

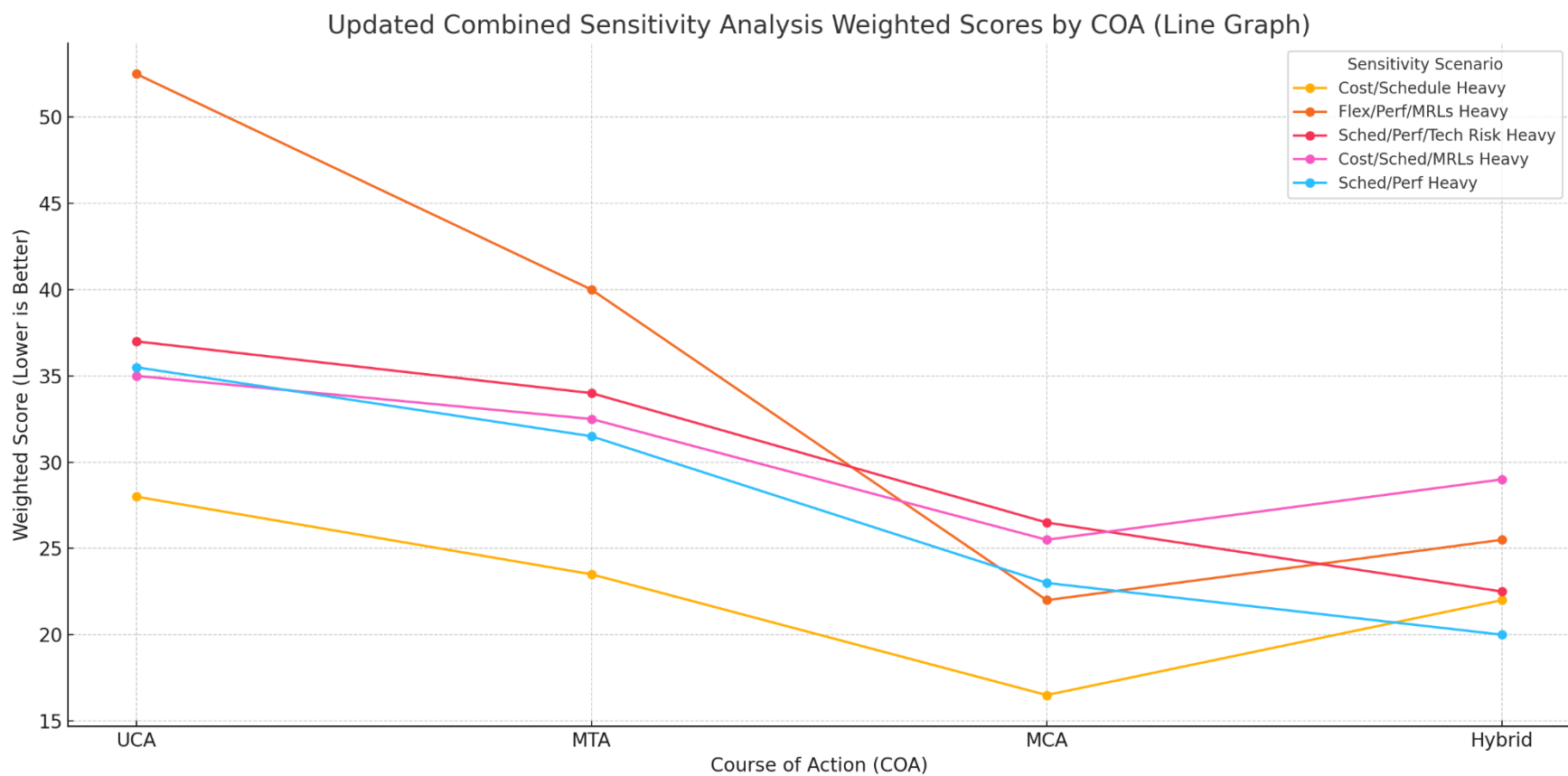
Abstract

This research project examines the Future Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (FTUAS) program as a case study in adaptive Army acquisition. The study employs a case history methodology by analyzing the history of the RQ-7 Shadow and its eventual retirement, conducting stakeholder analysis for the new FTUAS program, and using structured decision tools to assess the most appropriate acquisition pathway to recommend an acquisition strategy. Central to the analysis are decision matrices and sensitivity analyses, which evaluate four courses of action: Urgent Capability Acquisition (UCA), Middle Tier Acquisition (MTA), Major Capability Acquisition (MCA), and a Hybrid approach. The analysis evaluates each possible pathway against the decision criteria of cost, schedule, performance, flexibility, manufacturing readiness levels (MRLs) and technical risk, applying weightings based on stakeholder preferences. This capstone research presents a decision-making framework for acquisition professionals to use to develop an appropriate acquisition approach based on the Service’s priorities to balance risk, manage cost/schedule/performance requirements and deliver capability at the speed and scale of relevance.

Methods

- Conducted case history analysis of the FTUAS based on predecessor unmanned system.
- Established four potential courses of action for acquisition pathway.
- Used qualitative assessment in the form of decision matrices and sensitivity analyses to compare courses of action.

Decision Matrix (Qualitative Ranking of Options)							Option Scores (lower is better)
	Cost	Schedule	Performance	Flexibility	MRLs	Technical Risk	Unweighted
COA 1 UCA	3	1.5	4	4	4	4	20.5
COA 2 MTA	2	3	3	3	3	2.5	16.5
COA 3 MCA	1	4	1.5	2	1	1	10.5
COA 4 Hybrid	4	1.5	1.5	1	2	2.5	12.5



Results & Impact

- This study identifies the MCA pathway as the most effective strategy for acquiring the FTUAS.
- The case study highlights how tailored acquisition strategies can address urgent operational requirements and provides actionable insights for future unmanned systems programs.
- This research offers a practical decision-making framework to help acquisition professionals select the most appropriate strategy based on defined evaluation criteria.

Future Research

- Follow-up analysis on Increment 2 of the FTUAS and how its acquisition strategy performs over time.
- Additional comparative research on unmanned systems and implementation of acquisition reform.
- Future studies should evaluate DoD programs by examining the accuracy of initial cost estimates and assessing the effectiveness and resilience of life cycle sustainment strategies as systems evolve.



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