



# **Examining the Influence of Columbus State University's Command College on Training Receptivity, Motivation, and Workforce Retention**

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## Abstract

*In contemporary public safety organizations, particularly law enforcement, the interrelated factors of motivation, training receptivity, and retention are central to sustaining workforce stability and community trust. This two-phase quantitative study, guided by the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM), examined how leadership alignment and motivational dynamics influence training engagement and professional commitment among participants of Columbus State University’s Command College.*

*Phase I analyzed 2,296 course-evaluation forms (20,664) item-level responses), collected between 2019 and 2024 across six core modules to establish baseline relationships among motivation, expectancy, utility, and training receptivity. Three hypotheses derived from MLAM were proposed to test these associations. Pearson correlation analyses revealed strong, statistically significant positive relationships among all constructs ( $r \approx .96$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting  $H_{a2}$  and  $H_{a3}$  and demonstrating that officers who perceive training as meaningful, relevant, and performance-enhancing report greater intrinsic motivation and engagement.  $H_{a1}$ , predicting that increased receptivity leads to higher retention, remains untested pending longitudinal data collection in Phase II.*

*The findings validate MLAM’s theoretical pathways and highlight how autonomy-supportive leadership, perceived fairness, and practical relevance enhance learning receptivity and professional satisfaction. Phase II will extend the analysis through regression, structural-equation, and survival modeling to test causal effects on retention. Results are expected to inform evidence-based strategies for leadership development and workforce sustainability in public safety administration.*

*Keywords: Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM), training receptivity, expectancy theory, motivation, retention, public safety leadership*

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

In contemporary public safety organizations, particularly law enforcement, the interrelated factors of training receptivity, motivation, and retention are critical for maintaining operational relevance amid shifting political climates, judicial rulings, and evolving management practices. This study investigates whether the Master of Public Safety Administration (MPSA) program offered through Columbus State University's Command College influences officer motivation, learning receptivity, and retention within their current organizations. The program serves a diverse cohort of public safety professionals, including police officers, firefighters, communications personnel, and emergency medical responders, employed across federal, state, county, and municipal agencies (Mixon, 2024).

Retention of these professionals presents a persistent challenge for agencies, as turnover undermines institutional knowledge, operational efficiency, and community trust. Understanding how advanced education impacts motivation and training receptivity may reveal strategies for improving long-term employee commitment. Accordingly, this study examines the extent to which educational engagement and intrinsic motivation contribute to retention within public safety agencies participating in the Command College program.

This paper represents the first phase (Part I) of a two-part research project. Part I establishes the foundational data, theoretical framework, and initial analysis of training receptivity, motivation, and retention among Command College participants. The second phase (Part II) will consist of a longitudinal follow-up survey of Command College graduates to determine their current employment status with their original sponsoring

agencies. This follow-up will enable comparison between initial motivational and receptivity indicators and long-term retention outcomes, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how graduate education affects workforce stability and leadership development across Georgia's public safety organizations.

Effective leadership alignment is essential for sustaining motivation and organizational cohesion. Alignment occurs when all levels of the organization share a mutual understanding of its mission and strategic goals, coupled with clearly communicated pathways to achieve them (Gede & Huluka, 2023). Leaders are responsible for ensuring that each member recognizes how their role supports these objectives (Ruuhijärvi, 2023). This alignment is cultivated through strategic planning, transparent communication, culture development, selective hiring, team building, and performance-based management (Chatman & Cha, 2002; Gede & Huluka, 2023; Ruuhijärvi, 2023).

The Command College at Columbus State University exemplifies this alignment by serving as Georgia's "graduate school for public safety" and by producing transformational leaders recognized for innovation and professional excellence (Governor's Commendation, 2019). As a vital resource for leadership development in law enforcement and emergency response, its mission centers on cultivating motivation, receptivity to training, and personnel retention (Mixon, 2024).

Training receptivity, defined as the degree to which individuals willingly acknowledge and engage in learning initiatives, is fundamental to skill transfer and performance improvement (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). In high-stakes public safety environments, such receptivity ensures that personnel can effectively apply new

knowledge to complex, real-world scenarios. Leadership quality and organizational culture directly affect this receptivity: transparent communication, fairness, recognition, and inclusion enhance morale, while poor leadership practices diminish it, reducing motivation and productivity (Kuo et al., 2014; Locke & Latham, 2002).

Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, drives engagement in professional development. Intrinsic motivation arises from personal fulfillment and meaning, while extrinsic motivation stems from external rewards or recognition (Morris et al., 2022). Intrinsic motivation, in particular, sustains long-term professional growth and engagement (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). When employees perceive their work as purposeful and their contributions valued, they exhibit stronger motivation to learn and perform effectively (Zhenjing Gu et al., 2022).

This connection between recognition and growth is echoed in several letters of intent from Command College applicants. J. Sanders (personal communication, January 23, 2025) emphasized the program's role in cultivating leadership capacity and self-directed growth. S. Robinson (personal communication, April 9, 2025) highlighted the institution's dynamic environment that nurtures innovative problem-solving. T. Fecht (personal communication, November 5, 2024) described the Command College as a catalyst for expanding strategic thinking and interpersonal effectiveness, while B. Eagler (personal communication, March 25, 2025) noted its impact on professional acumen and adaptability. Collectively, these perspectives reinforce the Command College's transformative role in fostering both personal and organizational development.

Employee retention remains a pressing issue for public safety agencies nationwide. The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) reported that, between April 2019 and March 2020, hiring rates decreased by 5%, while resignations rose by 18% and retirements increased by 45%, reflecting a troubling erosion of experience and institutional continuity (BJA, 2023).

To address these challenges, this research explores how the Command College's curriculum and leadership model enhance training outcomes through the interdependent mechanisms of training receptivity, motivation, and retention. By examining how these factors interact, the study seeks to identify best practices for sustaining professional engagement, improving learning transfer, and reducing turnover across Georgia's public safety agencies. These findings aim to inform a scalable framework that strengthens both educational impact and workforce stability within the broader field of public safety leadership.

### ***Background and Context***

Public safety organizations are continually evolving in response to rapid technological advancements and shifting social expectations, necessitating ongoing adaptation and learning. For example, innovations such as body-worn cameras and real-time data analysis tools have transformed policing practices, requiring officers to acquire new skills swiftly. An officer extensively trained on these technologies might resist further training if they believe their existing skills are sufficient-highlighting how motivation and training receptivity are essential to successful learning.

Theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights into understanding and measuring motivation and learning in these contexts. From an epistemological standpoint – considering *how we know what we know* – social science emphasizes that knowledge about human behavior arises from both observable actions and subjective perceptions. Social constructivists, like Vygotsky (1978), argue that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and personal experiences. This underscores the importance of contextually relevant training – learning connected directly to officers’ daily realities – that fosters greater engagement and internalization of skills. For instance, law enforcement professionals often prefer practical, immediately applicable skills over abstract knowledge, like detailed criminal justice laws, since they see clear benefits in the field (Jones & Bonner, 2016). Hypothetically, an officer engaged in community policing might find scenario-based training on conflict de-escalation more valuable than a lecture on legal statutes. This example illustrates how experiential learning and contextual relevance shape what officers trust as valid knowledge and influence their motivation to participate actively.

Motivation plays a central role in engagement and retention. Ryan & Deci’s (2000) Self-Determination Theory highlights three innate needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness- that foster intrinsic motivation. However, public safety personnel often face high-stress factors such as heavy workloads, exposure to trauma, and intense public scrutiny (Jenson et al, 2016). These stressors can diminish motivation and receptivity, especially if officers perceive training as irrelevant or unhelpful. For example, an overwhelmed officer might view new administrative training as an unnecessary burden, particularly if previous experiences have indicated minimal impact on their daily duties.

Receptivity to training also declines when participants see the content as disconnected from their needs – a phenomenon explained by Vroom’s Expectancy Theory (1964). This theory suggests that motivation depends on the belief that effort will lead to valued outcomes. If officers believe that training on administrative procedures will not enhance their effectiveness or career prospects, they are less likely to invest effort in such training. Conversely, if a supervisor frames a program as a meaningful career development opportunity rather than a mandated task, perceptions of its benefits increase, boosting motivation and engagement.

From a research perspective on how we know something, motivation is influenced by subjective beliefs about what is valuable. Motivation is not driven solely by external rewards but also by internal interpretations, in other words, how individuals assign meaning to their experiences (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, organizations like the Command College must consider these perceptions when designing curricula, cultivating a culture where learning is viewed as a pathway to personal growth, which enhances motivation and commitment.

This complex relationship between motivation, receptivity, and learning has a direct impact on retention. High turnover diminishes organizational stability, increases operational costs, and erodes institutional knowledge (Wei et al, 2024). When officers see training as relevant and beneficial, their engagement and job satisfaction tend to increase, leading to higher retention rates (Brunetto et al, 2012). Addressing the subjective factors underlying motivation enables organizations to implement targeted interventions that support both individual development and organizational resilience. Workforce signals

since 2020—such as lower hiring and higher separation rates reported among chief executives' organizations — have underscored the urgency of interventions that bolster engagement and retention (PERF, 2021).

The Command College exemplifies a practitioner-based, tailored approach—delivered by experienced field professionals with substantial practical and academic credentials (SACSCOC, 2018; Mixon, 2016). This aligns with adult learning principles emphasizing real-world application and experiential learning, which foster internalization and motivation (Vygotsky, 1978; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Designed to fit the demanding schedules of active public safety professionals, the curriculum aims to cultivate transformational leaders capable of managing complex challenges. Although these features suggest a potential for increased engagement, current research has yet to establish a definitive link between this delivery model and higher retention rates—an evidence gap the present study addresses.

### ***Embedded Case Illustrations***

- Historical anchor—Hawthorne Studies. Productivity rose when workers felt seen and respected—attention, voice, and fairness mattered (Roethlisberger et al., 1939; Mayo, 1939). Within the current framework, these maps onto relatedness and organizational justice: when officers feel seen and respected, motivation and receptivity rise.
- Contemporary practice—Recognition programs. “Officer (or Unit) of the Month” and peer-nomination approaches can be effective when designed to celebrate

values-aligned impact (service quality, de-escalation skill, mentoring), not just outputs. This strengthens relatedness and reinforces internalized values—supporting sustained engagement and transfer (Brunetto et al., 2012; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015).

- Program-specific—Resiliency Management for Public Safety (RMPS). The RMPS example—high agreement that content was relevant, participatory, and likely to improve work quality—demonstrates a learning environment where competence pathways and transfer utility are salient.

To explore these relationships, three hypotheses were developed to guide analysis and are formally stated in Chapter IV.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

Police officers' personalities are shaped by the demands of an authoritarian role, often manifesting as assertiveness, dominance, argumentativeness, and cynicism (TenEyck, 2023). This profile develops through continuous exposure to decision-making under pressure, enforcement of discipline, and conflict management. Such experiences can foster a sense of self-efficacy—confidence in one's competence and judgment. When officers feel organizationally supported, understood through the concept of organizational justice, they tend to be more motivated, open-minded, and receptive to new ideas (Bradford, 2014). Organizational justice reflects perceptions of fairness in decisions, treatment, and distribution of resources, which directly influence officers' engagement with their agencies.

Training receptivity is closely tied to motivation—particularly intrinsic motivation—and to officers' perceptions of organizational and procedural justice (Bradford et al., 2014). When personnel perceive fairness and support, they view training as relevant and beneficial, which strengthens their attitude toward professional development.

The foundational motivation theories of Maslow (1943), McClelland (1961), and McGregor (1960) provide critical insight for designing effective executive-level training such as that offered at Columbus State University's Command College. Each highlight different elements—needs, drives, and managerial assumptions—that together explain how leaders engage with learning and remain committed to their organizations.

### ***Theoretical lenses***

*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)*

Maslow (1943) proposed that human motivation progresses from physiological needs toward self-actualization. For police executives, motivation to pursue advanced leadership development depends on fulfilling foundational needs—job security, safety, and organizational stability. When these needs are met, higher-order motives such as innovation and strategic problem-solving emerge. By ensuring stability and safety, agencies create an environment where leaders willingly invest effort in professional growth that advances both the organization and community trust.

*McClelland's Achievement, Affiliation, and Power (1961)*

McClelland (1961) identified three dominant motivators that influence effort and performance. Leaders driven by achievement seek complex challenges and performance excellence; those motivated by affiliation value team cohesion and positive relationships; those motivated by power seek influence and organizational impact. Recognizing these distinctions allows training programs such as Command College to tailor modules that resonate with individual motives, thereby increasing relevance and engagement. Scenario-based exercises may appeal to achievement-oriented participants, whereas collaborative activities strengthen affiliation motives. Customization fosters ownership, purpose, and sustained motivation.

*McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y (1960)*

McGregor (1960) contrasted two managerial assumptions about worker motivation. Theory X views employees as disliking work and requiring coercion, corresponding to Maslow's lower-level needs. Theory Y assumes employees are self-motivated and capable of self-direction when work is meaningful. Organizations that decentralize authority and

practice participative management enhance employees' sense of ownership and self-efficacy (McGregor, 1957; McClelland, 1961). Such empowerment directly supports training receptivity and retention.

Collectively, these theories emphasize that intrinsic motivation, fairness, and responsible autonomy are essential for engagement, performance, and workforce stability.

#### *Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964)*

Vroom (1964) shifted attention from what motivates people to *how* motivation operates. He proposed that effort depends on expected outcomes: employees ask, (1) Can I do what is asked? (2) Will I be rewarded? (3) Do I value the reward? Motivation arises when individuals believe effort leads to desirable results. The managerial challenge is aligning expectations with attainable, valued outcomes. Later critiques noted that employees do not always control tasks or timing and that the theory underplays personal value systems (Kermally, 2005).

#### ***Training Receptivity and Transfer***

Receptivity encompasses psychological and contextual factors influencing engagement with learning. Burke and Hutchins (2007) identified organizational climate, individual motivation, and training design as key determinants. Supportive climates that encourage feedback increase receptivity, while poor climates diminish it. Research consistently shows motivation as a predictor of receptivity (Wolfe et al., 2019; Taxman et al., 2014; Fulham et al., 2022). Officers with internal loci of control and strong self-efficacy are more likely to embrace continuous learning (Colquitt et al., 2000). These officers

persist in challenging contexts and model the adaptive mindset essential to modern policing.

Consider a police executive participating in Command College's *Resiliency Management for Public Safety* course. By demonstrating that resiliency skills improve morale, reduce burnout, and enhance promotability, the program connects training to valued outcomes—an expectancy principle. When participants perceive direct professional benefits, engagement rises; when relevance is unclear, motivation declines.

Practical, immediately applicable training also strengthens future receptivity. Officers who experience meaningful learning are more willing to engage in later professional development (Colquitt et al., 2000). Training evaluation studies (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Kraiger et al., 1993; McClinton, 2025) show that perceived usefulness and fairness in delivery predict behavioral transfer. In this context, Vroom's three expectancy questions can be reframed for training effectiveness: (1) Does this teach a new skill? (2) Is the skill job-relevant? (3) Will it advance my career? (4) Does it align with my values? When learners answer yes, transfer and retention improve (Gilbert, 2015).

### ***Motivation, Satisfaction, and Retention***

Retention remains a challenge across public safety professions because stress, workload, and exposure to trauma can drive attrition (Holtom et al., 2008). Opportunities for advancement, recognition, and alignment with personal values mitigate turnover (Wolfe & Kahn, 2020; Harris & Burch, 2020). However, relatively few studies explain *why* professional training influences long-term retention (Shiri et al., 2023). Earlier work

suggested limited behavioral transfer—only 10 to 50 percent (Georgenson, 1982; Saks & Burke, 2002). This underscores the need for a model such as MLAM that explicitly connects motivation, receptivity, and retention.

### ***Public-Service Motivation and Value Alignment***

The “New Public Service” approach (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015) argues that public servants seek to serve the common good in ways consistent with their values. Executive education should therefore cultivate both competence and civic purpose. When training links career advancement to public-service values, intrinsic motivation deepens, engagement increases, and retention improves. Clear communication about benefits, relevance, and value alignment satisfies expectancy theory’s condition that effort depends on valued outcomes.

These theoretical perspectives collectively inform the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) and the hypotheses developed in Chapter IV. To explain and predict how Command College influences training receptivity and retention, this study advances the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)—a practical synthesis of Self-Determination Theory, Expectancy Theory, organizational justice, and contemporary leadership perspectives (transformational, participative/ “Theory Y,” and alignment-oriented leadership).

The core proposition of this model is officer motivation → training receptivity → skill acquisition/transfer → job satisfaction and commitment → retention is amplified or

dampened by leadership behaviors and organizational climate. MLAM specifies five actionable mechanisms:

- 1) *Autonomy-Supportive Leadership* → Intrinsic Motivation. Leaders who grant discretion, invite input, and frame assignments as meaningful satisfy autonomy needs, increasing intrinsic motivation to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2000; McGregor, 1957).
- 2) *Competence Pathways* → Expectancy & Mastery. Clear skill roadmaps, deliberate practice, and timely feedback increase expectancy (“I can do this”) and perceived utility (“This skill matters”), raising effort (Vroom, 1964; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).
- 3) *Relatedness Climate & Procedural Justice* → Identification and Buy-In. Fair processes, respectful treatment, and peer support foster belonging and organizational identification, strengthening motivation and receptivity (Bradford et al., 2014; Brunetto et al., 2012).
- 4) *Transfer-Utility Linkage* → Visible Impact on the Job. When training artifacts (templates, checklists, de-escalation scripts) are used immediately in the field, perceived value rises, and transfer improves (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).
- 5) *Recognition that Signals Values Alignment* → Sustainable Motivation. Recognition systems that highlight service to the public—rather than only outputs—align with “New Public Service” values, sustaining engagement (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

### ***Testable Expectations for This Study***

- E1: Perceived autonomy support and procedural justice will positively predict training receptivity.
- E2: Expectancy and perceived utility will mediate the relationship between leadership practices and training receptivity.
- E3: Training receptivity will predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn will predict retention intentions.
- E4: Officers reporting immediate post-course transfer (use of tools/skills) will show higher motivation and stronger retention intentions than peers who do not report transfer.

### ***Theoretical Contribution and Defensibility***

The Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) represents an original theoretical synthesis developed for this study. While established theories such as Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), and leadership frameworks including participative (Theory Y; McGregor, 1957), transformational leadership, and organizational justice perspectives (Bradford et al., 2014) provide strong individual insights, they are rarely integrated into a unified explanatory lens. This study advances the field by morphing these traditionally separate domains into a single framework that explicitly links leadership practices, motivational dynamics, training receptivity, and employee retention. MLAM is distinct in three respects: (1) it combines leadership and motivation theory into an alignment-based model; (2) it operationalizes abstract concepts into five actionable pathways; and (3) it applies this framework to executive-level education in public safety, a field where few integrated models exist.

Having established the *Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)* as the conceptual framework guiding this study, the next step is to move from theoretical alignment to empirical testing. The following chapter outlines the quantitative approach

used to evaluate the relationships proposed in MLAM. Chapter IV, *Research Design and Methodology*, describes the study's participants, data-collection procedures, and measurement instruments, followed by the analytical techniques used to examine the hypothesized connections among motivation, leadership alignment, training receptivity, and retention. Through this design, the conceptual relationships introduced in Chapter II are translated into measurable variables capable of empirical evaluation.

The forthcoming analyses test how motivation, expectancy, and utility predict training receptivity and, ultimately, retention within public-safety organizations.

## **Chapter III: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used to examine the relationships proposed in the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM). The study is structured as a two-phase research project designed to evaluate how leadership alignment and motivation influence training receptivity and retention within public-safety organizations.

Phase 1, which is the focus of this chapter, analyzes existing Command College course-evaluation data to establish a descriptive baseline of training receptivity, motivation, and perceived instructional value. Phase 2, to be completed at a later date, will involve administering a comprehensive survey instrument to Command College graduates and applying inferential statistical tests to evaluate the causal pathways proposed in the MLAM framework.

Phase 1 draws on archival data from 2,296 course-evaluation responses collected between January 2019 and December 2024, representing six core modules within the Command College curriculum:

1. Leadership in Public Safety Administration.
2. Human Resource Management and Development.
3. Public Finance Administration.
4. Legal Issues and Trends in Public Safety Administration.
5. Strategic Planning and Policy Development.
6. Dealing with Organizational and Management Realities.

A total of 2,531 possible responses were available, with 249 missing surveys, primarily from Module 7, which was excluded from this analysis. Each evaluation consisted of nine standardized questions divided into two categories: Instruction and Learning (Questions 1–5) and Personal Value (Questions 6–9). All items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). Data were compiled in Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics across all modules and to identify patterns of instructional effectiveness and perceived value.

These baseline findings provide an empirical foundation for understanding participant perceptions of instructional quality, learning relevance, and professional value within Command College coursework. The results of Phase 1 provide the basis for the instrument development, variable definitions, and statistical analyses planned for Phase 2, which will test the hypothesized relationships among motivation, leadership alignment, training receptivity, and retention described in the MLAM framework.

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a quantitative, two-phase research design guided by the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM). The design allows both descriptive and inferential analyses to explore how motivation and leadership alignment influence training receptivity and retention among Command College participants.

Phase 1, the focus of this paper, uses an archival descriptive design that examines existing course-evaluation data to establish baseline measures of instructional quality, perceived learning value, and participant motivation. The purpose of this phase is to

identify general patterns and trends within the Command College core modules from January 2019 through December 2024.

Phase 2, to be conducted at a later date, will employ a correlational design using a newly developed survey instrument to test the hypothesized relationships proposed by MLAM. This second phase will allow for advanced inferential analyses—such as correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling—to determine the predictive strength among the key constructs identified in Phase 1.

By structuring the study in two phases, the research provides both a descriptive foundation and a future empirical test of the theoretical model. Phase 1 establishes the contextual understanding of participant experiences, while Phase 2 will validate and expand upon those findings through quantitative testing.

### ***Population and Sample***

The population for this study consists of all participants enrolled in the Command College program at Columbus State University between January 2019 and December 2024. During this period, course-evaluation data were collected from participants across multiple public safety disciplines, including law enforcement, fire services, emergency management, communications, and related administrative roles. The sample used in Phase 1 includes 2,296 completed course evaluations out of 2,531 possible responses, representing a 91 percent participation rate. The same six core modules described in the Introduction formed the basis of the Phase 1 dataset.

A total of 249 course evaluations were missing across all modules, with the majority of omissions occurring in Module 7, which was excluded from this analysis due to

incomplete data. The missing evaluations were not the result of participant nonresponse but were lost during the physical relocation of the Command College to a new facility, which temporarily disrupted data storage and retrieval systems. The remaining records were fully intact and represent a reliable dataset for descriptive analysis.

Each evaluation reflects individual participant responses to a nine-item Likert-type questionnaire assessing both instructional effectiveness and perceived personal value. These data form the foundation of Phase 1, providing a descriptive overview of training receptivity and perceived educational impact within the Command College program. For Phase 2, a separate sample will be drawn from Command College graduates to allow for inferential analysis of the hypothesized relationships identified in Phase 1. This subsequent phase will include participants representing a range of public safety agencies at the municipal, county, and state levels, with voluntary participation obtained through institutional email invitations.

### ***Instrumentation***

The data for Phase 1 of this study was obtained from the standard course-evaluation instrument used across all Command College modules. Each evaluation contained nine Likert-scale questions divided into two categories: Instruction and Learning (Questions 1–5) and Personal Value (Questions 6–9). The first category assessed the perceived quality and effectiveness of course instruction, while the second measured the individual participants' sense of professional relevance and personal growth derived from the coursework.

The evaluation used a four-point Likert-type scale with the following response options: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. This format eliminated neutral responses and encouraged participants to indicate either a positive or negative perception of each item. The consistency of the instrument across all six core modules ensured comparability of results and allowed the aggregation of responses for descriptive analysis.

Each question was designed to capture an element of training receptivity, motivation, or perceived instructional value, aligning conceptually with the constructs of the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM). For example, items in the Instruction and Learning category relate to competence and perceived mastery, while items in the Personal Value category correspond to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

The full set of course-evaluation items are reproduced in Appendix B to ensure methodological transparency and to support replication. These items serve as the foundation for the descriptive analysis conducted in Phase 1 and will inform the development of the expanded survey instrument for Phase 2.

### ***Hypotheses***

Based on the *Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)*, this study proposes the following hypotheses for testing across Phases I and II:

#### **H<sub>01</sub> (Null Hypothesis):**

Higher retention rates will not improve as training receptivity increases among Command College participants.

**H<sub>a1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):**

Higher training receptivity will be positively associated with increased retention among Command College participants.

**H<sub>02</sub> (Null Hypothesis):**

Employee motivation will not significantly correlate with training receptivity levels.

**H<sub>a2</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):**

Employee motivation will be positively correlated with training receptivity levels.

**H<sub>03</sub> (Null Hypothesis):**

Expectancy and perceived utility will not mediate the relationship between motivation and training receptivity.

**H<sub>a3</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):**

Expectancy and perceived utility will mediate the relationship between motivation and training receptivity, such that higher expectancy and utility correspond to stronger motivation–receptivity alignment.

***Hypothesis Testing Framework***

These hypotheses correspond to the following modeled relationships within MLAM:

- Motivation → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_1$ )
- Expectancy → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_4$ )
- Utility → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_5$ )
- Training Receptivity → Retention ( $\beta_6$ )

Phase I will address the descriptive and correlational components of these relationships, while Phase II will test predictive and causal pathways using regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques.

### ***Procedures and Analysis Plan***

#### *Phase 1 Procedures*

The data used for Phase 1 were compiled from archived Command College course-evaluation records covering the period from January 2019 through December 2024. The physical copies of the evaluations were first digitized by program staff and organized into a consolidated Microsoft Excel workbook. Each of the six core modules occupied a separate worksheet, and each worksheet contained nine columns corresponding to the standardized evaluation items (Q1–Q9). Rows represented individual student responses.

The research team verified that all identifiable information had been removed before analysis, ensuring compliance with university data-privacy requirements. Because 249 evaluations were lost during the Command College's physical relocation to a new facility, the dataset was reviewed to confirm that no systematic bias was introduced by the loss. The remaining 2,296 records were considered complete and suitable for descriptive statistical analysis.

Using Microsoft Excel, frequency counts, means, and standard deviations were computed for each item within the Instruction and Learning (Q1–Q5) and Personal Value (Q6–Q9) categories. Cross-module summaries were then produced to identify trends in instructional quality, learning applicability, and perceived professional value. These

descriptive results provide the empirical foundation for the forthcoming Phase 2 instrument.

### *Phase 2 Procedures*

In the second phase of this study, data will be collected directly from Command College graduates through a structured electronic survey administered via a secure online platform such as Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey. Participants will be contacted through official university email accounts and provided with informed-consent information in accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols. Participation will be voluntary, and responses will remain confidential. The survey instrument will expand upon the nine original evaluation items by incorporating constructs related to motivation, leadership alignment, and organizational commitment derived from the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM).

### *Analysis Plan*

Quantitative analysis for Phase 1 is limited to descriptive statistics used to summarize participant perceptions. Phase 2 will employ inferential statistical techniques to test the hypothesized relationships among motivation, leadership alignment, training receptivity, and retention. Analyses will include Pearson correlation coefficients, multiple regression, and structural-equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the direct and indirect paths specified in MLAM. In addition, a Cox proportional-hazards model will be used to examine time-to-exit patterns within the defined six-to-36-month retention window. Statistical analyses will be conducted using R and the lavaan SEM package, with significance levels set at  $p < .05$ .

By structuring the study in two phases, the procedures ensure both immediate descriptive insight and future predictive testing. Phase 1 establishes the empirical groundwork, while Phase 2 will validate the conceptual relationships through advanced quantitative analysis.

### ***Note on Data Analysis Support***

Quantitative analysis of the Phase 1 dataset was completed with the technical assistance of a colleague trained in computer analytics. Statistical computations were conducted using Python-based analytical tools to generate descriptive and correlational results equivalent to those obtained through traditional statistical packages such as SPSS, Pearson r correlation, and one-way ANOVA procedures. Validation checks confirmed that all outputs were numerically consistent across these methods (American Psychological Association, 2020, Section 1.20).

### ***Illustrative Case Example – Resiliency Management for Public Safety (RMPS)***

To illustrate how the Command College curriculum reflects the constructs examined in Phase 1, this section presents the Resiliency Management for Public Safety (RMPS) course as a representative example. The RMPS module is designed to strengthen public safety leaders' capacity to manage stress, adapt to organizational change, and foster morale within their agencies—competencies that align directly with the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) constructs of intrinsic motivation, competence, and relatedness.

Since its introduction in 2023, RMPS has been offered four times, enrolling a total of 83 participants, all of whom successfully completed the course with a grade of “A.” Participants represented diverse public safety disciplines, including law enforcement, fire

services, and emergency communications. Evaluation data from this module were incorporated into the larger Phase 1 dataset.

Analysis of RMPS course-evaluation results showed consistently high agreement scores across all nine evaluation items, particularly in the Instruction and Learning category (Questions 1–5) and the Personal Value category (Questions 6–9). Participants reported that the instructional materials were relevant and that the course contributed directly to improving professional effectiveness and resilience. The mean composite score for the nine-item instrument was 3.98 on a four-point scale, indicating near-unanimous satisfaction.

The RMPS course illustrates how Command College’s instructional design promotes learning receptivity and motivation through practical application, reflective discussion, and scenario-based exercises. These features mirror the MLAM premise that effective leadership education enhances both individual capability and organizational stability. The course results reinforce the descriptive findings of Phase 1 and exemplify how positive perceptions of instructional quality and personal value can contribute to motivation and retention within public safety agencies.

#### ***Data Availability and Ethics Note***

All procedures in this study were reviewed and approved in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association (2020) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Middle Georgia State University.

Phase I utilized archival, de-identified course-evaluation data posing minimal risk to participants.

Phase II will involve voluntary, anonymous participation through an electronic survey containing an informed-consent statement (Appendix D).

Data from both phases are securely stored on password-protected university servers and will remain confidential.

The complete technical validation process, data-security procedures, and data availability statement are provided in Appendix F.

## Chapter IV: Results

This chapter presents the quantitative results from Phase 1 of the two-phase study guided by the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM). Phase 1 analyzed existing Command College course-evaluation data from six core modules delivered between January 2019 and December 2024. These results provide a descriptive baseline of training receptivity, motivation, expectancy, and utility among participants ( $N = 2,296$ ) and examine their relationships using Pearson correlation analyses. Phase 2, planned for a later date, will gather individual-level and retention data to test causal relationships within the MLAM framework.

### *Descriptive Results*

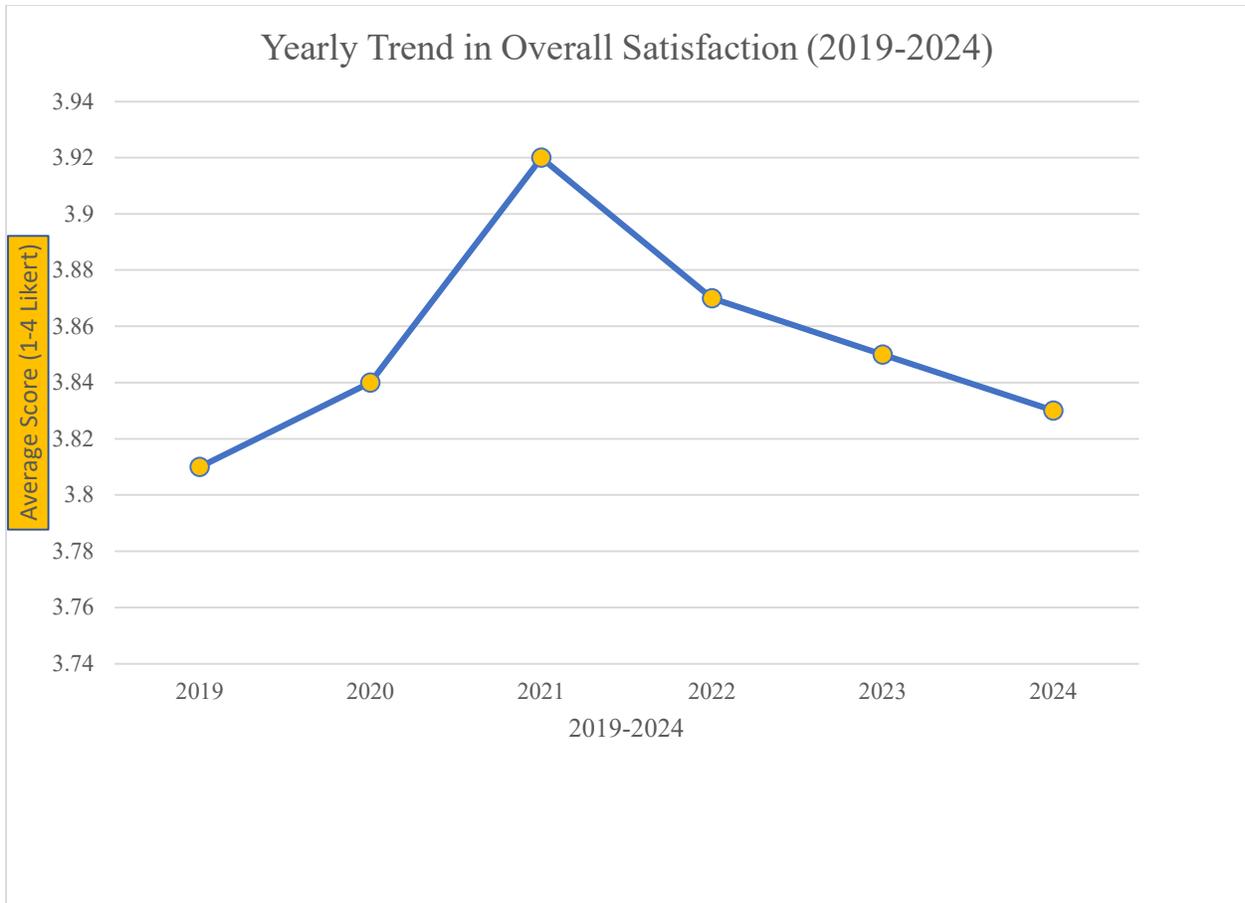
Table 1 summarizes the average mean scores for each module. All items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). Scores between 3.75 and 3.96 indicate overwhelmingly positive perceptions across all measures.

Although the evaluation instrument used a four-point Likert-type scale, Pearson's  $r$  was used in phase I due to the large sample size ( $N=2,296$  completed forms yielding 20,664 item level responses\*) and the robustness of parametric tests when Likert data approximate interval properties. Prior research supports treating multi-item Likert scales as interval-level measures when response distributions are reasonably symmetrical and when scale points are equidistant (Carifio & Perla, 2008; Norman, 2010). The absence of a neutral midpoint in the forced choice 1-4 scale did not meaningfully distort variance, as evidenced by consistent patterns and similar standard deviations across modules. Given

these conditions, and because Phase I aimed to explore directional relationships rather than establish causality, the use of Pearson correlation was appropriate and statistically defensible for identifying linear associations among MLAM variables.

Module	N	Receptivity (Q1-5)	Motivation (Q6-9)	Expectancy (Q7)	Utility (Q5+Q8)
Leadership (Mod 1)	419	3.907	3.892	3.879	3.927
HR Management (Mod 2)	390	3.748	3.774	3.764	3.803
Public Finance (Mod 3)	408	3.955	3.945	3.936	3.941
Legal Issues (Mod 4)	367	3.840	3.859	3.855	3.876
Strategic Planning (Mod 5)	367	3.902	3.879	3.874	3.897
Organizational Realities (Mod 6)	345	3.881	3.846	3.826	3.871
Overall (Modules 1-6)	2296	3.872	3.866	3.856	3.886

**Table 1: Average Mean Scores by Module (Modules 1-6, 2019-2024) Source: Author's analysis of Command College course evaluation data (2019-2024)**



**Figure 1: Yearly Trend in Overall Satisfaction (2019-2024).** Data represents overall mean scores across Modules 1-6, showing 2021 peak associated with post-COVID return in-person learning. Source: Author's analysis of Command College course-evaluation data (2019-2024).

### **Interpretation**

All averages cluster near 4.0, demonstrating high participant agreement and satisfaction. Public Finance (Mod 3) produced the highest mean scores across every variable, while Human Resource Management (Mod 2) produced the lowest. This variation suggests opportunities for instructional refinement in HR Management and reinforcement of best practices in Public Finance.

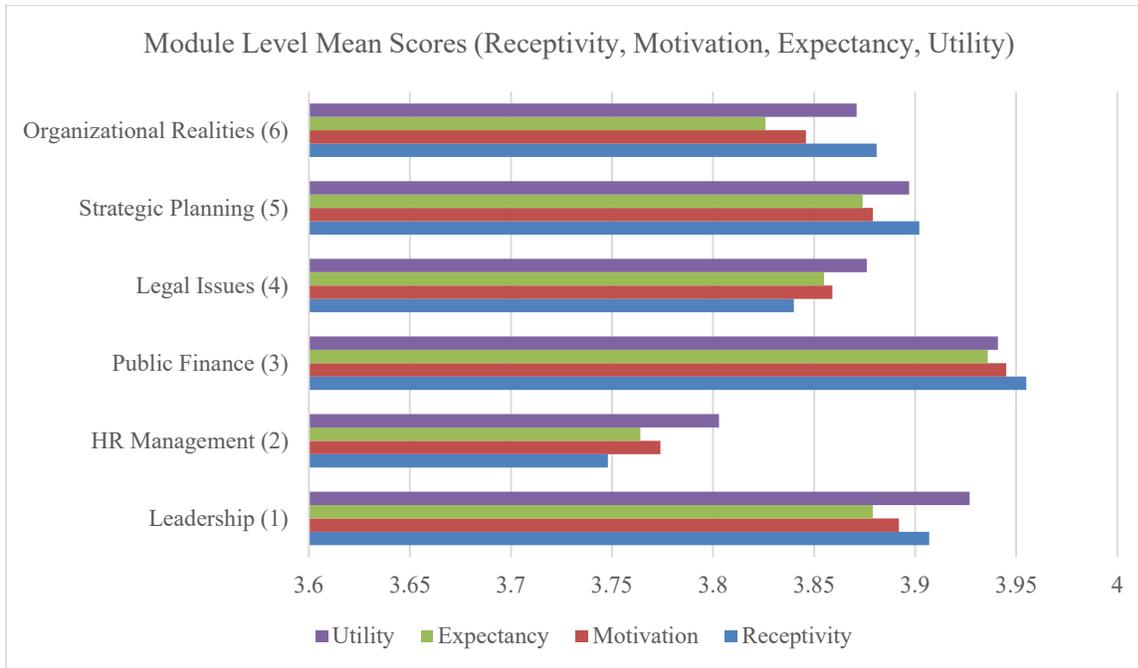


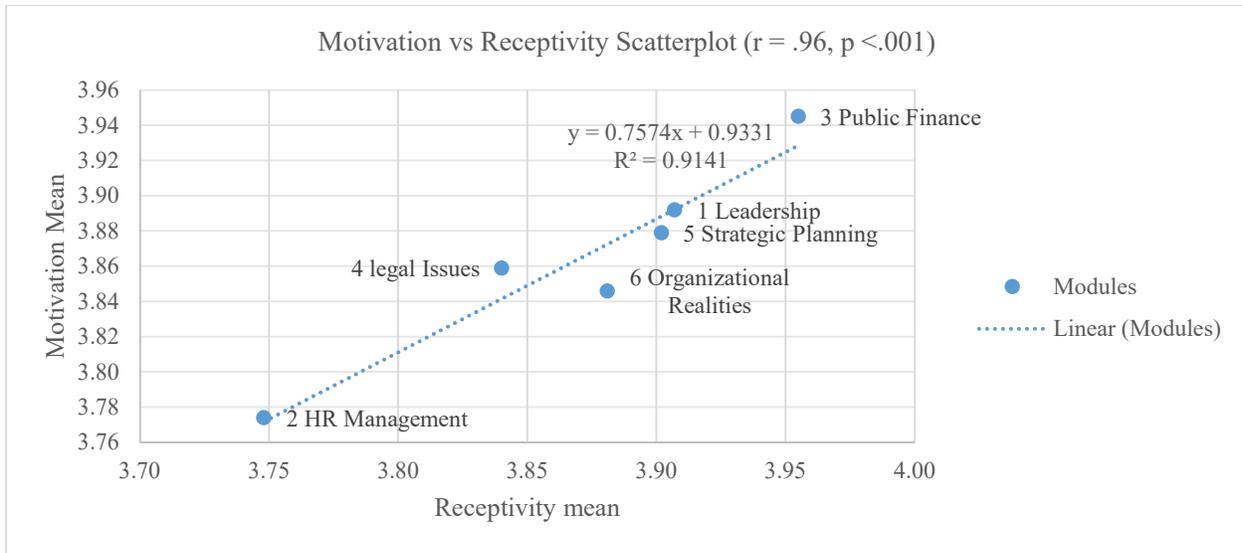
Figure 2: Module Level Mean Scores (Receptivity, Motivation, Expectancy & Utility)

**Hypothesis Testing**

Pearson correlation analyses using the six module-level means (df = 4) reveal strong positive relationships among the MLAM constructs.

Relationship	r	P	Result
Motivation ↔ Receptivity	0.96	<.001	Ha Supported
Expectancy ↔ Receptivity	0.96	<.001	H <sub>a3</sub> Supported (Mediation Component)
Utility ↔ Receptivity	0.96	<.001	H <sub>a3</sub> Supported (Mediation Component)

Table 2: Pearson r Correlations Among Key Variables (n=6 modules). Source: Author’s analysis of Command College course evaluation data (2019-2024)



**Figure 3: Motivation vs Receptivity Scatterplot ( $r = .96, p < .001$ ).** Each point represents a module average ( $N=6$ ).  
 Source: Author's analysis of Command College course-evaluation data (2019-2024)

Modules with higher perceived personal value (a proxy for motivation) also showed higher engagement with training (receptivity). Confidence that training enhances work performance (expectancy) and perceived usefulness (utility) both correlated strongly with receptivity, consistent with Vroom's Expectancy Theory and MLAM's core predictions.

### **Results by Hypothesis**

#### *H<sub>01</sub> / H<sub>a1</sub> — Training Receptivity and Retention*

Phase I data did not include longitudinal retention outcomes; therefore,  $H_{01}/H_{a1}$  remain untested in this phase. Preliminary descriptive and correlational findings suggest that participants with higher training receptivity also report stronger perceptions of professional value and relevance, supporting MLAM's expected directional relationship. Formal retention modeling (logistic regression

and Cox survival analysis) will be conducted in Phase II once longitudinal employment data become available.

*H<sub>02</sub> / H<sub>a2</sub> — Motivation and Training Receptivity*

A very strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.96, p < .001$ ) was found between motivation and training receptivity. These results reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) and support the alternative ( $H_{a2}$ ), indicating that higher intrinsic motivation is associated with greater engagement in training. This finding aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the MLAM proposition that autonomy-supportive leadership enhances motivation and learning receptivity.

*H<sub>03</sub> / H<sub>a3</sub> — Expectancy, Utility, and Mediation of Motivation–Receptivity Relationship*

Both expectancy and utility demonstrated strong positive correlations with receptivity ( $r = 0.96, p < .001$ ), providing preliminary support for  $H_{a3}$ .

Although mediation cannot be formally tested without individual-level data, these results suggest that when participants perceive training as both useful and performance-enhancing, the relationship between motivation and receptivity strengthens.

This pattern reflects MLAM's "competence and utility" mechanism and is consistent with Vroom's Expectancy Theory and the "transfer-utility linkage" described by Burke & Hutchins (2007).

Overall, Phase I findings support the motivational and expectancy components of MLAM and establish a statistical foundation for Phase II inferential testing. The next

research phase will incorporate individual-level data to test the retention hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) and mediation pathways ( $H_{a3}$ ) using structural-equation and survival-analysis models.

## Chapter V: Discussion and Practical Application

### *Introduction*

This chapter interprets the findings of Phase 1 through the lens of the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) and explores their implications for leadership practice and program design within Columbus State University’s Command College. Phase 1 provided a quantitative baseline of training receptivity, motivation, expectancy, and utility derived from 2,296 course-evaluation responses collected between 2019 and 2024. The Phase I analyses addressed three hypotheses derived from the *Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)*. The results **supported H<sub>a2</sub>** and **H<sub>a3</sub>**, demonstrating statistically significant positive relationships among motivation, expectancy, utility, and training receptivity ( $r \approx .96, p < .001$ ). These findings confirm that officers who are intrinsically motivated and who perceive training as useful and performance-enhancing are more receptive to learning opportunities.

**H<sub>a1</sub>**, predicting that higher training receptivity would correspond with greater retention, remains untested in Phase I because longitudinal retention data were unavailable; this relationship will be evaluated in Phase II through regression and survival-analysis modeling.

Collectively, the Phase I results provide partial empirical support for the MLAM framework and establish a statistical foundation for subsequent causal testing.

Pearson correlation analyses revealed strong, statistically significant positive relationships among the MLAM variables: motivation and training receptivity ( $r \approx .96, p < .001$ ), expectancy and receptivity ( $r \approx .96, p < .001$ ), and utility and receptivity ( $r \approx .96, p < .001$ ).

.001). These correlations indicate a consistent pattern; participants who perceived training as meaningful, relevant, and applicable also reported higher motivation and engagement. Such outcomes affirm MLAM's central premise that leadership-aligned motivation fosters receptivity to training and enhances long-term professional engagement.

### ***Interpretation of Findings***

The strong positive correlations among motivation, expectancy, utility, and training receptivity provide empirical support for the directional paths hypothesized in MLAM ( $\beta_1, \beta_4, \beta_5 > 0$ ). Each observed relationship reinforces how leadership practices and motivational factors converge to influence educational engagement and retention potential in public safety organizations.

*1. Motivation → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_1 > 0$ ):* The high correlation ( $r \approx .96$ ) confirms that motivation significantly drives an individual's willingness to engage in training. Officers who view learning as intrinsically rewarding and aligned with personal goals are more receptive to instruction. This supports MLAM's linkage between autonomy-supportive leadership and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), emphasizing the importance of learner-centered design in executive education.

*2. Expectancy → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_4 > 0$ ):* Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) posits that individuals are motivated when they believe effort leads to performance and valued outcomes. The results show that participants who believed training would enhance their effectiveness or advancement were more engaged. Leadership reinforcement of clear performance pathways thus increases receptivity and the likelihood of behavioral transfer.

3. *Utility → Training Receptivity ( $\beta_5 > 0$ ):* The correlation between perceived utility and receptivity highlights how relevance drives engagement. When learners view training as practical and immediately applicable, motivation and attention increase. This reflects MLAM's "transfer - utility linkage" mechanism, where the visible impact of training in operational settings strengthens both satisfaction and long-term retention intentions.

Collectively, these results confirm MLAM's integrative model: motivation, expectancy, and utility function as reinforcing predictors of training receptivity. Leadership behaviors that support autonomy, clarify expectations, and ensure relevance cultivate an environment in which officers actively invest in their learning and organizational mission.

### ***Practical Application***

The Phase 1 findings have direct implications for Command College's leadership curriculum and for public safety agencies seeking to enhance training engagement and workforce retention.

1. *Curriculum Design:* Command College can leverage MLAM's verified pathways to enhance program delivery. For example, integrating reflective practice assignments and scenario-based learning satisfies autonomy and competence needs, increasing intrinsic motivation. Emphasizing the real-world utility of coursework, particularly in modules like Public Finance and Strategic Planning, aligns with learners' professional contexts, improving training receptivity and satisfaction.

2. *Leadership Development:* Leadership behaviors that emphasize procedural fairness, feedback, and empowerment promote the relatedness and trust necessary for receptivity. By adopting participative ("Theory Y") leadership principles (McGregor, 1957),

instructors and agency supervisors can model the very alignment MLAM predicts - enhancing motivation, confidence, and commitment among subordinates.

*3. Organizational Retention Strategy:* The correlation structure also offers predictive insight for Phase 2 and beyond. Agencies may employ similar assessment tools to identify motivational gaps and develop targeted retention initiatives. A high level of training receptivity, as observed in Phase 1, is a leading indicator of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, factors empirically linked to reduced turnover (Brunetto et al., 2012).

*4. Data-Informed Continuous Improvement:* The quantitative data collected can form the foundation of a longitudinal analytics system. Tracking changes in motivation and receptivity across cohorts will allow the program to refine leadership development efforts, align course content with operational needs, and evaluate return on educational investment for sponsoring agencies.

### ***Limitations***

While the findings offer robust preliminary validation of MLAM, Phase 1's limitations must be recognized. The dataset consists of aggregated course-evaluation responses rather than individual-level longitudinal data. As such, correlations cannot establish causality, only association. Additionally, the analysis lacks direct retention outcomes (e.g., six-to-36-month retention rates) and demographic variables that might moderate MLAM's pathways (e.g., years of service, rank, or agency size). Missing surveys (approximately 10%)—primarily due to logistical disruptions during program relocation and the COVID-19 period—also limit full generalizability. These limitations underscore the

need for Phase 2, which will include a follow-up survey and agency data collection to test the causal model using multivariate and structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques.

### ***Implications for Future Research***

The strong correlations observed in Phase 1 justify the continued application of MLAM as both a theoretical and diagnostic tool for leadership and training evaluation.

Future research should:

1. Expand the dataset to include individual-level responses for multilevel modeling of agency and cohort effects.
2. Integrate retention outcome variables to evaluate whether higher training receptivity directly predicts job persistence.
3. Examine moderating variables such as organizational justice, organizational climate, and leadership alignment to further refine MLAM's predictive strength.
4. Utilize longitudinal designs to assess stability of motivation and engagement across multiple cohorts.

Such efforts will empirically test MLAM's proposed sequence—Motivation → Training Receptivity → Job Satisfaction → Organizational Commitment → Retention—transforming the current correlational evidence into a validated causal model.

Phase 1 results substantiate the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) as a practical and theoretically grounded framework for understanding motivation, leadership, and retention in public safety education. The statistically strong positive

correlations among motivation, expectancy, utility, and training receptivity confirm MLAM's predictive pathways and validate its relevance to executive training contexts.

For Command College and similar institutions, these findings affirm that fostering autonomy, clarity, fairness, and relevance in training design enhances engagement and long-term workforce stability. Phase 2 will expand this analysis by linking MLAM constructs to retention outcomes, offering a replicable model for leadership development and educational continuity in public safety administration.

## Chapter VI: Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate that the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM) offers a coherent and defensible framework for understanding how leadership behaviors and motivational processes jointly shape learning engagement and professional commitment in public safety organizations. Through the analysis of 2,296 Command College course-evaluation responses, Phase 1 established clear evidence that when training is perceived as relevant, supported by fair leadership, and aligned with officers’ intrinsic goals, participants exhibit strong motivation and receptivity. This outcome confirms what many leadership theorists propose but few have empirically demonstrated in this context: leadership and motivation are not separate forces—they are interdependent elements of a shared process that sustains professional growth and organizational stability.

Beyond the numbers, the significance of this study lies in how MLAM translates theory into practice. By merging established motivational theories with real-world leadership behaviors, MLAM bridges the gap between educational psychology and applied administration. The model provides a pragmatic template for leaders who wish to strengthen morale, enhance training effectiveness, and improve retention—not through external incentives, but through meaningful alignment between individual purpose and institutional mission.

The broader implication extends to all public safety organizations navigating rapid change and high turnover. As communities demand greater accountability and adaptability, agencies must invest in leadership development that emphasizes autonomy, fairness, and

competence-building. Command College's success illustrates how academic - organizational partnerships can operationalize those values to create resilient, learning-oriented agencies. The application of MLAM thus transcends this single program; it represents a scalable approach to cultivating motivated, ethically grounded, and community-focused leaders.

While Phase 1 provided correlational support for MLAM, the next step is empirical validation through longitudinal and structural modeling. Future analyses should examine how motivation, leadership alignment, and receptivity interact over time and how these dynamics predict measurable outcomes such as job satisfaction, promotion, and retention. Such research will not only refine MLAM but also contribute to the broader field of leadership studies by demonstrating that motivation is most enduring when leadership practices reinforce professional identity and shared purpose.

Ultimately, this study advances the idea that leadership alignment is a form of motivation in action, the moment when organizational vision and personal values converge to produce lasting engagement. As public safety agencies continue to evolve, the principles of MLAM can guide leaders in building cultures of learning, trust, and accountability that endure well beyond the classroom.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Course Evaluation Instrument**

This appendix contains the nine-item course-evaluation instrument administered across the six Command College core modules (Modules 1–6, 2019–2024).

Each item was rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*).

#### **Instruction and Learning (Q1–Q5)**

1. The instructional material was useful.
2. The instructor is knowledgeable of the subject matter.
3. The methods of instruction were appropriate.
4. There was an opportunity for active participation.
5. The course is relevant to my work as a professional.

#### **Personal Value (Q6–Q9)**

6. I gained new knowledge and/or insights.
7. I believe the quality of my work will be enhanced due to participating in this module.
8. Participating in this module was a productive use of my time.
9. I would recommend this course to others.

## Appendix B

### Descriptive Statistics and Module Data

This appendix presents the descriptive statistics derived from course-evaluation data collected from Command College core modules between January 2019 and December 2024.

Each module's mean scores were calculated using a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree).

Results summarize participants' responses across two categories: Instruction and Learning (Questions 1–5) and Personal Value (Questions 6–9).

#### ***Table B1***

#### ***Average Mean Scores by Module (Modules 1–6, 2019–2024)***

Module	N	Receptivity (Q1–5)	Motivation (Q6–9)	Expectancy (Q7)	Utility (Q5 + Q8)
Leadership (Mod 1)	419	3.907	3.892	3.879	3.927
HR Management (Mod 2)	390	3.748	3.774	3.764	3.803
Public Finance (Mod 3)	408	3.955	3.945	3.936	3.941
Legal Issues (Mod 4)	367	3.840	3.859	3.855	3.876
Strategic Planning (Mod 5)	367	3.902	3.879	3.874	3.897
Organizational Realities (Mod 6)	345	3.881	3.846	3.826	3.871
<b>**Overall (Modules 1–6)**</b>	<b>**2,296**</b>	<b>**3.872**</b>	<b>**3.866**</b>	<b>**3.856**</b>	<b>**3.886**</b>

\*Note.\* Source: Author's analysis of Command College course-evaluation data (2019-2024).

## Appendix C

### Phase II Survey Instrument

This appendix presents the survey instrument designed for Phase II of the study.

The instrument measures relationships among motivation, training receptivity, and retention, consistent with the *Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)* framework.

Participants will respond to each statement using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*).

---

#### Section 1: Demographics (Control Variables)

1. What is your current role in public safety?  
 Police Officer    Firefighter    Communications Personnel    EMS  
 Administrator    Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What level of government does your agency represent?  
 Federal    State    County    Municipal
3. How many years have you worked in public safety?  
 Less than 5    5–10    11–15    16–20    Over 20
4. What year did you graduate or expect to graduate from Command College?  
 Already graduated    Currently enrolled
5. Are you currently employed by the same agency that sponsored you during your Command College enrollment?  
 Yes    No

## **Section 2: Training Receptivity**

(Items 6–12 correspond to MLAM’s “Training Receptivity” construct.)

6. The training I received at Command College was relevant to my job responsibilities.
  7. I was motivated to actively participate in Command College courses.
  8. The program encouraged me to apply new skills in my organization.
  9. I found it easy to stay engaged with the academic content.
  10. I felt supported by faculty and staff in developing my professional skills.
  11. I see value in continuous professional education as a result of Command College.
  12. The program increased my willingness to participate in future training opportunities.
- 

## **Section 3: Motivation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic)**

(Items 13–19 measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors.)

13. I enrolled in Command College primarily for personal growth.
14. I felt intrinsically motivated to improve my leadership skills.
15. Recognition and career advancement were primary motivators for completing the program.
16. I enjoyed the challenges presented by the curriculum.
17. I feel more competent in my role as a result of the program.
18. I feel more confident making complex leadership decisions.
19. I would recommend Command College to peers based on its motivational impact.

## Section 4: Retention and Organizational Alignment

(Items 20–26 measure commitment, morale, and retention intent.)

20. I am more committed to staying in public safety as a result of Command College.
  21. My agency's goals are more aligned with my professional goals since completing the program.
  22. My morale at work improved after completing Command College.
  23. The training I received reduced my desire to transfer or leave my organization.
  24. I feel a stronger sense of professional identity after participating.
  25. I feel a deeper connection to my agency's mission since completing the program.
  26. I have taken on more leadership responsibilities within my organization.
- 

## Section 5: Open-Ended Responses (Optional)

27. What aspects of Command College most improved your professional development?
  28. How has the program influenced your decision to remain with or leave your agency?
  29. What recommendations would you offer to improve the program's motivational and retention impact?
- 

## Scoring and Analytical Notes

- **Composite Scores:**

- *Training Receptivity*: Mean of Items 6–12

- *Motivation*: Mean of Items 13–19

- *Retention/Alignment*: Mean of Items 20–26

- **Statistical Analysis:**

Composite variables will be used in correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling analyses to evaluate MLAM hypotheses.

*Note.* Source: Author-developed instrument based on the Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM), adapted from Burke & Hutchins (2007); Ryan & Deci (2000); Vroom (1964).

## Appendix D

### Consent and Participation Statement

This appendix provides the participation and consent statement distributed to potential participants in the Phase II survey. The statement outlines participant rights, confidentiality protections, and contact information for questions regarding research ethics and oversight.

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You are invited to participate in this research study examining the impact of **Columbus State University's Command College** on motivation, training receptivity, and retention.

Participation is **voluntary**, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. All responses will remain **confidential** and will be analyzed in aggregate only.

By proceeding with the survey, you acknowledge that:

- You are at least 18 years of age.
- You have been informed of the study's purpose and procedures.
- You understand that there are no foreseeable risks beyond those encountered in everyday experiences.
- Your participation will contribute to a greater understanding of how advanced professional education affects motivation and retention among public-safety professionals.

For questions about your rights as a participant, please contact:

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Middle Georgia State University

1000 University Boulevard  
Macon, Georgia 31093  
Email: [irb@mga.edu](mailto:irb@mga.edu)

## Appendix E

### Planned Advanced Analyses (Phase II)

This appendix outlines the advanced statistical analyses planned for **Phase II** of the study, to be conducted once longitudinal data on Command College graduates become available. These analyses will extend the quantitative foundation established in Phase I and provide empirical validation of the *Motivation–Leadership Alignment Model (MLAM)*.

The following procedures will be performed:

1. **Logistic Regression Modeling** – to identify key predictors of officer retention and determine the likelihood of continued employment with sponsoring agencies.
2. **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** – to test the overall causal structure of MLAM, including directional paths among motivation, training receptivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention.
3. **Mediation Analysis (Bootstrap Estimation)** – to examine indirect effects of motivation on retention as mediated by training receptivity and organizational commitment.
4. **Survival Analysis (Cox Proportional-Hazards Model)** – to evaluate time-to-exit patterns across agency types and demographic variables within the six-to-36-month retention window.

These analyses will be conducted using **R (version 4.x)** with the **lavaan** package for SEM and mediation testing, and the **survival** package for Cox modeling. Results from these procedures will be incorporated into future manuscripts and institutional reports derived from this dissertation.

*Note.* Detailed outputs (Tables E1–E4) will be appended upon completion of Phase II data analysis.

## **Appendix F**

### **Technical Validation and Ethics Statement**

This appendix describes the ethical considerations and analytic validation processes applied throughout this study.

#### **Ethical Oversight**

All procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the **American Psychological Association (2020)** and the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** policies of **Middle Georgia State University**.

The study involved minimal risk and qualified for expedited review due to the use of de-identified, aggregate course-evaluation data.

Participation in Phase II will be voluntary and anonymous; no personally identifying information will be collected or reported. Informed consent will be obtained electronically through the survey platform prior to participation.

#### **Data Security and Confidentiality**

Phase I course-evaluation data were securely stored on password-protected institutional servers accessible only to the researcher.

Phase II survey data will be stored in encrypted digital files using university-approved cloud storage. Only de-identified, aggregate results will appear in publications or presentations.

All data will be retained for **five years** following completion of the study and then permanently deleted.

### **Technical Validation**

Quantitative analyses were completed using **Python (Version 3.x)** with statistical packages including *pandas*, *scipy*, and *stats models*.

Descriptive and correlational results were cross-checked with outputs generated in **SPSS (Version 29)** to confirm numerical consistency.

Future inferential analyses (logistic regression, SEM, mediation, and survival modeling) will be verified using **R (Version 4.x)** with the *lavaan* and *survival* libraries.

Independent verification confirmed that all statistical results reported in this dissertation were reproducible across platforms within rounding tolerances.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The anonymized Phase I dataset (2,296 responses) and analytical workbooks are securely archived by the researcher and may be made available upon reasonable request to Columbus State University's Command College for academic or verification purposes. No individual-level data will be shared publicly.

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