

Who wants training?

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The present study examined factors that were assumed to play an important role in training motivation. In order to collect data regarding trainee characteristics surveys were conducted with newly hired teachers before and after an in-service training program run at the Department of Basic English, METU, Turkey. All trainees involved in the study filled out the questionnaires that included questions regarding professional background, personality, pre- and post-attitudes toward training, and motivation to learn and transfer. The statistical analysis of trainee responses revealed that training value, that is, attitudes toward training, and motivation to transfer increased after the training program among all participants regardless of their previous background. Personality factors such as openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness were more prevalent among trainees holding an MA degree whereas factors such as extraversion and emotional stability were observed more among trainees with a BA degree. Based on the findings it was also concluded that trainee personality had no effect on the trainee's motivation to develop further. The study also underlined the importance of factors such as teaching environment and training programs in motivating trainees to learn and transfer, and suggested some points to consider for future design and delivery of training programs in order to enhance training motivation of all involved.

Introduction

Motivation theory suggests that individual and context characteristics, which play an important role in the acquisition of new knowledge and its transfer to the actual classroom context, are closely related with training motivation. Battistelli, Lemoine and Odoardi (2007) describe training motivation as a multidimensional construct of the motivation to acquire new knowledge and work skills, of the motivation to apply acquired skills to the work place and the individual's motivation to improve his professional standing. Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992) have stated that for a positive training outcome to be realized one has to consider the needs of the trainees, a thorough planning, and most importantly, the person's ability to learn and the person's motivation. For the purposes of this paper also the following concepts and their descriptions as provided in the literature need to be revisited.

- I. Training value: "individual's attitudes toward the usefulness of training programs" (Ford & Noe, 1987, p. 42)
- II. Pre-training motivation: "a trainee's specific desire to learn the content of the training program" (Noe & Schmitt, 1986)
- III. Post-training motivation: "the degree to which trainees apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in training to their job" (Ford & Weissbein, 1997)

Empirical results show that individual characteristics are likely to predict a teacher's motivation to learn whereas context characteristics contribute to a teacher's motivation to transfer the newly acquired knowledge to the actual teaching situation. Thus, training motivation, which represents the core of this study, seems to be determined by the trainee's motivation not only to learn but also to transfer. As for factors related to personality, the Five Factor Model, which focuses upon behaviours that are expressed while dealing with people, the environment and changing conditions, has been used to describe the personality traits of the participants in the study. *Table 1* lists the five factors and their characteristics. This model has been derived from factor-analytic studies of various sets of characteristics and reduced to the given five relatively independent trait dimensions. Saucier, Hampson, and Goldberg (2000) mention the fact that this model has been reproduced across many

cultures and languages. Literature sources also refer to research done to predict the relationship between the Five-Factor Model and job performance. According to research findings, the Big Five Factors seem to impact motivation, which in turn affects performance.

Factor:	Characteristics:
Extraversion:	assertive, competitive, sociable
Agreeableness:	gentle, warm, cooperative
Conscientiousness:	industrious, dependable, disciplined
Emotional Stability:	relaxed, free from anxiety and negative emotions
Openness to Experience:	creative, cultured, perceptive

Table 1. The ‘Five Factors’ and their Characteristics

In addition to personality factors, organisational context factors have also been shown to directly influence acquisition and its transfer to application (Hicks & Klimoski, 1987), Thus, it can be claimed that characteristics of the workplace must also allow for the use of newly acquired skills and techniques if transfer of knowledge is expected.

The Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the validity of the aforementioned literature findings regarding training motivation based on the surveys conducted before and after the 2008-2009 in-service program run at the Department of Basic English, METU. Eleven trainees with varying degrees of professional background and expertise participated in the in-service program.

The Method

The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 15.0 version. A paired sample t test was used to understand the difference between the pre-test and post-test results. The data gathered from the likert scale items were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The statistical significance level was used as $\alpha < .05$ for all the independent sample findings.

Among the 11 subjects involved in the study, 73 % (n=8) had 0-5 years of teaching experience, 18 % (n=2) 11-15 years and only 9 % (n= 1) 6-10 years.

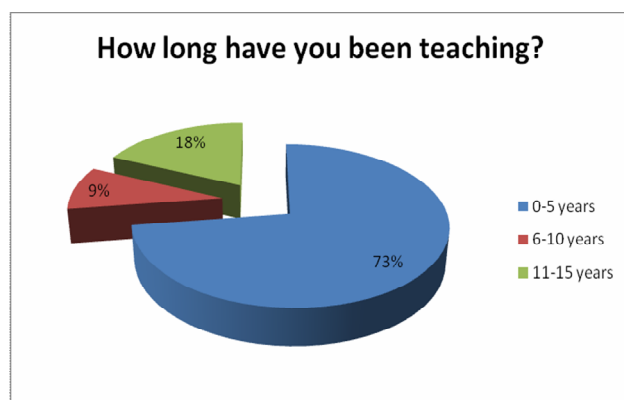


Figure 1. Distribution of the Years of Teaching English of the Questionnaire Population

Regarding their undergraduate area of study, six of the trainees had degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, three of them in English Language and Literature, and two of them in Translation and Interpretation and American Culture and Literature, respectively.

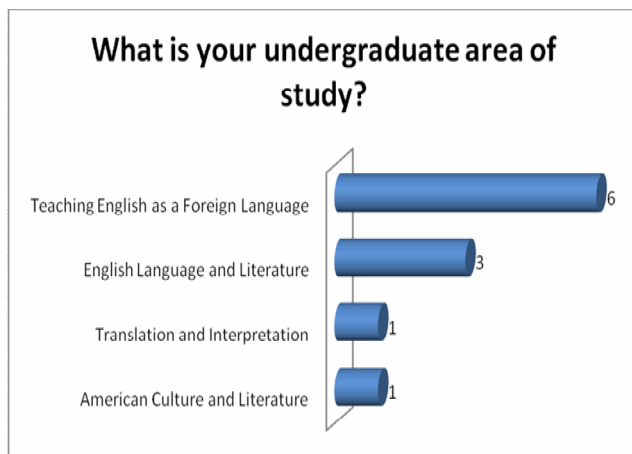


Figure 2. Distribution of the Undergraduate Area of Study of the Questionnaire Population

As for the age distribution, among the 11 respondents, 46 % (n=5) were in the 24-27 years age group, 27 % (n=3) in the 28-31 years age group and 27 % (n=3) in the 32 and above age group.

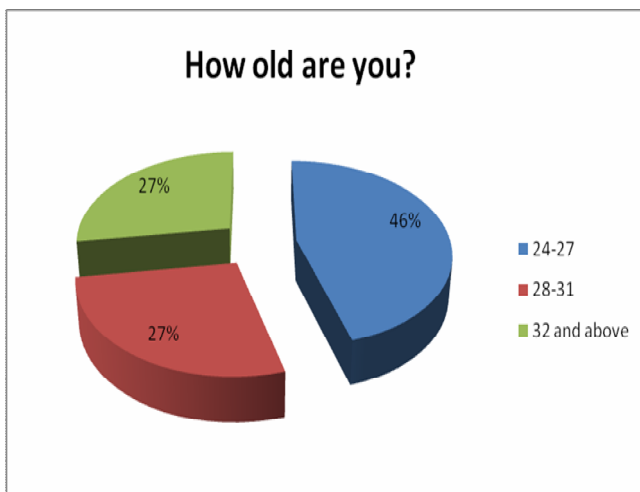


Figure 3. Age Distribution of the Questionnaire Population

As for the last degree completed, while 55 % (n=6) of the respondents have only BA/BS degrees, 45 % (n=5) of them also hold MA/MS degrees.

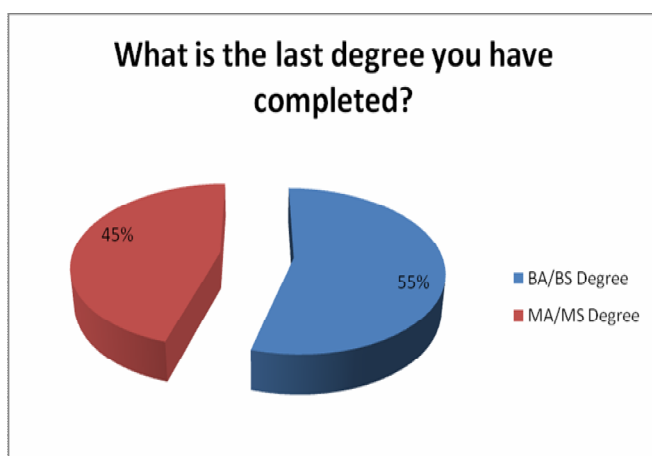


Figure 4. Distribution of the Last Degree Completed by the Questionnaire Population

Among the 11 respondents, 64 % (n=7) of the English instructors gave the answer “yes” to the question whether they had any plans to take any additional qualifications in ELT or education in the future and only 36 % (n=4) of the English instructors gave the answer “no” to the same question.

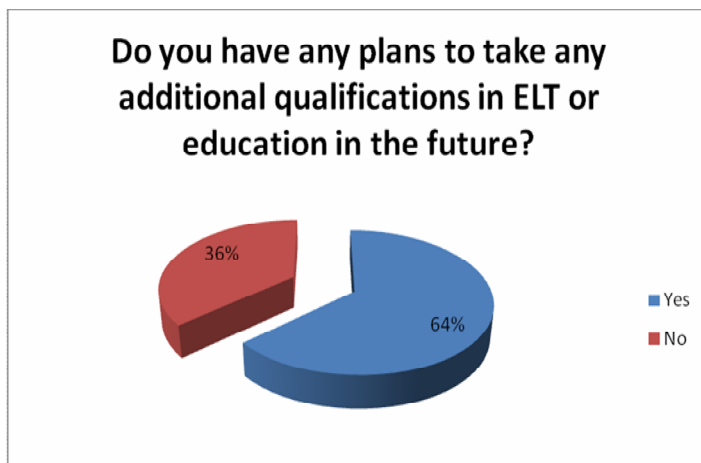


Figure 5. Distribution of the Future Plans of the Questionnaire Population Regarding Additional Qualifications in ELT

The Results of the Study

Among the sub-factors of personality, the highest mean score ($M=4,09$) was found for Agreeableness with a standard deviation of 0,436. After Agreeableness, the next highest mean score ($M=3,72$) was found for Conscientiousness with a standard deviation of 1,08. However, Extraversion had the lowest mean score ($M=3,36$) with a standard deviation of 1,00.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Agreeableness	11	3,50	5,00	4,0909	,43693
Conscientiousness	11	1,00	4,50	3,7273	1,08082
Openness	11	2,50	4,50	3,6364	,59544
Neuroticism (Emotional Stability)	11	2,00	5,00	3,4091	,88933
Extraversion	11	1,50	5,00	3,3636	1,00227
Valid N (listwise)	11				

Table 2. Descriptive statistics displaying personality

As mentioned earlier, all of the participants, who were newly employed teachers at the Department of Basic English, responded to the survey questions provided in Table 3, which presents the results of paired t-test for Attitudes and Motivation to learn / transfer. As can be understood from the Sig (2-tailed) values, 0,49 and 0,08, there are significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores of attitudes and pre-test and post-test scores of motivation to learn/transfer.

Paired Samples Test						
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre Attitudes - Post Attitudes	-,809	1,198	,361	-2,240	10	,049
Motivation to learn - Motivation to transfer	-,364	,369	,111	-3,273	10	,008

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test displaying trainee attitudes and motivation to learn and transfer

This study also examined whether there was a significant difference between the instructors who hold MA/MS degrees and those who only have BA/BS Degrees and between instructors who were planning to pursue additional qualifications in ELT or education in the future and those who were not. Table 4 and Table 5 display the descriptive information of the sub-factors of attitudes and the motivation to learn/transfer according to educational background and willingness to continue education in the future.

Group Statistics					
	The last degree you have completed?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Openness	BA/BS Degree	6	3,58	,80	,33
	MA/MS Degree	5	3,70	,27	,12
Conscientiousness	BA/BS Degree	6	3,50	1,45	,59
	MA/MS Degree	5	4,00	,35	,16
Extraversion	BA/BS Degree	6	3,75	,76	,31
	MA/MS Degree	5	2,90	1,14	,51
Agreeableness	BA/BS Degree	6	4,00	,32	,13
	MA/MS Degree	5	4,20	,57	,25
Neuroticism (Emotional Stability)	BA/BS Degree	6	3,58	1,16	,47
	MA/MS Degree	5	3,20	,45	,20
Attitudes 1	BA/BS Degree	6	4,03	,89	,36
	MA/MS Degree	5	3,28	1,01	,45
Motivation to Learn	BA/BS Degree	6	4,63	,30	,12
	MA/MS Degree	5	4,35	,21	,09
Attitudes 2	BA/BS Degree	6	4,50	,55	,22
	MA/MS Degree	5	4,50	,61	,27
Motivation to Transfer	BA/BS Degree	6	4,92	,20	,08
	MA/MS Degree	5	4,80	,45	,20

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Sub-factors of Attitudes and Motivation to Learn/Transfer According to Educational Background

	Do you have any plans to take any additional qualifications in ELT or education in the future?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Openness	Yes	7	3,43	,53	,20
	No	4	4,00	,58	,29
Conscientiousness	Yes	7	3,93	,73	,28
	No	4	3,38	1,60	,80
Extraversion	Yes	7	3,50	,96	,36
	No	4	3,13	1,18	,59
Agreeableness	Yes	7	4,07	,45	,17
	No	4	4,13	,48	,24
Neuroticism (Emotional Stability)	Yes	7	3,14	,75	,28
	No	4	3,88	1,03	,52
Attitudes 1	Yes	7	3,77	1,13	,43
	No	4	3,55	,77	,39
Motivation to Learn	Yes	7	4,54	,21	,08
	No	4	4,44	,41	,21
Attitudes 2	Yes	7	4,57	,53	,20
	No	4	4,38	,63	,31
Motivation to Transfer	Yes	7	4,93	,19	,07
	No	4	4,75	,50	,25

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Sub-factors of Attitudes and Motivation to Learn/Transfer According to Willingness to Continue Education in the Future

Findings based on the responses given in both surveys were as follows:

1. All behaviours described by the Five-Factor-Model of personality were observed among the participants.
2. Training value being higher among participants with B.A. degrees before the training increased among all participants after the training.
3. Motivation to learn being higher among participants with B.A. degrees before training, had a positive effect on motivation to transfer, which increased among all participants after the training.
4. Openness, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness were more prevalent among participants with M.A. degrees whereas Extraversion and Emotional Stability were observed more among participants with B.A. degrees.
5. Personality had no effect on a participant's willingness to develop further.

The researchers, after a thorough analysis and evaluation of the survey results, also pointed out that training motivation was not only determined by the factors mentioned above but was also strictly related to the work environment and the training program itself. Based on the feedback received from the trainees at the end of the training program and the ongoing trainer-trainee discussions

during the year of training, it could be said that attitudes of colleagues and administration as well as the relationship with the trainer did indeed affect the trainees' motivation and commitment to a great extent. Support from old and new colleagues in the staffrooms and the encouragement received by the administration as well as the trainer were highly appreciated as they both helped the trainees gain confidence and better their teaching performance. It was also claimed by the trainees that the transfer of the newly acquired knowledge to their teaching context was only possible because they had been given the chance to observe and experience numerous teaching applications through demos during the training sessions, all of which were prepared and delivered according to the trainees' weekly syllabus.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the surveys listed above and the observations of trainee behaviour during the training period it could be said that the following two main factors seem to affect training as well as learning outcome: Trainee characteristics and Teaching environment.

As for the trainee characteristics it was found out that factors such as readiness to change, motivation to learn, personality, previous experience and attitudes, and higher self-efficacy contributed to a trainee's learning outcome and performance during the in-service program. However, these factors, despite their crucial role, should not be observed and evaluated in isolation but be given thought within the present teaching environment.

The teaching environment, being another determining factor in training motivation, needs to be considered as well in designing training programs for the following reasons. Firstly, there is need for support from the supervisor, colleague, and peers. Secondly, the supervisor or the trainer must display credibility and confidence. Thirdly, the work context must be one that permits the transfer and application of the acquired input during the in-service training program, which is only possible if there is consistency of training with organizational goals. Finally, the work place must provide its teachers with a continuous learning culture in which both junior and senior teachers can find the opportunity for personal as well as professional development and growth.

These results, undoubtedly, bear implications for future training design and delivery. Thus, the following points must be considered if an effective training program for both trainees and trainers is aimed at.

- designing the content of in-service programs according to needs analysis,
- ensuring congruence between training and job requirements;
- providing behavioural modelling to quicken the pace of adaptation;
- incorporating self-management techniques such as letters of reflection, and journals;
- examining learning strategies and personalities of trainees to ease the process of designing a tailor-made program.

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