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Internship Report on

"Employee Perception on Engagement Programs in a Start-Up"

Submitted To:

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Program: BBA

Major: Human Resource Management

BRAC Business School, BRAC University

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Internship Report

"Employee Perception on Engagement

Programs in a Start-Up"

Letter of Transmittal

30th April, 2019

Md. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury

Associate Professor

BRAC Business School, BRAC University

Subject: Submission of the Internship Report on "Employee Perception on Engagement Programs in a Start-Up"

Dear Sir,

It is my great pleasure to submit my internship report on "Employee Perception on Engagement Programs in a Start-Up". I have been enrolled for internship in Spring'19 under your guidance. I have been doing my internship in Axiata Digital Bangladesh (Private) Limited and through my internship observation, I have tried to work on a new but efficient initiative on employee engagement.

I have tried to incorporate my experience through survey of the employees and a direct interview with the HR Operations, Recruitment and General Admin Manager. I hope to have a broader perspective opened on the basis of this initiative that would help not only to improve employee performance but also the organizational placement in regard of employee engagement.

Sincerely,

…………………..

Maliha Rahman Safa

ID: 15104091

Program: BBA

BRAC University

Letter of Endorsements by the Supervisor Faculty

The internship report on "Employee Perception on Engagement Programs in a Start-Up" has been created for the purpose of being submitted to BRAC Business School to complete the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), the report has been written and submitted by Maliha Rahman Safa, ID: 15104091, major in Human Resource Management. The report has been accepted and this may be presented to the internship defense committee for evaluation.

Md. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury

Associate Professor

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Acknowledgement

To acquire the practical knowledge of how a company operates in business field we are required to complete an internship semester where we work with a specific company as in intern for a specific amount of time. I have has the privilege to work for ADA-Asia which is currently operating under the name Axiata Digital Bangladesh (private ltd.).

At first I would like to state that it is by ALLAH's grace that I have had the strength and capability able to complete the internship and the report within the designated time. I would also like to reimburse my respects to Md. Hasan Maksud Chowdhury, Associate Professor, BRAC Business School, BRAC University for his uttermost support and guidance throughout internship and the construction of the report. I appreciate his assistance throughout the times where I was unable to perceive issues related with my internship report. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the people in the company I am truly indebted to starting from my supervisor, Evans Raphael Shaon Gomes who has consistently helped me to learn, guided me with patience and has entrusted me with responsibilities to take over on my own. Apart from that, I am grateful to the whole office who have consistently supported me, helped me grow and have shown the care that I am most delighted to have.

To conclude I am obliged to the entire workforce of ADA-Asia for assisting me in completion of my internship report. I have tried sincerely to prepare the report with the most correct information I could process, despite that there might still remain some errors in the report thus I would like to request kind consideration as I am still in of learning.

Executive Summary

The report is based on the engagement program initiatives undertaken by ada-asia, operated as Axiata Digital Bangladesh (Private) Limited in Bangladesh. It is a Malaysian based digital agency, currently operating in nine countries, headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As a start-up the management has tried to have the operations to be impactful with the power of data and the employee performance.

In order to maintain the goal with values as – act now, win win, shaping industries, driven by data, disrupting the status quo and stay humble, stay hungry, the company has undertaken several initiatives. One of the initiative, being unique to the nature is referred as ada culture that comprises of weekly lunch in the office, monthly fun and quarterly CSR activities.

As motivational trigger and solution to work stress, the initiative is executed in all the countries with successful impacts. The impact may be seen or not, but having a real time representation of how the employees actually feel about it can give out information about the culture alongside the compensation plans. Further in the study shows similar positive response through survey conducted with the employees and an interview taken of the HR Operations, Recruitment and General Admin Manager.

Prior to the survey and interview there have been some findings depicted accumulating recommendations with them. And finally the report has been concluded with a scope of further research.

Contents

Organizational Overview

Operating under the name Axiata Digital Bangladesh (Private) Limited, ada is a digital marketing agency in Bangladesh founded in 2013. Operating in nine countries of South and Southeast Asia, the head-quarter is situated in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The countries are Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Phillipines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Singapore and Korea. It is the largest independent data powered digital marketing agency in the region. The core is integrating mechanized publicizing business uniting data science, advancement, substance and media, to alter the scenario of exhibiting for brands and businesses transversely over Asia. The collaborated team of data experts, growth hackers and advertising experts work with analytics and their competitive experience to have the best outcome in the designated brands and their profit goals. Not only the execution but also the whole process is under pressed through setting guide-objective and undergoing marketing decision while planning. Thus the process breaks the silos between media and creative with the greatest resource as data. (ada, 2018)

From the earliest starting point of the masterminding strategy, we arrange data and use bits of learning to plot the customer voyage and guide out inventive method streamlined for mechanized first, programmed movement. Utilizing modernized thinking, we recognize and parcel purchasers, by then digitize inventive age to pass on 10x the estimation of standard creatives. This engages customization by gathering of spectators profile, channel and timing for facilitated duty at scale. Data and judicious showing enables us to be result driven. We perceive and mitigate risk to pass on business results with clear attribution. PC based insight and AI is in our DNA. Through modernizing routine fight to-campaign the administrators and using AI to improve media spends and imaginative arrangement, we enable our promotion errands to focus on bits of learning and strategy, ensuring each campaign is shrewder than the last. (ada, 2018)

Being the digitization business segment of Axiata, ada reforms the structure and accuracy of targeting the right market and executing in the real time with the help of the most reliable and credible source of telco data. With the preservation of privacy, the data is acquired through the basic positioning and variables combined with extreme planning and streaming, limiting the overlapping leads at the same time as much as possible.

Values:

As for the organizational goals, vision or mission are concerned, ada goes by six values that define the goal of each operation comprising of relevant coherence changes. These values are reflected in all the departments, phases and policies. Also, the values have significance over reaching the organizational goal to have been established as the biggest marketing agency in Bangladesh and on profit growth being targeted for each quarter of the year.

1) *Act now* – This value is represented by the fast phase of the growing and evolving agency industry that resembles the potential and integrity to have in order to avoid delay and its following circumstances. As a matter of fact it not only impacts the advertising, but also the operations where integration among the various time zones is always must maintenance with schedules and appointments.

2) *Win win* – ada promotes the strategy of winning on both ends. The point of view resembles of any two or more parties working as one, and all the parties getting benefits out of the venture. Here, particularly it states of the relationship among clients, the agency and/or any other stakeholders.

3) *Shape industries* – Shaping the industries basically draws to the structure of the approach of several brands and their effective operation plans. This is to hope for better outcomes in a modified industry design to have direct and simpler lead, target, approach and ultimately action plans.

4) *Driven by data* – The main and the most promising distinction of the offering is the real time data coverage acquired from adaReach, Studio A and exact which are other concerns of ada to work purely with data and so. The data makes it authentic in terms of recognizing target market as much accurate as possible.

5) *Disrupt the status quo* – As for the typical nature of disruption goes, in this case it is actually in a positive notion of the redesigning the platform of digital marketing for the concern of improvisation, growth, efficiency and lastly the outcome profit.

6) *Stay humble, stay hungry* – This value calls out for the employee nature of their perception allover. Concerning the status of the company policies and their nature, employees are expected to acquire this behavioral distinction for a smooth transition.

Management:

As for the overseas operation, the management generally consists of people from other countries, whilst operations are divided into several departments inside the country based hierarchy (ada-asia, 2018).

I)   Srinivas Gattamneni, Chief Executive Officer

II)   Anurag Gupta, Chief of Agency & Chief Operations Officer

III)   George Chua, Head of Data Science and Engineering

IV)   Adrian Burton, Head of adaAcquire

V)   Jo Fisher, Vice-President HR

VI)   Faradi Bachri, Country Director, Indonesia

VII)   Gilbert Cadiang, Country Director Philippines

VIII)   Gilbert Cadiang

IX)   Country Director Philippines, Country DIrector Malaysia and Singapore

X)   Yogi Triharso, Country Director, adaReach Indonesia

XI)   Shihab Ahmad, Managing Director Bangladesh

XII)   Rozy Laxana, Managing Director Sri Lanka

XIII)   Suppakit Limboonsong, Country Director Thailand

XIV)   Ted Kim, Country Director Korea

As for the Bangladesh team, the organization structure under Shihab Ahmed, the Managing Director is as follows-

=> Digital Planning & Strategy

=> Creative

=> Strategy & Performance

=> adaReach

=> Data Analytics

=> Human Resource & Admin

=> Finance

The teams are divided into 3 groups based on their stations. There are 3 offices people are currently working in.

I)   Robi Corporate Office – adaReach team is stationed in the Robi Corporate Office for being collaborated with the marketing team of Robi directly.

II)   Shuru Campus – The Creative team has a separate office for them in the Shuru Campus for their work in preferable environment and with space they require.

III) Skydeck Executive Office – The rest of the teams are at the Skydeck Executive Office at Shanta Glass House.

The HR team get all of them together at one place through the engagement activities as ada culture.

Introduction to the Study

Rationale of the Study:

In the perception of the growing concept of human resources management, the techniques and meaningful impacts are often faced with a gap of the assumed solution and the actual result. With a fast moving world, demand and putting up with the stressed and focus requiring workforce, the responsibility of the department reaches to a new height with compatibility. As for the implication in Bangladesh, multinational companies genuinely face some differences with of the host countries. Besides, in start-up perspectives, the stance to keep people dedicated and avoiding job rotation can be a pretty challenging job. Observing the company, it has been seen to have a rather appreciative approach in terms of the company policies and designated culture initiative. There are 3 types of activities maintained in (ada-asia) to improve employee engagement and have a positive attitude towards dealing with stress. They are,

Weekly Lunch – The whole team based in both Robi office and Glass House office come together to have lunch on Wednesday of every week.

Monthly Fun Activity – The monthly fun activity is having a fun session to get out of the work stress for a day every month.

Quarterly CSR Activity – On a quarter-based timeline, the organization gets involved in any Corporate Social Responsibility work once in every quarter.

Not only is it beneficial for the companies like start-ups, but it can have further extensive research and analysis on a broader scale. As a full time intern, I got to work through the policies and experience it to the fullest. For my stance, I can say that I have seen notable differentiation on the culture from a few other agencies. As a result, this might just be the next evolution of productive implication other than gross salary or benefits attractions. So ultimately, it may work as solution and to boost integrity among employees to a whole new level eliminating the affiliated cost incurring

Statement of the Problem:

In contrast to the statement of problems the study is actually recognizing the possibility of behavioral assessments in a company other than salary and benefits. Whereas the response of benefit plans may work as an attraction for employees, many organizations suffer the severity of job rotation in terms of loyalty and costing. As the nature of agencies go, it is often pretty hard to hold on to or even find compatible and pacing workforce to have the dedication and patience to work under instant and continuous pressure with expectation dilemma. Now to compliment the turmoil, these agencies often try to compensate with ease of work, time flexibility, care programs, fringe benefit plans and the most widely seen is attractive monetary compensation. Despite that, skilled employees are seen to have left the job out of frustration, work pressure, unpredictable nature etc. Though established companies often do not get through this due to brand image, this problem often delivers obstacles for start-up organization. On one hand, they have to go through the limitation of resources and on the top of that they sometimes lose knowledge over the poor function or maintenance. And that right there arouses the risk of losing company's internal information and thus competence level.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study:

The study is on the analysis of employee perception about engagement programs in a start-up. The research can give insights about how employees generally feel or see the non-monetary

factors of engagement initiation fragment upheld. The focus is kept on start-ups as Bangladesh often stumbles on any new concept or business setup may it be for any purpose and from anywhere. The study should depict if the involvement in fun activities in agency stressed employees. This should benefit both the organization in terms of costing, reputation, loyalty and growth and the employees with a stable and fun work condition eliminating the hassle of switching jobs frequently. However, the study has been done in the perspective of employee concerns in a start-up digital agency in Bangladesh. It may not be applicable even in the same organization based in other countries. Furthermore, the research respondents who are the current employees in Axiata Digital Bangladesh (Private) Limited are all experienced from various reputable agencies of the country. Thus, the study findings might have a different implication on the fresh graduates or of different disciples.

Objective:

The main objective of making the report on engagement programs in a start-up is to follow the impact on employee engagement, harmony and thus resulting in performance improvement with ownership. Other factors concerned are –

I)   The development of the relative new culture of improving employee engagement
II)   The source for having improved employee interactions within a hierarchy
III)   Encouraging through refreshing techniques
IV)   Adding dimensions to the benefit structure along with fringe benefits
V)   Defining an opportunity of fast growth for start-ups

Research Questions:

As the purpose for the report tries to figure how employees may perceive these activities out of any benefits plans and if it has a positive impact on the relationship and performance. Thus the questionnaire to have that information is as follows-

Survey Questionnaire:

1. Email address (Text)

2. Gender

   I) Male   II) Female

3. Age

   I) 20-24   II) 25-29   III) 30-34   IV) 35-39   V) 40+

4. Designation (Text)

5. Job experience

   I) 0-2 years   II) 2-5 years   III) 5-10 years   IV) 10+ years

6. Do you feel motivated while working rather in team than alone?

   I) Yes   II) No

7. Do you think your organization policies encourage harmony among employees?

   I) Yes   II) No

8. Does the industry require a lot of focus and productivity to achieve the goal?

   I) Yes   II) No

9. Do you feel stressed out often?

   I) Yes   II) No

10. Do you believe that the weekly, monthly and quarterly activities provide a chance to socialize?

    I) Yes   II) No

11. Do the activities bring about a change in the continuous work stress?

    I) Yes   II) No

12. Through the activities, do you feel motivated towards the organization and work with full potential?

    I) Yes   II) No

13. Does the initiative give a chance to have coherence in the team as a whole?

    I) Yes   II) No

14. Do you think this initiative has a positive outcome in its significance?

    I) Yes   II) No

15. Are you given proper liberty to avoid the activities for emergency reasons?

    I) Yes   II) No

Interview Questionnaire:

1. Please give a brief description of your HR career so far.
2. What do you have to say about the 3 engagement initiatives as ada culture?
3. As the HR manager how would you differentiate in the effectiveness of the initiatives compared to previous experience?
4. How do you feel about the program or policies personally?
5. Do you think it to be rational from the perspective of company's compatibility?

Limitations of the Study:

There were some limitations that arose while conducting the survey. They are listed as-

1. The very first limitation of the study was to have relevant information on similar stances to make comparison or to show relatable variables
2. The population size may not be sufficient to make absolutely accurate hypothesis or claims on the note.
3. Time availability for the interview was a drawback in the pace of time
4. Reaching out to the people can be pretty time consuming with major events reaching peak at the beginning of the second quarter of the year

Review of related literature:

There has been no use of external secondary data used as books, journal or any other publication for the writing of this report. It is based on the concentration of the company policies and operation only as per the values mentioned above.

Methodology of the Study

The research has been conducted based on both primary and secondary data to purely justify the hypothesis on the employee perception and the impact analysis based on the findings on the engagement concept. A few generic value additions have been implemented on personal observation as I have directly managed some of the tasks during the internship period.

Primary Data – As for primary data source, there has been a survey of the employee population. There are 30 employees enlisted in Bangladesh office and they have been participating in the weekly, monthly and yearly activities as per the ada culture. There will be graphical representation of the acquired data to best describe the scenario. Along with the survey, the HR Operations, Recruitment and Admin Manager was interviewed to share his point of view on the questionnaire.

Secondary Data – For the secondary data, the online sources have come in handy in terms of integrated information about ada. The official website of ada and the LinkedIn profile have been properly utilized to have the relevant and credible information.

Analysis & Interpretation of the Data

Graphical Representation & Interpretation: 30 respondents

Gender
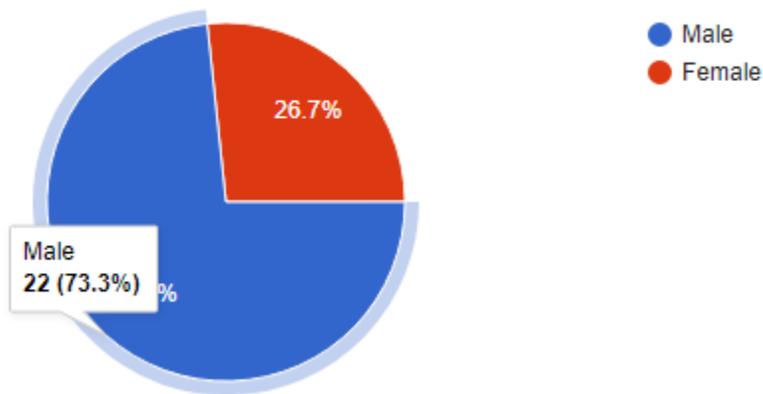
Figure 1: Gender Ratio

The graphical representation shows that about 1/4th of the employees are female and 3/4th are male which depicts participation to be quite differentiated supposedly due to the nature of the industry being too stressful, requiring too much of dedication. If this is overcame, the ratio may have a different ratio.
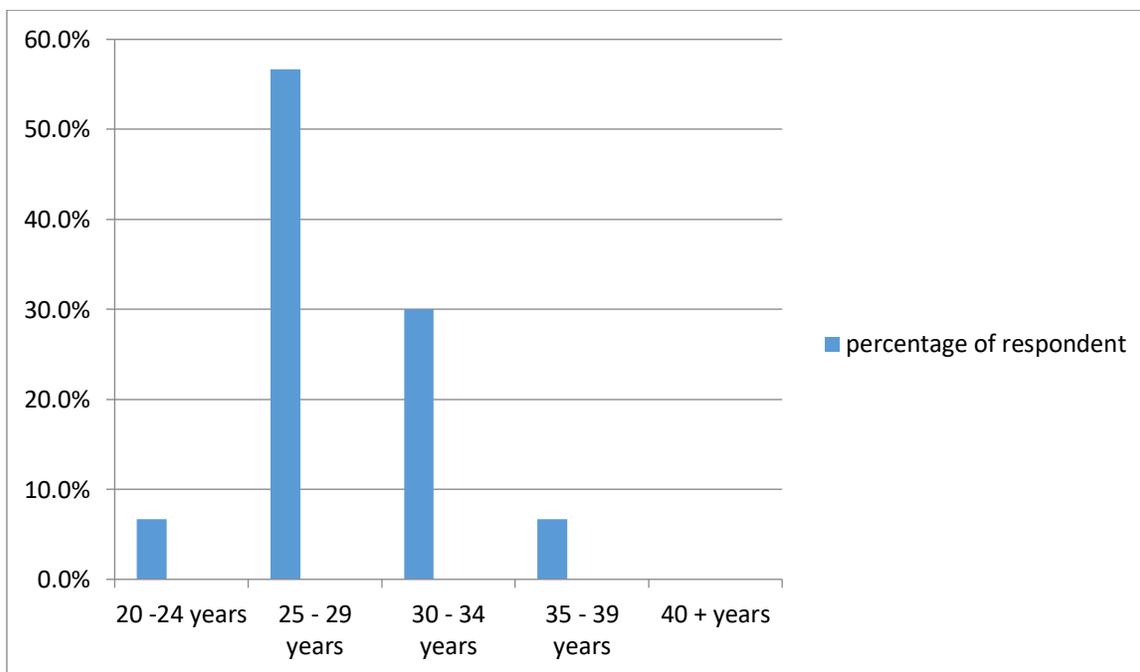
Age

Figure 2: Age Ratio

The age ratio depicts the majority being 25 - 34 years of age. As the productivity is higher so goes for the behavior where people thrive for more than basic satisfaction by nature and something differentiating out of regular schedule can bring about a change and point of interest in the work schedule.

Designation
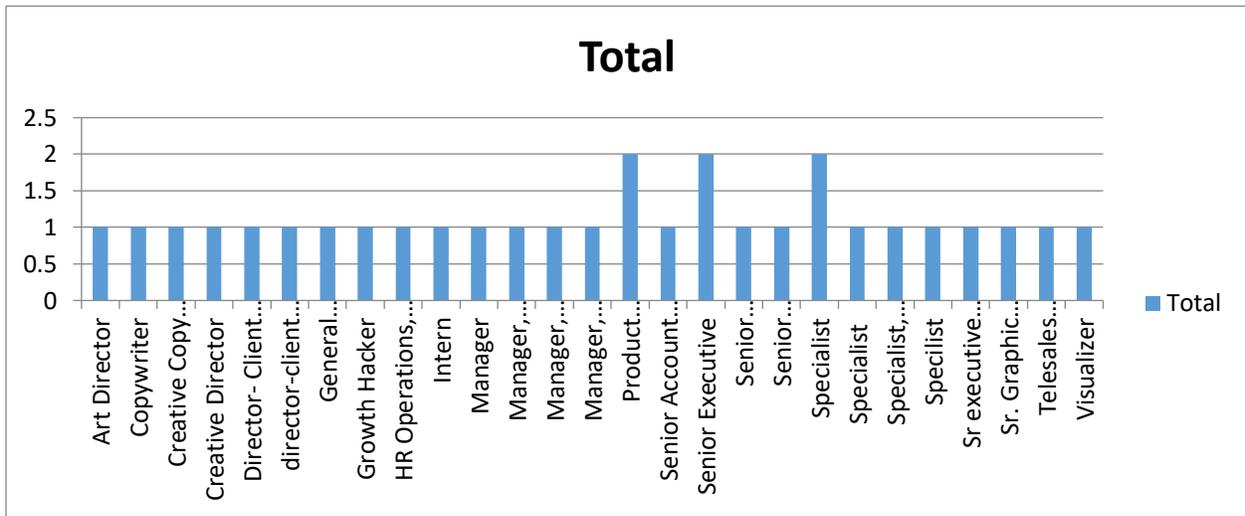
Figure 3: Designation Extended
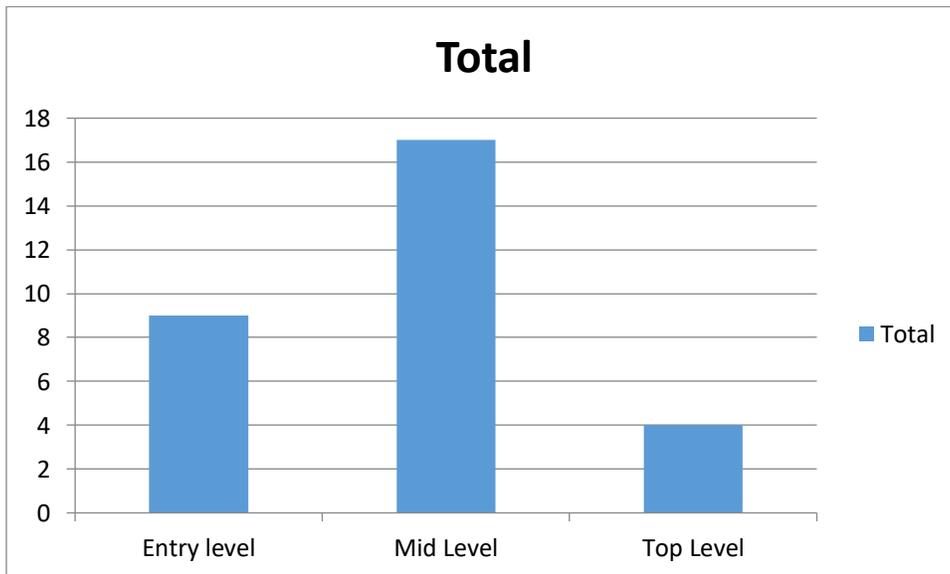
Figure 4: Designation in level

The charts above show that the most employees are mid-level employees, then entry level and lastly top level who all shared their views.

Job Experience
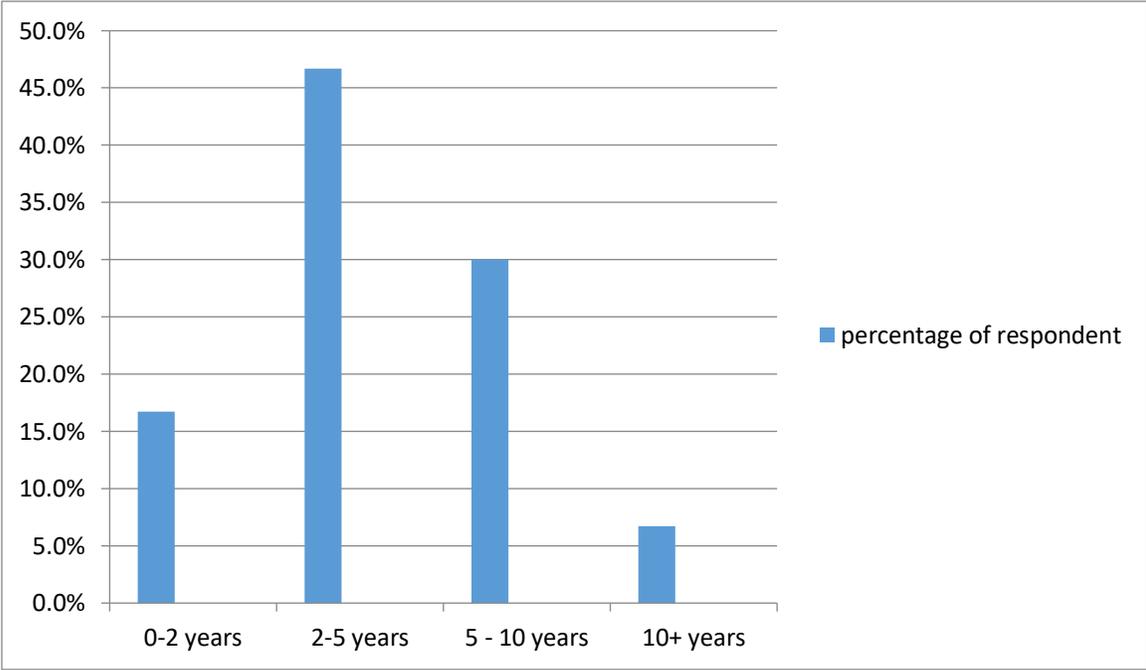
Figure 5: Job Experience (In Years)

The experience ratio shows that despite being a relatively start-up business, experienced employees are encouraged to join the organization. There can be more illustrations on that in the interview section further.

Do you feel motivated while working rather in team than alone?
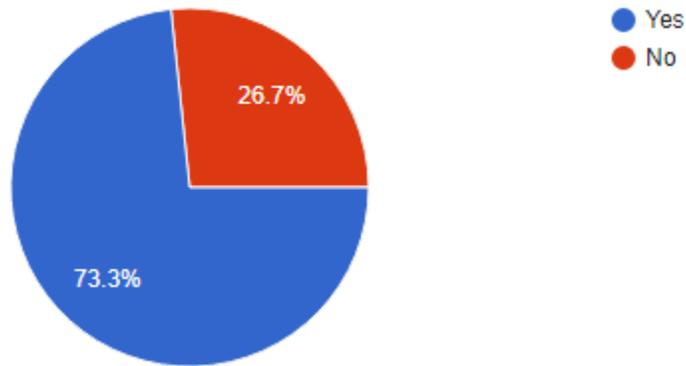
Figure 6: Work Preference in Teams or Alone

More than 70% people feel motivated to work in team for which they would need to have coherence and proper communication establishment. Mostly the culture has proved to be the initial ice breaker for any new joining.

Do you think your organization policies encourage harmony among employees?
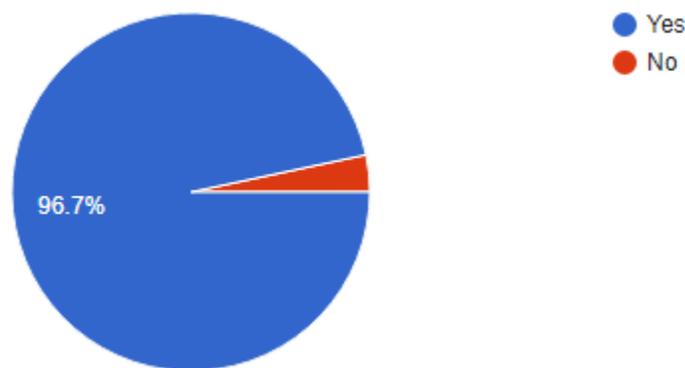
Figure 7: Policies Encouraging Harmony

More than 90% of the employees believe the policies to be effective on encouraging harmony among the employees. In case of where there are separate offices operating remotely, this support holds a very strong stance.

Does the industry require focus and productivity to achieve the goal?
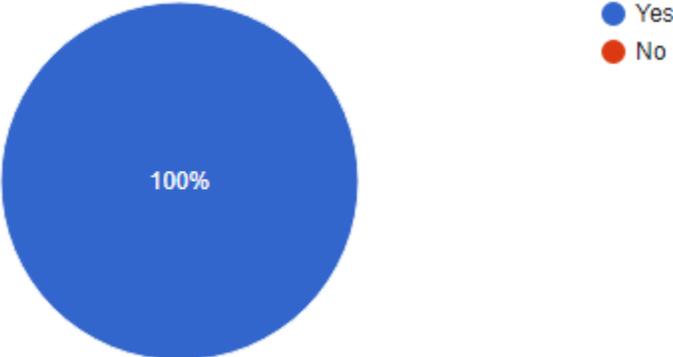
Figure 8: Focus and Productivity Required

Everyone stands strong on the stance that their work requires for them to have focus in their tasks and be productive with accuracy and efficiency that can put the organization on time bound pace with the rest of the world.

Do you feel stressed out often?
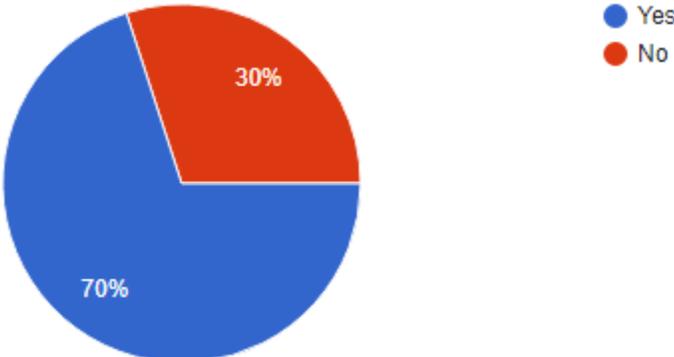
Figure 9: Getting Stressed

Meeting the pace, catching up with new possibilities require a lot of work that may often lead to stress and pressurizing situations with overlapping deadlines. As much as the work itself gets challenging, it gets further ahead with client management. 70% people agree that they often get stressed out for several factors.

Do you believe that the weekly, monthly and quarterly activities provide a chance to socialize?
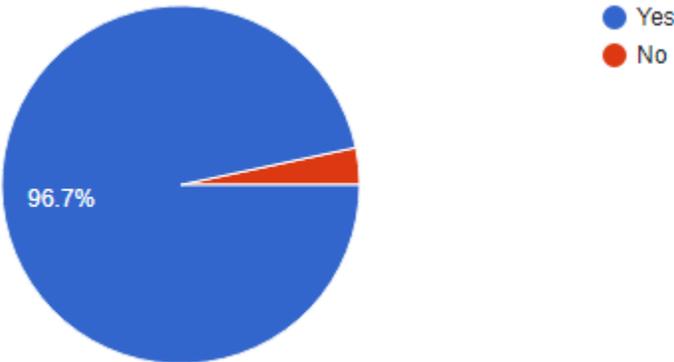

Figure 10: Chance to Socialize

Workplace is not often just a place where people come to work. Spending a majority of the time in a day, the place and people come close to a person and relationship does not get limited to professional. Friendship, understanding, empathy start to grow in people towards each other by socializing in a relieved environment.

Do the activities bring about a change in the continuous work stress?
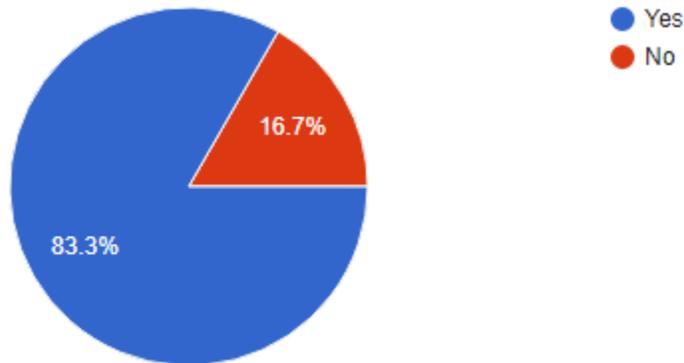

Figure 11: Activities Bringing Change in Stress

More than 80% of the employees feel a change out of their continuous work stress caused by several deadlines and work pressure. This break is not even going to be charged for anytime later. So that gives everyone a sigh of relief for a while, as a break that they would need.

Through the activities, do you feel motivated towards the organization and work with full potential?
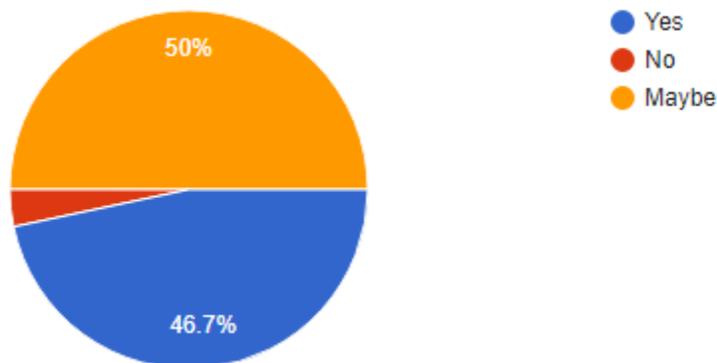

Figure 12: Motivation Triggered

Most people agree or somewhat agree to the fact that they feel motivated to give their utmost dedication and potential towards the organization through the unique activities undertaken by the company.

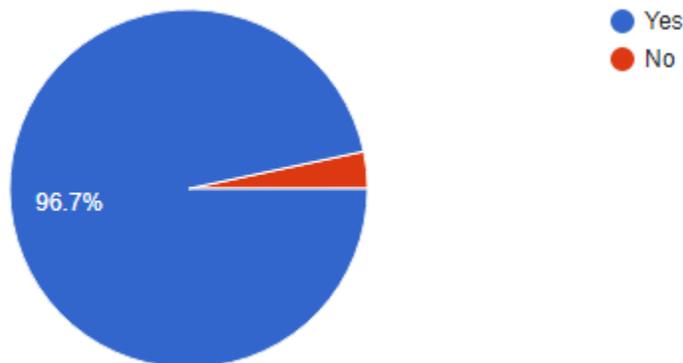*Does the initiative give a chance to have coherence in the team as a whole?*

Figure 13: Coherence in Teams

Almost everyone agrees that the activities have a big impact on creating coherence within the teams. It has been sometimes seen that misunderstanding or miscommunication of instructions can lead to roughness in people working in the same departments. A continuous approach of communication actually helps with situations like that to overcome.

Do you think this initiative has a positive outcome in its significance?
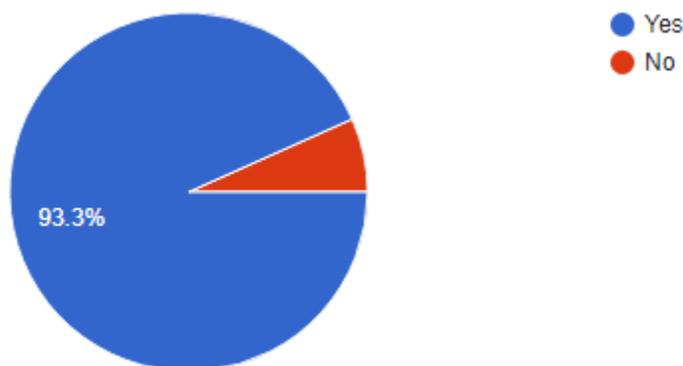

Figure 14: Positive Outcome

More than 90% people agree on the fact that the initiative bears a positive outcome for them despite the hassle of getting together or sparing time from their schedule in the day.

Are you given proper liberty to get excused from the activities for emergency reasons?
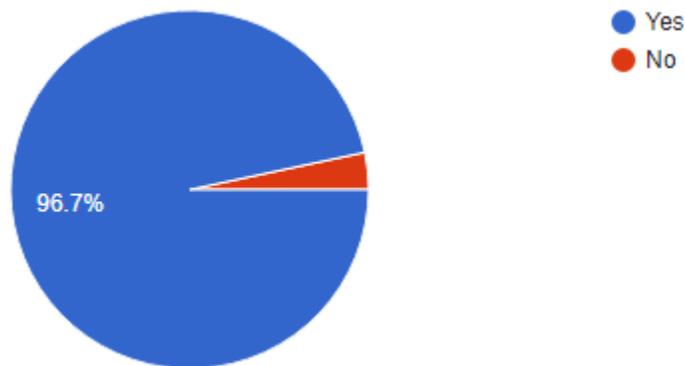

Figure 15: Liberty to be excused

Although the culture is a part of the company policies that people in every department are instructed to maintain. However, almost everyone says that they are given full liberty to avoid any of the activity for any emergencies.

Interview of the HR Operations, Recruitment and Admin Manager

1. Please give a brief description of your HR career so far

   => I started my HR career back in 2013, in Asiatic Marketing Communications Limited as Human Resources Executive. I learnt and over time I grew professionally. I progressed to Human Resources Manager there. During this journey I worked in Recruitment, Compensation design, Performance Management, Employee Engagement and Employee Lifecycle Management. Since Asiatic MCL is the first Bangladeshi advertising agency to practice proper Human Resource policies and procedures, I had the opportunity to build so many things from scratch. In January 2019, with the urge to learn and do something new I joined ada. Here I am looking after HR Operations, Recruitment and General Admin functions.

2. What do you have to say about the 3 engagement initiatives as ADA culture

   => I would rather say 3 types of engagement initiative, weekly, monthly and quarterly initiatives. These activities are fantastic and definitely unprecedented in the industry.

Weekly Lunch, Monthly Fun and Quarterly CSR – all these programs are designed with particular objective. Weekly lunch enhances team collaboration and cross functional engagement. Monthly fun gives employees a breathing space from day-to-day work and also enhances team bonding. Quarterly CSR is basically giving back time and effort to the community we belong to. All these activities are designed in such a way that each activity reflects at least one of the 'ada Values.'

3. As the HR manager how would you differentiate in the effectiveness of the initiatives compared to previous experience?

=> As I said previously that employee engagement module in ada is unprecedented in the industry, it is definitely different than what others are doing. In most other companies employee engagement programs are mostly annual or occasional. When there are continuous efforts done weekly, monthly and quarterly the engagement is much higher due to high frequency. Moreover, if engagement of employees is higher then it is definitely more effective than what others are doing.

4. How do you feel about the program or policies personally?

=> Personally I feel that these initiatives are one of the best parts of ada. The moment I heard of such activities during my onboarding, I was very excited. Your employer giving you scope to get rid of work for a certain time and participating in fun activities with colleagues is such a great thing!

5. Do you think it to be rational from the perspective of company's compatibility?

=> That will depend on company's strategy. Since ada is a new organization they want to retain talent for long term, developing ownership is a must. Engagement always helps in building ownership. This cost and time investment will return in long run. From that point of view, this is rational from the perspective of company's compatibility.

Findings of the Study

From the survey data, we can come into several points on the perception stance of employees upon the weekly lunch, monthly fun and quarterly CSR activities.

1. The employees are without a doubt coherent with the company policies
2. The attraction of the ada culture had a vast impact on the employees' decisions of choosing the organization over their previously esteemed career plan
3. The fast moving and evolving nature puts the employees under much stress and pressure that is often overwhelming
4. Dealing with stress can be made a pretty smooth phase with the collaborative nature.
5. Activities inside the organization can be overpowered compared to compensation planning
6. The impact of non-monetary facilities has greatly changed the nature and demand of employees with organizational fun being a major part
7. People with experience can rely on the initiative as an effective drives to have competence in its objectives
8. The culture represents a motivational driver to be working in the employee mindset that may lead them to feel the ownership of work better in the organization
9. People find a better chance to socialize with others as a break to the continuous workload keeping them busy
10. Coherence and proper communication channel can be established among people in several places
11. People gave their consent on the fact that these activities give them a chance to bring about change in their everyday work life. This simply draws the balance line between the stress and work pressure
12. People may sometimes like the liberty to be excused, with the proof as some do not feel too much of interested to have alliance or interaction with a number of people.

As an Human Resources personnel, one has to go maintain about a balance over both preference on activities that would best satisfy everyone's business as per their nature.

Recommendations

Based on the research done and what the findings depict, some recommendations are in order to have a better maintenance on the culture execution.

1. The initiative may be new and be sufficient to attract people on personal or moral stance; the completion of the objective can only be assured with the impact having a good reach out.

2. Being separate entities, the organization might be losing some values of their own that may be acquired when everyone can step up on their expectations

3. Undertaking the initiative with execution can have proper liberty over the employees

4. A more holistic approach for executing the activities may be recommended as it may need to be upgraded in future scale

Conclusion

The objective of the study has a vast reaching impact on the employees' perception towards the concept of fun in workplace. Even a start-up with that concept in mind, responds to the factor to meet the employee expectation or trying to get over it as some of the countries are doing. Being a very fast growing and with strong values, they have considered out of the generic structure that people seem to have appreciated as a workplace attraction and they seem to uphold the reputation and the possible image high with their performance.

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Appendix