

ABSTRACT

Human resource development has been emphasised as a key contributor to ensuring organisational effectiveness and the maximum return from their most important asset; the people in the organisation. It has been argued that effective management and innovative approaches to the development of employees will enable organisations to capture and embed knowledge and skills. In pursuit of upgrading the skills of people, organizations are today increasingly using outward bound training programmes as a human resource development tool. However, there is dearth of literature on the effectiveness of these training programmes in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the use of the outward training programmes for the Sri Lankan public and private sector organizations as a human resource development tool.

To study the effectiveness of outward bound training programmes 11 organizations practising outward bound training were selected. As this research was explanatory in nature, both survey as well as case study methods was used for data collection.

The results reveal that there is clear differences between outward bound training programmes and the other human resource development training programmes in developing expected outcomes of human resource development as these training programmes address different dimensions of human resource development needs. Moreover, the contribution of OBT programmes to develop the expected outcomes considered in the study was much higher than the contribution of other human resource development programmes. However, the findings imply that both outward bound training and other conventional human resource development training can complement each other to improve expected outcomes of human resource development programmes.

Another interesting finding of the study was that the outcomes of the outward bound training programmes are not affected by demographic factors, professional qualifications or composition of trainee groups. Hence, the outward bound training is suitable for a wide target group within an organization irrespective of their education, gender, age, professional qualifications or position in the management hierarchy.