726
I feel supported and understood.	0.755
Overall, I am more satisfied with my current position.	0.880
It was hard for me to adapt to alternative work schedules.	0.673
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

Table 14*PCA of Job Satisfaction (Final)*

PCA - Job Satisfaction	Component
I find my work meaningful.	0.780
I would encourage friends to work here.	0.517
My job satisfaction has improved.	0.823
I am more satisfied with my firm as an employer.	0.786

I find my work more interesting and challenging.	0.595
I am more satisfied with the level of support and guidance provided by my supervisor.	0.783
I feel supported and understood.	0.795
Overall, I am more satisfied with my current position.	0.878
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

The study evaluated the proposed scale of job performance, which was originally measured with the help of five items, as shown in table 15 below.

Table 15

PCA of Job Performance

Component Matrix	
	Component
I am more accessible to my students and colleagues.	0.881
I am more willing to reply to emails outside of normal working hours.	0.713
My job performance has improved as a result of alternative work schedules.	0.909
My job performance would increase if some version of the alternative work schedule becomes permanent.	0.896
My job performance would decrease if alternative work schedules ended.	0.347
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 component extracted.	

Considering the face validity of the items, along with the lower component score, the following three items in Table 16 formed the employee job performance construct (composite variable). The other variables were removed, and factor analysis was conducted again with the following result, which constituted the job performance construct.

Table 16

PCA of Job Performance (Final)

PCA – Job Performance	Component
I am more accessible to my students and colleagues.	0.901
I am more willing to reply to emails outside of normal working hours.	0.784

My job performance has improved as a result of alternative work schedules. 0.874

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 component extracted.

Lastly, the study examined the proposed scale for job morale. Table 17 presents the initial factor analysis run on the items related to job morale.

Table 17

PCA of Job Morale

Component Matrix

Component

My superiors communicate company news effectively and in a timely.	0.722
My job responsibilities are clearly defined.	0.771
Work is distributed evenly across my colleagues.	0.649
In general, supervisors value my feedback.	0.706
In general, senior leaders interact well with employees.	0.570
In general, middle managers interact well with employees.	0.719
I am happier in my work after shifting to alternative work schedules.	0.670
I am more satisfied with my work-life balance.	0.617
In general, people in my department cooperate to get work done.	0.459
My morale will decrease significantly if alternative work schedules end.	0.305

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 component extracted.

Based on the PCA extraction method, all proposed items of job morale are part of a single component. However, considering the face validity of the items along with the lower component score, the following six items formed the employee job morale construct

(composite variable). The other variables were removed, and factor analysis was conducted again with the following result, shown in Table 18.

Table 18

PCA of Job Morale (Final)

PCA - Job Morale		Component
		1
My superiors communicate company news effectively and in a timely manner.		0.734
My job responsibilities are clearly defined.		0.791
Work is distributed evenly across my colleagues.		0.629
In general, supervisors value my feedback.		0.804
In general, senior leaders interact well with employees.		0.722
In general, middle managers interact well with employees.		0.78
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
a. 1 component extracted.		

Regression Analysis and Analytic Results

Following the elimination of variables through factor analysis, a regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses: the impact of preference for AWS on job satisfaction, performance, and morale. Table 19 shows F statistics and R square values.

Table 19

F Statistics and R Squares

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected	Job Satisfaction	120.432 ^a	1	120.432	354.758	0.000
Model	Job Morale	34.309 ^b	1	34.309	73.324	0.000
	Job Performance	146.232 ^c	1	146.232	301.456	0.000

a. R Squared = .368 (Adjusted R Squared = .367)

b. R Squared = .108 (Adjusted R Squared = .106)

c. R Squared = .331 (Adjusted R Squared = .330)

Regarding the individual outcome (dependent variable) results, all regressions were found to be statistically significant (significance values < 0.001). The R-squared values indicate that the regression models account for 10.6% to 36.7% of the variance in the corresponding dependent variables. Table 20 shows the individual results.

Table 20

Individual Results – Coefficients

Dependent Variable		B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Job Satisfaction	Intercept	3.100	.037	84.125	.000	3.028	3.172
	[AWS = No]	0 ^a					
	[AWS = Yes]	.903	.048	18.835	.000	.809	.998
Job Morale	Intercept	3.407	.043	78.744	.000	3.322	3.492
	[AWS = No]	0 ^a					
	[AWS = Yes]	.482	.056	8.563	.000	.372	.593
Job Performance	Intercept	2.893	.044	65.684	.000	2.807	2.980
	[AWS = No]	0 ^a					
	[AWS = Yes]	.996	.057	17.362	.000	.883	1.108

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

N = 580

The individual results further demonstrated that the preference for AWS had a statistically significant impact on the three dependent variables. Using AWS = No as the

reference category, the coefficients indicated that individuals with a preference for AWS (AWS = Yes) exhibited significantly higher levels of employee job satisfaction, morale, and performance compared to those without a preference (AWS = No). Specifically, the analysis showed that employee satisfaction was 0.903 units higher among those who preferred AWS compared to those who did not.

The data are significant and allow for H1, H2, and H3 to be accepted. Based on the coefficients (see Table 20), the following are the regression equations:

$$JS = 3.1 + 0.903 (AWS_i)$$

$$JP = 2.893 + 0.996 (AWS_i)$$

$$JM = 3.407 + 0.482 (AWS_i)$$

JS, JP, and JM are job satisfaction, job performance, and job morale, while AWS_i represents a preference for AWS.

The basic research design for the study was a cross-sectional Likert scale survey of employees and supervisors about their experience with the benefits and drawbacks of alternative work schedules. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent does the preference for alternative work schedules (AWS) correlate with changes in job performance?

RQ2: How does the preference for AWS influence employees' levels of job satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the preference of AWS and employees' job morale?

To address these research questions, three hypotheses were formulated:

H1: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job performance.

H2: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job satisfaction.

H3: A preference for alternative work schedules is positively associated with job morale.

Each hypothesis was analyzed using factor analysis and multiple linear regression techniques. Individual results revealed that the impact of preference for AWS is statistically significant on the three dependent variables ($p < .001$). Furthermore, the coefficients' values revealed that preference for AWS significantly affects employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale more than no preference. Based on the data collected and analyzed, H1, H2, and H3 were supported.

Summary

In this study, an in-depth examination of the impact of alternative work schedules (AWS) on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within community colleges was conducted. The extensive Likert scale survey, distributed among 1,120 full-time faculty and administrators across three State of Alabama community colleges, yielded invaluable insights. Participants expressed predominantly positive sentiments toward AWS, with job morale attaining the highest mean score. Factors influencing AWS benefits and drawbacks were scrutinized, illuminating concerns such as decreased face time and increased isolation, while benefits were notably linked to improved work-life balance and reduced stress.

Frequency analysis showed encouraging trends in student learning outcomes and student evaluation scores during AWS, with supervisor performance evaluations reflecting a high percentage of employees meeting or exceeding expectations. Shifts in overtime hours and reported improvements in technical skills during AWS were underscored, alongside an exploration of communication patterns with colleagues and supervisors, emphasizing the intricate dynamics at play.

Following the elimination of variables through factor analysis, a regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses: the impact of preference for AWS on job satisfaction, performance, and morale. Since there was more than one dependent variable, multivariate regression analysis was performed. Overall, the data revealed a significant impact of AWS preference on the dependent variables (job satisfaction, morale, and performance; $p < 0.001$). Regarding the individual outcome (dependent variable) results, all regressions were found to be statistically significant (significance values < 0.001). The R-squared values indicate that the regression models account for 10.6% to 36.7% of the variance in the corresponding dependent variables. The individual results further demonstrated that the preference for AWS had a statistically significant impact on the three dependent variables. Using AWS = No as the reference category, the coefficients indicated that individuals with a preference for AWS (AWS = Yes) exhibited significantly higher levels of employee job satisfaction, morale, and performance compared to those without a preference (AWS = No). Specifically, the analysis showed that employee satisfaction was 0.903 units higher among those who preferred AWS compared to those who did not.

The data are significant and allow for H1, H2, and H3 to be accepted. Based on the coefficients (see Table 20), the following are the regression equations:

$$JS = 3.1 + 0.903 (AWS_1)$$

$$JP = 2.893 + 0.996 (AWS_1)$$

$$JM = 3.407 + 0.482 (AWS_1)$$

JS, JP, and JM are job satisfaction, job performance, and job morale, while AWS_1 represents a preference for AWS. This comprehensive exploration will significantly advance the understanding of AWS' effects on employees within community colleges, providing nuanced insights that serve as a robust foundation for further research and practical applications in crisis management and organizational development.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Due to government-mandated shutdowns and work-from-home orders resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations have faced the urgent need to reduce expenses and maintain productivity without access to their physical premises (Sider, 2020). In response, various industries, including education, have adopted alternative work schedules such as telecommuting and compressed time as a precautionary measure against in-person interactions and the potential transmission of the virus (Ivey, 2020). To mitigate operational costs and ensure survival, other businesses and organizations have also implemented alternative work schedules (Currie, 2022; Sider, 2020; Wadsworth et al., 2010).

The utilization of AWS has transcended a temporary solution and has now become an integral part of workplace culture, progressively evolving into a permanent offering (Currie, 2022). This shift has been further propelled by the entry of millennials into the workforce and the transformative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, AWS has gained traction and is recognized as a significant and enduring change in the way work is structured and executed.

This study aimed to fill that gap in understanding the effects of an unanticipated, forced shift to AWS and employees' perceptions and preferences for AWS on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within the community college setting. The population consisted of employees and supervisors at three State of Alabama community colleges: Gadsden State, Trenholm State, and Southern Union.

Discussion

This study aimed to expand the understanding of the effects of an unanticipated, forced shift to AWS along with employees perceptions and preferences for AWS on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within the community college setting. The research design utilized for this study was a cross-sectional survey employing Likert scale questions, which were administered to both employees and supervisors. The survey aimed to gather insights into the benefits and challenges associated with AWS. The main variables assessed through the survey were employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale.

The mean scores from the descriptive table (Table 1) indicate the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the levels of job satisfaction, performance, and morale during the implementation of AWS. In this study, the response scale used ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The intermediate values of 2, 3, and 4 corresponded to “disagree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” and “agree,” respectively. The data analysis revealed that job morale had the highest mean score of 3.62, followed by job satisfaction (3.56) and job performance (3.32). These findings confirm that, on average, most respondents either agreed or remained neutral regarding their high job morale, satisfaction, and performance resulting from the shift to AWS. The results are consistent with previous studies conducted by Cohen (2021), Currie (2022), and M. Smith (2022), which also found that AWS is highly valued and contributes to increased job satisfaction, performance, and morale.

The survey also inquired specifically about the factors considered to be benefits and drawbacks of AWS. The findings of this study indicate that 45.5% of the identified drawbacks were associated with factors related to decreases in relationships and organizational culture: “decreased face time with colleagues/employees” (18.2%), “increased isolation from colleagues” (11.4%) and “decreased face time with employer” (11.4%). The

findings of this study align with prior research conducted by Kennedy and Garewal (2020) and Larasati and Martono (2020), which suggest that the loss of relationships and organizational culture is a potential drawback of AWS. These studies emphasize the importance for organizations to consider and address these challenges in order to effectively utilize and maximize the benefits of AWS in the future while considering the employees preference and perception.

Regarding the benefits of AWS, the results of this study align with the findings of Wadsworth et al. (2016) and Nanji (2021). Specifically, the majority of respondents (89%) identified several advantages of AWS, including improved work-life balance (28.7%), reduced personal costs (22.3%), decreased stress (19.8%), and increased job satisfaction (18.5%). The findings of this study align with previous research conducted by Currie (2022), M. Smith (2022), Sider (2020), and Wadsworth et al. (2016), which have shown the reasons why employees are willing to accept lower pay and forego raises in exchange for the opportunity to have AWS. Improved work-life balance was the most frequently reported benefit of AWS, with 28.7% of participants selecting it. This finding is particularly interesting to organizations, as it suggests that employees experienced an enhanced work-life balance even while working more overtime hours during AWS. Before AWS, 30.5% of participants reported rarely or never working overtime, whereas, during AWS, this percentage decreased to 25.4%.

The institutions in this study currently measure employee performance data through annual survey evaluations completed by the instructors using data compiled from courses taught during the academic year (Alabama Community College System, 2021). Student withdrawal rate, pass rate, student evaluation of instructor score, and student learning outcomes are measured for employee performance evaluations, with a target or success rate of 70% or higher (Alabama Community College System, 2021). The results of this study

found that 71.2% of SLO scores were “about the same” (54.2%), “increased” (10.2%), or “significantly increased” (6.8%) as a result of AWS. These findings are consistent with Mafini and Dlodlo (2014), Karyotakis, and Barda (2020), who found that a more positive working environment created by AWS would increase employees’ job satisfaction and performance. However, the results of this study also showed that 28.8% of respondents reported decreases in SLO scores, with 16.9% reporting “decreased” and 11.9% “significantly decreased.” These decreases may partly be explained by students who registered for in-person traditional classes being forced to complete coursework online and struggling to adapt to the unexpected, undesired learning environment. The SLO decreases may have also been caused by instructors being deficient in their ability to deliver content online, as this study found that 64% of employees reported their “technical skills increased” during AWS, indicating there may have been inefficiencies at the beginning of AWS. Nevertheless, these SLO decreases still met the state’s target or success rate of 70% or higher SLOs “meeting or exceeding” (Alabama Community College System, 2021).

Another current method of employee performance evaluation by the institutions is student evaluations of the course (Alabama Community College System, 2021). This study found that 81.4% of student evaluations of the course were “about the same” (62.7%), “increased” (11.95%), or “significantly increased” (6.8%). These findings have important implications for organizations considering a shift to AWS, as they highlight the potential technological inefficiencies that instructors or students may face. Understanding these challenges can help organizations develop strategies to mitigate these issues and ensure a smooth transition to AWS.

Further support for the notion that the decrease in SLO scores may be attributed to a lack of instructor or student skill in the initial stages can be seen in the current increase in student online course registration, even as in-person classes are being offered again (Alabama

Community College System, 2021). This suggests that students and instructors may have acquired the necessary skills, and these SLO scores could be higher at the next annual evaluation. The final measure of employee performance currently used by the institutions is employee evaluations by supervisors, which measure student withdrawal rates and pass rates, among other things (Alabama Community College System, 2021). This study found that during the AWS, 94.9% of employees received “meets expectations” (72.9%) or “exceeds expectations” (22%).

For this study, three hypotheses pertained to the effects of a preference for AWS on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale. It was observed that a statistically significant positive relationship exists with an alpha level of $p \leq 0.05$. Data reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach alpha statistics, which demonstrated that employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale items had high internal consistency reliability, with each Cronbach’s alpha being greater than the generally recommended threshold of 0.7 (Taber, 2018). Following data reliability testing, factor analysis was conducted to eliminate those variables with lower factor loading scores.

After applying factor analysis to reduce the number of variables, a regression analysis was performed to examine the hypotheses pertaining to the influence of AWS preference on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale. Multivariate analysis revealed a significant positive impact of AWS preference on the set of dependent variables (employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale). All statistical values yielded significance levels lower than 0.001. The individual regression outcomes on the dependent variable demonstrated statistically significant results ($p < 0.001$) and positive relationships, which align with the findings of Cohen (2021), Currie (2022), Smith (2022), and Wadsworth et al. (2016), thereby supporting the hypotheses. The R-squared values (Table 20) indicated that

the regression models accounted for 10.6% to 36.7% of the variance in the respective dependent variables.

The regression equations for each dependent variable are as follows:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 3.1 + 0.903 (\text{AWS}_i)$$

The individual results demonstrated that the preference for AWS had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable job satisfaction. Using AWS = No as the reference category, the coefficients indicated that individuals with a preference for AWS (AWS = Yes) exhibited significantly higher levels of employee job satisfaction, compared to those without a preference (AWS = No). Specifically, the analysis showed that employee job satisfaction was 0.903 units higher among those who preferred AWS compared to those who did not.

$$\text{Job Performance} = 2.893 + 0.996 (\text{AWS}_i)$$

The individual results demonstrated that the preference for AWS had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable job performance. Using AWS = No as the reference category, the coefficients indicated that individuals with a preference for AWS (AWS = Yes) exhibited significantly higher levels of employee job performance, compared to those without a preference (AWS = No). Specifically, the analysis showed that employee job performance was 0.996 units higher among those who preferred AWS compared to those who did not.

$$\text{Job Morale} = 3.407 + 0.482 (\text{AWS}_i)$$

The individual results demonstrated that the preference for AWS had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable job morale. Using AWS = No as the reference category, the coefficients indicated that individuals with a preference for AWS (AWS = Yes) exhibited significantly higher levels of employee job morale, compared to those without a

preference (AWS = No). Specifically, the analysis showed that employee job morale was 0.482 units higher among those who preferred AWS compared to those who did not.

Note. AWS₁ represents a preference for AWS.

Interpretation of Findings

This study generated several implications that can be valuable to organizations and managers. The literature review indicated numerous benefits and approaches for organizations wanting or needing AWS. An underlying assumption in the literature was that workers already had or gained the skills necessary to be successful while working in AWS, and chose to be in AWS prior to the evaluation of the AWS. This study focused on employees who were abruptly forced into AWS without prior training or preparation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, carried their unique perceptions of and preferences for AWS. The absence of training, preparation, and preferences could explain why the data revealed that 64.4% of respondents reported improving their technical skills during the AWS period.

The question then arises, “If I, as a manager, want or need to utilize AWS, what outcomes can I expect?” Based on the findings, it can be inferred that adopting alternative work schedules would yield significant benefits regarding employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale. Furthermore, these findings align with previous research conducted by Cohen (2021), Currie (2022), M. Smith (2022), and Wadsworth et al. (2016), further bolstering the notion that AWS implementation has a positive impact on various employee outcomes.

This study found that the most selected benefits of AWS were improved work-life balance (28.6%), decreased stress (19.8%), and increased job satisfaction (18.5%). Thus, it can be reasoned that managers and organizations that choose to utilize AWS can expect employee job performance outcomes to increase (Tables 4-6), employees’ willingness to

work overtime to increase (Tables 7-8), and employee job satisfaction and morale to each increase (Table 18). In addition, the study found positive, significant results demonstrating that AWS within the organizations studied increased employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale from 10.6% to 36.7%.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the effects of AWS preference on employee outcomes. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of considering factors such as employee training, work-life balance, perceptions and employee satisfaction when implementing AWS. By taking these factors into account, organizations and managers can make informed decisions regarding the adoption and optimization of AWS, ultimately contributing to their employees' overall well-being and productivity.

Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for organizations and managers considering the adoption of alternative work schedules. The study identified several key implications that can guide the implementation process and help maximize the benefits of AWS. First, the study revealed that AWS could contribute to enhanced work-life balance. This is a crucial consideration, as employees reported improved work-life balance as one of the most significant benefits of AWS. Organizations and managers should recognize the importance of promoting work-life balance as it can increase employee satisfaction, reduce stress levels, and improve overall well-being. By implementing AWS, organizations can provide employees with greater flexibility in managing their personal and professional responsibilities, fostering a healthier work-life integration.

Second, the study highlighted the positive relationship between AWS preference and employee job satisfaction. The flexibility and autonomy provided by AWS can create a more satisfying work environment. Managers should consider implementing AWS as a strategy to

enhance employee satisfaction, which can lead to higher productivity, engagement, and retention.

Another important implication is the need for adequate training and preparation when transitioning employees to AWS. The study found that employees who abruptly shifted to AWS during the COVID-19 pandemic reported improved technical skills. This underscores the importance of providing comprehensive training programs to equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in an AWS environment. By investing in training and preparation, organizations can ensure a smooth transition and minimize potential challenges or inefficiencies. Furthermore, the study highlighted the potential drawbacks related to relationships and organizational culture in an AWS setting. Organizations and managers should be mindful of these considerations and take steps to maintain relationships and foster a positive organizational culture. Strategies such as virtual team-building activities, regular communication, and creating opportunities for collaboration can help mitigate the potential negative effects on relationships and culture.

Lastly, managerial support is critical for the successful implementation of AWS. Managers should provide clear communication, guidance, and ongoing support to employees during the transition period. Effective leadership and support can help employees navigate the challenges of working in an alternative work schedule and ensure their well-being and productivity. It can also help navigate the perceptions of and preferences for the forced AWS that employees have. The implications derived from this study emphasize the significance of work-life balance, job satisfaction, training and preparation, relationship and culture considerations, and managerial support in implementing AWS. Managing the preference for AWS matters when enhancing job performance, satisfaction, and morale. By addressing these implications, organizations can create a conducive work environment that promotes employee well-being, productivity, and organizational success.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations that exist within this study. First, the absence of research funding resulted in limited incentives for participation and may have affected the overall response rate. This could potentially introduce bias and impact the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the failure of some correspondents to submit their survey feedback further decreased the sample size and could potentially introduce non-response bias.

Another limitation of the study is related to the nature of the research topic. Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a complex and ongoing phenomenon inherently limits the availability of comprehensive and long-term quantitative data. In addition, the dynamic nature of the pandemic and the evolving circumstances may have influenced the results and their generalizability to other contexts or time periods. Furthermore, the survey instrument used in this study had its own limitations. While efforts were made to develop a comprehensive questionnaire, certain important aspects or variables may not have been captured due to constraints in time, resources, or the length of the survey. The extensive nature of the questionnaire might have also led to respondent fatigue or reduced attention, potentially affecting the accuracy and reliability of the responses.

Last, the population sampled in this study was limited to three State of Alabama community colleges, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings or populations. Each institution may have unique characteristics, such as organizational culture or demographic composition, which could influence the outcomes and limit the broader applicability of the results. It is important to consider these limitations when interpreting the findings of this study. Future research should aim to address these limitations by securing appropriate funding, expanding the sample size, capturing longitudinal data, and refining survey instruments to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant variables.

Recommendations

The current study, which sought to explore the association between employee preference for AWS when shifting to AWS and employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within three State of Alabama community colleges, has unveiled several areas that merit further investigation. In light of the insights and implications derived from this study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for future research:

1. Conduct an in-depth investigation into the impact of AWS on employee mental health, specifically examining the relationship between increased work-life balance and decreased stress, as highlighted by the most selected benefits of AWS in this study (work-life balance at 28.6% and decreased stress at 19.8%). This research could explore the underlying mechanisms and dynamics through which AWS influences employee mental well-being, providing valuable insights for organizations seeking to optimize employee mental health within the context of alternative work schedules.
2. Explore the potential role of AWS in addressing climate change and the challenges posed by future oil crises. This investigation could involve integrating survey questions related to commuting distance or commute times as measures of carbon footprint reduction when utilizing AWS or, conversely, carbon footprints increase when workers are required to return to the office. By examining the relationship between AWS and environmental impact, organizations can identify ways to leverage AWS to promote sustainability and contribute to climate change mitigation efforts.
3. Conduct a comparative analysis of subsequent annual SLO scores to those obtained in this study. This analysis would focus on the 28.8% of respondents who reported a decrease in SLO scores (16.9% reporting a decrease and 11.9%

reporting a significant decrease) after transitioning to AWS. Furthermore, considering the majority of respondents reported an increase in their technical skills (64.4%), future research could investigate the potential correlation between enhanced technical skills and improved SLOs. This comparison would provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of AWS on student learning outcomes, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of AWS implementation on educational performance.

4. With workers having had ample time to acclimate to and engage with alternative work schedules (AWS), it is advisable to conduct a re-evaluation of their preferences to ascertain any shifts, whether positive or negative, regarding AWS.

These recommendations highlight specific areas that emerged from the present study that need further investigation. By pursuing these research avenues, researchers can deepen their understanding of the effects of AWS on employee well-being, environmental sustainability, and student learning outcomes. Ultimately, these insights can inform organizations and managers to optimize the implementation and benefits of AWS within their respective contexts.

Closing

In conclusion, this dissertation investigated the effects of the forced shifts to alternative work schedules along with employee's preference for and perceptions of AWS on employee job satisfaction, performance, and morale within the context of three State of Alabama community colleges. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design, analyzing data from employees who were abruptly forced into AWS due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between AWS and the dependent variables, supporting the hypotheses. Employees reported benefits such as improved work-life balance, decreased stress, and increased job satisfaction. Overall, this study contributes to

the understanding of the effects of AWS on employee outcomes and provides insights for organizations and managers considering the implementation of AWS as part of their workplace strategies.

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Appendix A:

Survey Likert Scale Questions

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

15	During alternative work schedules, I would encourage friends to work here.					
16	I am happier in my work after shifting to alternative work schedules.					
17	During alternative work schedules, I am more accessible to my students and colleagues.					
18	During alternative work schedules, I am more willing to reply to emails outside of normal working hours.					
19	My morale will decrease significantly if alternative work schedules end.					
20	During alternative work schedules, I have a clear understanding of how my work contributes to the mission of the college.					
21	During alternative work schedules, my performance evaluation is a fair and accurate measure of my performance.					
22	My job performance has improved as a result of alternative work schedules.					
23	During alternative work schedules, my job satisfaction has improved.					
24	When I don't feel well in the morning, I still come to work because I know my performance will be missed.					
25	During alternative work schedules, policies and procedures affecting my work are communicated adequately.					
26	It was hard for me to adapt to alternative work schedules.					
27	I am more satisfied with my work-life balance during alternative work schedules.					
28	I am more likely to stay in my current position because of alternative work schedules.					
29	During alternative work schedules, people in my dept. cooperate to get work done.					
30	My job performance would decrease if alternative work schedules ended.					

31	My job satisfaction would increase if some version of the alternative work schedule became permanent.					
32	My job performance would increase if some version of the alternative work schedule became permanent.					
33	I am more likely to stay in my current position or within the organization if some version of the alternative work schedule becomes permanent.					
34	I am more satisfied with my firm as an employer during the alternative work schedules.					
35	I find my work more interesting and challenging during alternative work schedules.					
36	My salary is appropriate based on my responsibilities and experience.					
37	I am treated with trust and respect during the alternative work schedules.					
38	I am more satisfied with the level of support and guidance provided by my supervisor during alternative work schedules.					
39	Overall, I am more satisfied with my current position during the alternative work schedules.					
40	I would like some version of an alternative work schedule to continue.					
41	During the alternative work schedule, I feel supported and understood.					

Appendix B:

Remaining Survey Instrument Questions

42	What are the drawbacks of AWS that your city experiences/experienced?	Decreased employee morale	Increased absenteeism	Decreased productivity	Increased overhead costs	Decreased face time with employees / colleague	Increased scheduling difficulty	Increased customer/student complaints	None
43	What are/were the benefits of alternative work schedules?	Improved work-life (work-family) balance	Decreased stress	Increased job satisfaction	Reduced daycare costs	Reduced personal costs (commuting, dry cleaning, etc.)	None		
44	What are/were the drawbacks of alternative work schedules?	Longer workdays	Decreased face time with employer	Increased isolation from colleagues	Increased limitation on career advancement	Increased daycare costs	None		
45	How many years have you worked for your department?	0-1	1-3	3-5	5-7	7-15	15+		
46	What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Some graduate school	Graduate degree	Doctoral degree		
47	Age?	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	70 or above	No response	
48	Gender?	Male	Female	No response					
49	Race or ethnicity?	White, Non-Hispanic	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Pacific Islander or Hawaiian	No response	
50	Years of experience?	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+				
51	Years with organization?	1-2	3-5	6-9	9+				
52	Which College or Dept are you in?								
53	During alternative work schedules, my student learning objectives (SLO) performance were:	significantly decreased	decreased	about the same	increased	significantly increased			
54	During alternative work schedules, my student evaluation scores were:	significantly decreased	decreased	about the same	increased	significantly increased			
55	Again, from an HR director's perspective, what are the drawbacks of alternative work schedules	Decreased employee morale	Increased absenteeism	Decreased productivity	Increased overhead costs	Decreased face time with employees / colleague	Increased scheduling difficulty		

	that your organization experiences/experienced?								
56	Prior to the Covid-19 forced alternative work schedules, how much overtime did you work?	rarely or never	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	more than 10				
57	During the forced Covid-19 forced alternative work schedules, how much overtime do/did you work?	Rarely or never	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	More than 10 hours				
58	When you work overtime, which do you usually receive?	doesn't apply- I don't work overtime	overtime pay	Compensatory time off	no pay at all				
59	Which of the following most closely describes your most recent performance evaluation during alternative work schedules?	exceeds expectations	meets expectations	needs improvement	unacceptable	Have not received performance evaluation			
60	Within the last year, has there been a RIF (reduction in force when employees are laid off) within your dept?	yes	no	not sure					
61	During the alternative work schedule, my technical skills have:	Improved	declined	stayed the same					
62	During the alternative work schedule, my communication with my colleagues:	Increased	decreased	stayed the same					
63	During the alternative work schedule, my communication with my supervisors:	Increased	decreased	stayed the same					
64	Prior to the forced alternative	none	once	a few days a year	often- at least once a week	very often- at least a few days a week			

	work schedule, how often did you work at home 'off the clock' after office hours?								
65	How important is the continuation of the current alternative work schedule in your decision to stay with your organization?	very important	somewhat important	not important at all					
66	How many children under the age of 13 live with you at least half of the time?	none	1	2	3 or more				
67	How is the productivity of your, or for supervisors, your team members (amount, quality, and timeliness of work) affected by the new alternative work schedule?	much worse	worse	about the same	better	much better			

Appendix C:

Institutional Review Board Exemption



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04177-2021

Responsible Researcher(s): Brent Wright

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Minsun Song

Project Title: *Community College Employee Performance within forced Alternative Work Schedules.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2**. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of this research study all collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*
- If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.*
-

Elizabeth Ann Olphie 06.12.2021 *Thank you for submitting an IRB application.*

Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator
irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Please direct questions to
