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BUILDING ON SUCCESS: REVISITING THE *TELE-ARAL* PROGRAM THROUGH THE LENS OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

As the pandemic challenges the education sector, alternative and innovative delivery of quality education has to be done. Notably, this study focused on a qualitative investigation of the successes and strengths of the Tele-Aral program using the 4-D process of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The data were gathered using both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Guides for the interviews and FGDs were aligned with the research questions and validated by experts. Similarly, I followed the ethical research standards to protect human subjects while maintaining the study's trustworthiness. Additionally, nonprobability sampling techniques such as purposeful and criterion sampling were used in determining the study participants. Then, the data were thematically analyzed and methodologically triangulated. The findings revealed that the Tele-Aral program gave specific benefits to its stakeholders during the discovery stage. Participants envisioned that the program would become more successful in catering to struggling learners in

the future. To achieve and sustain these visions, the participants looked into personal and collective upskilling and promoting the program to the local government units to reach more learners. Furthermore, I recommend that education stakeholders explore using appreciative inquiry in making various school reforms. Likewise, further studies are encouraged, focusing on the limitations of this study.

Keywords

Appreciative Inquiry, Learning Loss, Strengths-Based Approach, *Tele-Aral* Program

1. Introduction

In 2019, a global health crisis struck all sectors, including education. As the COVID-19 pandemic afflicts across nations, schools were forced to close. With the closing of schools, teaching and learning modality also shifted to distance or remote learning, which impacted the quality of learning. In the Philippines, various steps were made by every local government unit (LGU) to ensure that the pandemic would not cripple the education system. To conform with the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act of the Department of Education, Taguig City instituted the *Tele-Aral* Program to provide free online tutoring services by assisting students with their self-learning modules. With this initiative, learners could liberate themselves from the marshland of ignorance and lack of education during the pandemic. This holds and slows them into a poor quality of life and helplessness.

Several studies about the impact of the pandemic on education were made. The closing of schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 was the only solution for many. Many developing countries suffered when they switched from face-to-face to distance learning modality. Specifically, many developing countries endured the lack of network infrastructures, computers, and internet access, which posed a challenge to students, teachers, and parents. Consequently, impoverished and digitally-untrained families with lower educational stages and children with poor learning motivation are more anguished in this situation, increasing inequality (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020). Hence, governments must scale network structure and internet connectivity across urban and rural districts. Each country should plan a tactic to scale educational technology. This includes launching zero-rating educational resources online, formulating digital teaching and learning resources, employing free online learning resources, using mobile learning, radio and television teaching, and developing ICT infrastructures (Kumar et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, various challenges brought by the shifting of learning modality, consistent with the difficulties in the international context, were also noted. The new normal educational policy was realized nationwide to support quality education in the face of the lockdown and community quarantine. However, this posed challenges and issues, such as inadequate home space for learning, insufficient equipment to support online learning, and psychological effects on learners due to unceasing remoteness and absence of interaction with fellow students and teachers (Tria, 2020). In particular, the learning losses can diminish the affected students' potential productivity and lifetime earnings. The projected value of these losses at 1.25 trillion dollars for developing Asia is comparable to 5.4% of the region's 2020 gross domestic product (Gayares, 2021). In the Philippines, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) estimated that the learning loss could lead to a pandemic cost of productivity of 41.4 trillion pesos for the next 40 years (National Economic and Development Authority, 2021). Hence, Gayares (2021) also mentioned that government and aiding stakeholders should lessen learning losses by providing a systematic program to help students learn at home, such as tutoring programs that offer scaffolding and enrichment learning opportunities.

Therefore, I investigated how this study aimed to explore the successes and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* Program based on the teachers' experiences through an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. In doing this, I utilized an AI intervention for the teachers of the *Tele-Aral* program by answering prompts that revolved around this study's central and sub-questions using the 4D appreciative inquiry (AI) steps: discover, dream, design, and deliver.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

By utilizing the artistic inquiry in a qualitative study, I investigated the successes and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* Program based on the teachers' experiences through an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. Specifically, I also pursued that the participants would answer the following central and sub-questions:

Central Question: What successes and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* program can we get/gain based on the experiences of teachers?

Sub-Questions:

1. What are the strengths or best practices of the *Tele-Aral* program?
2. As an educator in the *Tele-Aral* Program, what could you envision, or how would you see the program in the future?

3. What should the *Tele-Aral* program be doing now?
4. What strategies will be used to execute these plans to improve the *Tele-Aral* program?

1.2. Significance of the Study

With the results of the study, I believe that they would be helpful to various education stakeholders, especially the administrators and educators of the *Tele-Aral* Program. The administrators can use the results of this study as baseline information to guide them on how to keep their employees engaged all the time. In addition to advancing productivity, displaying appreciation in the workplace also strengthens employee engagement and dedication. Moreover, AI assists organizational management by operating from strengths to discover new directions for growth rather than concentrating on weaknesses or issues to be resolved. For teachers, this study would help build loyalty since educators will be encouraged to boost their strengths and be involved in the future planning of the program. Lastly, students will benefit greatly from this in terms of quality learning. When AI is utilized in the classroom, students can exercise positive reframing, assess and recognize their strengths and skills, choose goals, build action plans, and take responsibility for their progress. Thus, it can enhance improvement by examining best practices, calculated planning, organizational background, and initiatives.

2. Literature Review

In this part of the study, I explicitly enumerated the challenges of educators and students during the pandemic through an empirical literature review. Also, I mentioned the current development regarding appreciative inquiry (AI), and its theoretical underpinnings are pointed out. Lastly, I defined specific terms used and elaborated the conceptual framework that guided the research.

2.1. Education during the Pandemic

The global health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic did not just affect the health sector but also other sectors, including education. With this critical situation, school closures served as the impetus for education institutions worldwide to think of contingency plans to still deliver quality education without sacrificing the safety of its stakeholders, especially the learners.

Most learning losses negatively affected students' literacy, eventually leading to economic distress (Hevia et al., 2022). In the Netherlands, specific practices were made to combat

the deteriorating effects of the pandemic on learners. Having short lockdowns, equitable school funding, and world-leading rates of broadband access were some of the highlights of the mitigations they did. However, learning loss has been observed to have affected those students from destitute homes (Engzell et al., (2021). Similarly, various countries tried to apply the best practices of the Netherlands. Some focused on the safe opening of classes since, based on evidence, school closure is the main contributor to learning losses (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). With all the initial findings in the international context, it seemed that most countries' and global leaders' top priority is to reopen schools. Others would assist online learning, such as education funding and access to the internet.

Nevertheless, learning loss will not be mitigated by only these measures. The education sectors should promote an adaptive and responsive curriculum to facilitate and assist learners during the pandemic. Besides, the pandemic took a lot of toll on individual's mental health, and the government should also help ensure the learners' healthy mental being to cope with this challenging situation.

In the local scenario, the Philippines has a similar experience with the pandemic, especially in the education sector. Concerning this, prolonged school closures and quarantines implicated anxiety in teachers and students. In addressing this, affected individuals engage in purposeful activities to reduce stress (Talidong & Toquero, 2020). Accordingly, UNICEF Philippines recommended four important and urgent ways to prevent further learning loss and recover education. The recommendations revolve around prioritizing the safe opening of schools for all levels, intensifying vaccinations and improving school infrastructures, tailor-fitting the instructions to the learners' needs and concentrating on the foundational skills, and providing and warranting that teachers can effectively support the learning needs of students (Thompson, 2022).

In the same manner, the Department of Education swears on applying the recommendations mentioned above of UNICEF to combat learning losses, with an addition of a few strategies compliant with the four pillars of the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030: access, equity, quality, and resiliency. Aside from this, monetary assistance to disadvantaged families was also looked into so that each family could support learners' learning at home and provide a school-to-home extension of education (Mateo, 2022). For example, Taguig City has developed and implemented a program (*Tele-Aral* program) to assist struggling learners and ensure

that no one is left behind. The tutoring sessions are online, so the learners are still safe in their homes, receiving assistance and quality education (Caliwan, 2020).

With all being said by the existing literature, I found that to combat the adverse effects of the pandemic in education; every stakeholder must try to alleviate the situation. In addition, everyone must be involved in conceptualizing the necessary steps to provide a safe learning space. These steps must include the following: 1) reassessing and restructuring the schools to be suited for the new normal, 2) revisiting the curricula to be more adaptive and responsive to the current situation, and 3) extending support to families who were greatly affected by the pandemic so that combating learning losses can be started even in most disadvantage societal unit.

2.2. Appreciative Inquiry

In writing an investigation, choosing the appropriate design to answer the research questions accurately is necessary. In doing this study, as the primary investigator, I aimed to evaluate the successes and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* program to foster organizational change. Similarly, the AI intervention can be done through one-on-one or group discussions to assist people in moving toward a shared vision through engagement (Armstrong et al., 2020)-

The change process of AI revolves around its five theoretical principles. Figure 1 illustrates the five theoretical principles of AI.

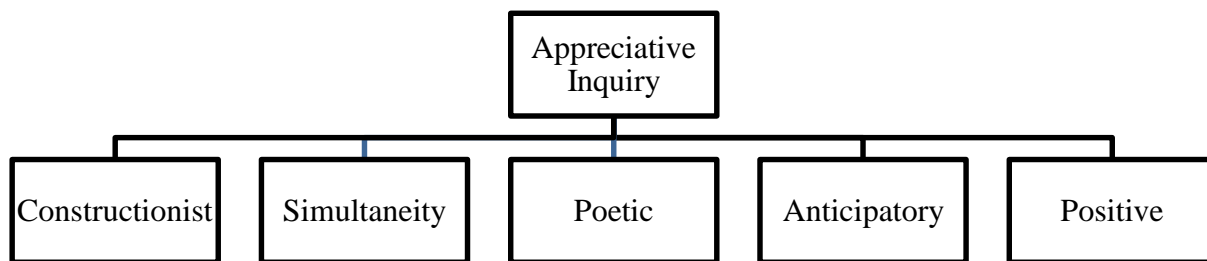


Figure 1: *Theoretical Principles of Appreciative Inquiry*

(Source: Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)

As shown in Figure 1, the AI intervention is anchored on five classic theoretical principles: Constructionist, Simultaneity, Poetic, Anticipatory, and Positive. The subsequent section of this paper elaborates on each of the AI principles.

Constructionist. Since the nature of AI entails conversations, language is influential in shaping and creating reality. Hence, stories that the participants tell during AI are key to socially creating reality. This is why one of the tenants of AI is discovering the strengths of a particular

group or program and using these strengths in creating an antidote to negatively socially constructed problems (Garrett, 2022).

Simultaneity. As AI drives change and conversation is the primary mode to gather narratives from the participants, change is initiated the moment the AI implementer asks a question. As the AI facilitator starts the inquiry process, it allows people to shift their attention to see things through multiple lenses or perspectives. Thus, the direction to improving or changing a policy or program lies in interviews involving a question-asking approach (Moorer et al., 2017).

Poetic. In this principle, the decision of the AI facilitator on what to study matters. Likewise, whatever has been chosen can serve as an impetus to determining what is highlighted and what is prevalent. In AI, the telling and retelling narratives regarding the cherished, significant events that correspond to the ‘best of’ are deemed compelling catalysts for change (Geldenhuys, 2020).

Anticipatory. One of the strong points of AI is that it is possibility-centric instead of problem-centric. Rather than resolving a problem, AI emphasizes the strengths of a program or a community and supports them in uncovering possibilities. Therefore, AI can be emancipatory as it underlines power issues, aids in building critical thinking, and interrupts self-limiting. Moreover, AI implies that our mental images of the future encourage us to take actions that can make them occur (Luhailima et al., 2022).

Positive. Lastly, the AI process focuses on the positive core of the phenomenon. This principle asserts that ‘positive questions have an advantage to positive change’. This is because positive questions swing people’s interest from problems to what provides life, what provokes, uplifts, and nurtures them. In supplement, research verifies the capacity of positive emotions to enrich flexibility, openness to new thoughts, and creative thinking to construct connections and more interconnected communities (Collington & Fook, 2016).

In conducting this study, I warranted that these principles also served as guideposts to envisioning the *Tele-Aral* program becoming a well-established educational program that aims to assist struggling learners. Since the AI process centers on determining the strengths of a program, this facet of the evaluation model will be helpful for the participants and the investigator to appreciate the program. Similarly, since the evaluation model thrives on the program's positive side, the visions the participants created will lead toward becoming a successful program.

Likewise, actions that the informants thought of will also move toward the program's greatness. Thus, positive steps are deemed expected as the AI process commences.

With these principles of AI, I designed this study to understand the successes of the *Tele-Aral* program from the teachers' experiences. Correspondingly, in fostering change for the program, I tackled the participants' visions and actions to make the program more established.

3. Methodology

For this part of the research paper, I included discussions on the research design employed, the study's sample or participants, the research instruments, the data-gathering procedures, and the statistical data treatment.

3.1. Research Design

As the primary investigator in this study, I followed a qualitative research design operating on an appreciative inquiry in evaluating the *Tele-Aral* program. As influenced by AI, I tackled this study's research questions using the 4D steps of AI: discover, dream, design, and deliver. All these steps are linked together following a cyclic phase. Thus, each step depends on the next while focusing on a positive core or phenomenon. In this investigation, I targeted that the positive phenomenon originates from the successes and strengths of the program based on the participants' experiences. Figure 2 visualizes the process the research has undergone, and the research sub-questions answered in each step of AI.

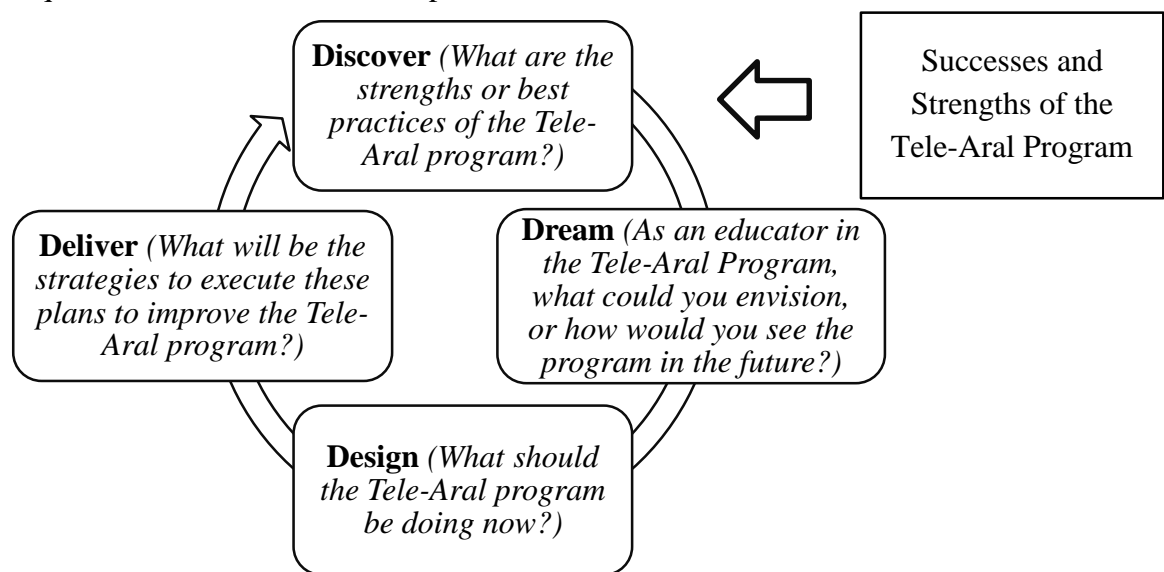


Figure 2: *Appreciative Inquiry Process Used in the Study*

(Source: Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)

3.2. Research Participants and Sources of Data

In choosing the participants, I applied the sampling technique in the study based on the research problem and questions. Additionally, I employed a non-probability and purposeful sampling in the present study since I intended to investigate the successes and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* Program based on the teachers' experiences through an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. Moreover, I chose criterion sampling as this technique allowed the primary investigator to gain insights and learn about the phenomenon through inclusion and exclusion criteria. The primary standard in selecting the participants was that they must be employed in the *Tele-Aral* program since January 2020, the program's start.

Given this description of the participants and the purposeful sampling criteria, the next section describes the researcher's procedure to implore informants for this study.

The number of participants for qualitative studies is generally much smaller than that of quantitative studies since it is not to generalize the result. The number of participants who qualified in the set criteria is six. I interviewed the six participants in the study from one barangay of Taguig city to discover the successes and strengths of the program. Then, I invited the participants to a focus group discussion to answer the other research sub-questions. Both the interviews and focus group discussions were done using teleconferencing software. Eventually, the sample size is enough to give helpful information for the conduct of this study. Similarly, with this number, the researcher reached the data saturation point.

The data sources in this study for data triangulation are limited to the following: data transcripts during semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and the testimonials of the parents and students posted on the Facebook page of the *Tele-Aral* program.

3.3. Research Environment

I conducted the research remotely by interviewing the selected participants. The focus group discussions were also done online using Zoom conferencing software for 40 minutes. All the participants are residents of Taguig City. Meanwhile, remotely conducting the study ensures the participants' safety due to the ongoing pandemic.

3.4. Research Instruments

I used two research instruments to gather qualitative data: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion questions. I ensured that a panel of experts validated the two research

instruments during the EDRE 316 class. The two expert validators of the instrument were the researcher's professor and classmate in the said course. After validating the research tools, I incorporated all comments and suggestions in formulating the final instruments used in the data-gathering process.

The semi-structured interview questions focus on asking participants' experiences on the successes and strengths of the Tele-Aral program, which accounts for the 'discover' step of AI. On the other hand, questions for the focus group discussions were patterned on the three remaining steps of AI – dream, design, and deliver. Overall, the research instruments sought to answer the central question - *What successes and strengths of the Tele-Aral program can we get/gain based on the experiences of teachers?*

3.5. Data Collection and Processing Procedures

Initially, as the key informant, I did an extensive literature review to solidify the need for the study. Before data gathering, I requested the approval of the program coordinator of the Tele-Aral program for the conduct of the study through a letter. Before the actual data gathering, I pilot-tested the research instruments to be used. The pilot interview aided the researcher in identifying flaws, shortcomings, and weaknesses in the interview design. I also tested the interview and focus group discussion protocols with a former colleague in the pilot process. The pilot interview and focus group discussion helped me establish the time needed for each participant. Likewise, this procedure also tested the interview questions, assisted me in preparing for the actual interview, and validated the accuracy and clarity of the interview questions. Then, I reviewed and refined the interview questions after the pilot test.

After the pilot test, I allowed the purposefully selected participants to answer the online informed consent form. Then, I scheduled the conduct of the interviews and focus group discussions with them. In doing this, the participants' availability was considered. Due to data gathering limitations due to the current pandemic, the data gathering procedures were done using Zoom teleconferencing software. Before the actual interview, I established rapport with the participants by raising personal questions. Also, I explained the study overview, confirmed participants' information to be included in the study, clarified the interview process, got the consent form, and validated that the candidate did not have problems expressing their experiences through a five-minute warm-up interview. Similarly, when conducting the interview, I reminded the participants regarding the statement about recording the interview in the consent form and asked

for permission to record the interview digitally. Then, I conducted the actual interview where I also paid attention to the three listening levels: (1) listening to what is being said, as well as the "inner voice" of the participants, (2) filtering out unguarded responses that are irrelevant, and (3) remaining aware of the overall interview process, and being sensitive to nonverbal cues. Each interview was estimated to be 30 to 45 minutes long to avoid fatigue. The participants decided on pseudonyms to use so that their stories would be fruitful and well-presented during the analysis as a substitute for using codes.

Moreover, I found data types that will address research questions in the data collection process. The central research question of this study aimed to understand the successes and strengths of the Tele-Aral program based on the experiences of its teachers. The appreciative inquiry is the most appropriate evaluation model for this study as it lets me, the researcher and key informant, gather the personal reflections of participants collaboratively, which would help evaluate the program to improve based on its various positive core or phenomena. The semi-structured interview method was applied to collect participants' insights regarding the program's strengths and successes, encompassing the initial step of AI - discover. Likewise, the focus group interviews facilitated the collection of participants' insights on the three remaining steps of AI – dream, design, and deliver.

Once the interviews were done, I sent a thank-you email to the participants within 24 hours after the interview. Afterwards, I transcribed the interviews using transcription software and double-checked the accuracy of the transcriptions. The transcription process was done within three days after the actual interviews. Within one week after the interviews, I emailed the transcripts to the participants to check the accuracy of the content or member-checking

Additionally, I wrote notes about his observations and interpretation of the utterances during the interviews. The notes helped me record the participant profile and avoid distorted information, which could have happened if I had relied only on the researcher's memory. Furthermore, I assisted in preventing the effect of the researcher's biases through reflexive journals that reflected my assumptions and biases on the research development. Thus, writing a reflexive journal was an ongoing process to guarantee that the findings were from the experiences and the participants' worldviews, not the researcher's preferences.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative data gathered were analyzed using thematic analysis. After coding transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions, an inter-rater was invited to check the accuracy of the codes made by the researcher. After that, an iterative comparison of themes was made to look for patterns in the data set.

The analyzed data was primarily from the transcriptions of the interviews. Additional data came from my notes and reflexive journal. In examining the data, I looked for themes from the content that both manifest and latent levels, themes directly observed in the utterances, and those that lay beneath the utterances.

Additionally, I employed a methodological triangulation with the focus group, semi-structured interviews, and the testimonials of students and parents of the program to boost the validity of the data gathered to deal with the research questions.

Methodological triangulation entails utilizing more than one qualitative bases of data in a single research (Fush et al., 2018). I selected this type of triangulation to attain (a) comprehensiveness by exhausting approaches with balancing strengths and non-overlying weaknesses; (b) contingency, by paying consideration to divergent extrapolations, population transferability, and common error types; and (c) validation, uniformity, and interpretive agreement by expending convergent, harmonizing, and meta-inference. This kind of triangulation permits the researcher to reconsider the conventional findings to produce higher-level frameworks (Noble & Heale, 2019).

After thematic analysis, I interpreted the qualitative data to see if the results confirmed or disputed the existing literature regarding AI. This manner is vital to creating new knowledge in program evaluation using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) evaluation model.

3.7. Managing the Trustworthiness of the Study

To manage the study's trustworthiness, I have done specific practices to make the study credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable.

To enumerate a few practices done, I carefully decided on the proper methodology to be used. Then, the participants were chosen using a criterion sampling technique to see that all of them possessed specific standards needed to represent the aim of the investigation. To ensure that the data gathered are credible, the instruments were validated by experts and then pilot-tested

before the actual data collection. Additionally, all codes transcribed from the utterances or narratives were sent back to the participants for member checking.

Since I was the key instrument in this qualitative research, confirmability relies on quantitative analysis. A qualitative researcher cannot prove that the findings do not depend on a researcher's skills or perception. However, a qualitative researcher must ensure the confirmability of the results by presenting that the findings are from the study's participants, not the researcher's preferences. To address this issue, triangulation plays a role in ensuring the research's confirmability and credibility. I conducted data triangulation from data sources in this study, collecting data from multiple informants and sites. Similarly, I made sure that the data is open for audit trailing to allow the readers to trace how the data ultimately leads to the findings. I used this comprehensive method to gather essential data. The six kinds of information collected to inform the audit process are raw data; data reduction and analysis notes; data reconstruction and synthesis products; process notes; materials related to intentions and dispositions; and preliminary development data.

Lastly, to ensure the transferability of the results, I provided thick descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. This was done by carefully reviewing the literature and coinciding with the study findings.

4. Results and Discussion

For this section of the research paper, I presented and discussed the significant findings to answer the research questions. Using the appreciative inquiry as an evaluation model, I also enumerated the emergent themes that arose from the data sources, such as the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and testimonials of students and parents of the *Tele-Aral* program. Finally, the educational implications and study limitations were also pointed out in this study segment.

4.1. Findings

The research started with Appreciative Inquiry (AI) interviews and FGDs with all six participants. The AI intervention involved four stages: discover, dream, design, and deliver. All through each of the four stages of the AI intervention, participants were asked various prompts to elicit thick and rich descriptions to answer the research questions. Each data-gathering method was designed to encourage dialogue and collaboration between the participants.

4.1.1. Discover

This first stage of the AI process aimed to unfold emergent themes from the success and strengths of the *Tele-Aral* programs based on the participants' experiences. Hence, I asked the participants for two prompts during the semi-structured interviews, which aimed to tackle the first research sub-question - *What are the strengths or best practices of the Tele-Aral program?*. These prompts were (1) *What can you say about your experiences teaching students online?*, and (2) *What are the best scenarios or situations where you see shreds of evidence that your students are learning?*

Based on an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), two themes emerged from the interviews' verbatims. These themes centered on the benefits to the stakeholders of the *Tele-Aral* program and the program's influential scaffolding roles to student learning.

Some direct comments that reflected the participants' experiences of teaching students online are below.

"...sa mga magulang naman ay matulungan natin ang walang kakayahan at sapat na oras para turuan ang kanilang mga aral..."-Participant 1 (Benefits for the parents)

"...masaya kasi may natututunan pa din ang mga bata and naexcite sila lagi pumasok..."-Participant 2 (Benefit for the students)

"...teaching online is very convenient, in terms of the use of visuals and such. It is much easier to teach because of the availability of materials online..."-Participant 5 (Benefits for the teachers)

As mentioned by the participants, the *Tele-Aral* program served its purpose of providing gains to its stakeholders during the pandemic. These benefits include (1) The offering of an extra hand for parents to assist their children, (2) The opportunity for learners to be assisted with their academic work, and (3) The avenue for teachers to teach students safely and comfortably.

These findings corroborated the conclusions of Garrett (2022) that with appreciative inquiry, meaningful conversations can lead to identifying a source of strength in a program, even if it is undergoing a difficult situation. This is because AI's primary focus is to direct the conversation to the program's positive core to discover avenues for improving it.

Based on the observations of the teachers, they noticed that learners were very eager and enthusiastic to learn during the online tutorial. Also, significant results in learners' academic performance, as shown in their improved scores during the tutorial sessions, showed that the program effectively guided the learners. This proves that the learners enjoy and learn when their teachers teach them. Therefore, these pieces of evidence indicate that the program contributes to lessening the learning loss brought about by the pandemic.

Correspondingly, most testimonials about the Tele-Aral program revealed that learners greatly benefited. Their improved academic performance and enthusiasm manifest this to learn a particular subject area even if they were experiencing a global health crisis where learning face-to-face is halted for safety reasons. Likewise, a considerable transfer of learning was also evident for learners enrolled in the program.

“The Tele-Aral program helps me to improve my English skills and I gain knowledge about proper usage of words in every sentences that I construct.”-

Testimonial 1

Lightly, this significant progress in students' academic performance while enrolled in this program would provide a meaningful blueprint for Philippine education in the future. As these successes and strengths can provide pieces of evidence that learning can still be manifested even if it is done remotely. Therefore, this calls for enlightenment for the administrators in the education sector to push forward and support the creation of digital infrastructure to allow this non-conventional setup to prosper. Undeniably, this direction coincides with the goal of Education 4.0, which is to respond to society's demands and transform the future of education using advanced technology and automation (Ghavifekr & Wong, 2022).

Moreover, while the program was discovered to provide specific benefits to its stakeholders, its administrators and funding agency could look into intensifying and improving the program even if there is no pandemic. Also, as the program served as a significant scaffold to learning, meaningful talks on planning and establishing a centralized approach to running and administering the *Tele-Aral* program. In addition, other cities and municipalities should look into incorporating a similar program, like the *Tele-Aral* program, to assist struggling learners in reaching their optimum potential. As a result, this can serve as one of the vital steps to improving the country's education quality.

4.1.2. Dream

The second stage of the AI process is intended to reveal emergent themes from the participants' visions or dreams about the *Tele-aral* program. So, I asked the participants one question, which aimed to tackle the second research sub-question - *As an educator in the Tele-Aral Program, what could you envision, or how would you see the program in the future?*. The FGD prompt was *How would you describe/envision the Tele-Aral program five years from now?* The question was crafted with a time frame to aid the participants in formulating their vision for the program.

Regarding the analysis, all the participants arrived at one vision for the *Tele-Aral* program – to become more established. All of them envisioned the program to become successful, thus, becoming an institution and a regular program to cater to more students, not just from the City of Taguig but also the entire country. Listed below are the snippets of the participants in response to the prompt for the dream stage of the AI process.

“...naniniwala akong magiging matagal at successful Ang programang ito dahil ito ay solution based program...”-Participant 1

“...tele- aral program become one of the best and most helpful programs in our society. Nurturing and helping a lot of students to improve their performances and learning...”-Participant 4

“...I envision the Tele-Aral program to be one of the best tutorials online...”-
Participant 5

These findings portrayed a shred of solid evidence that since the *Tele-Aral* program is assisting many learners in the City of Taguig, the teachers would envision it becoming well-known and one of the best programs to provide quality education in the future. This result agrees with the conclusion of Moore et al. (2017) that as Appreciative inquiry drives change and conversation, it allows people to shift their attention to see things through multiple lenses or perspectives. Thus, the direction to improving or changing a policy or program lies in interviews, which involve a question-asking approach.

In connection, this approach would foster creative pictures to challenge the current program to become what it is expected to be using the appreciative question-asking technique.

Similarly, all possible directions of the current program will be looked into and serve as a guide to establishing plans to make these visions possible. Conversely, since AI is too attached to its positive core, its loophole would be overseeing the potential downfalls of the current programs. With an AI approach, specific mitigations and contingency plans would not be crafted early since the evaluator only sees the current situation on one side of the spectrum. Therefore, making an unbalanced understanding of an issue.

However, putting it on a positive note, utilizing AI to achieve a goal or vision is advantageous since it allows the community to collaborate to make things work and to turn a dream into a realization.

In the Philippine education system context, appreciative inquiry could encourage reforms schools aim to achieve through an innovative approach. This can be done by initiating a shared vision of all its stakeholders, thus encouraging civic involvement and participation. Similarly, since AI encourages positive leadership, school administrators are expected to be the starters of making a difference by facilitating school reforms and transforming them into a reality. This way, educators would also be encouraged to target good performance to assist in achieving the vision of the entire institution

4.1.3. Design

The design stage, the third stage of the AI process, depends on the dream stage. This stage enumerates the actions to be done by the participants to make their visions possible. Based on the participants' responses to the FGDs, they arrived at a united action that they think will serve as the guiding light of their vision for the *Tele-Aral* program, which is to make a significant contribution to the program. Collectively, they stated that to contribute to the program's success in the future, each of them will exert their best efforts, such as doing their jobs very well. In addition, they will promote the program on various social media platforms to reach more in-need learners. Hereunder are the bits of the participants' responses regarding the actions they will undertake to realize their collective dreams for the program.

“...I will do my best as a teacher tutor to help those non-readers to become at least word readers....”-Participant 1 (Doing my best)

“...I would do my best in tutoring the students and giving them 100% attention to be able to accomplish their lessons...”-Participant 3 (Doing my best)

“...I will not stop praying and promoting the program online...”-Participant 5
(Promoting the program)

Dwelling on the possible actions that the participants will do to contribute to attaining their vision for the program, one must have a clear sense of role and direction for the program. In particular, since AI is a strengths-based approach, each program member must learn to collaborate and appreciate individual strengths. They can do this by having a shared understanding of one's potential through meaningful dialogues and hearing out one's stories. Moreover, these findings agree with the study of Luhailima et al. (2022) that since AI is seated on possibilities rather than resolving problems, its strengths mainly lie in uncovering opportunities through the shared actions of a community. Therefore, it underlines power issues by aiding the building of critical thinking and interrupting self-limiting practices. Furthermore, AI implies that our mental images of the future encourage us into actions that can make them occur.

With this practice, each member of the education sector can look into the usefulness of this particular step of AI. Instead of dwelling on the traditional problem-solving approach, the Department of Education could look into the system's strengths and use them in formulating positive actions to contribute to a shared vision of the institution. Moreover, since AI dwells on a positive or affirmative core, it combines the narratives from discovery with the inventiveness and creativity from the dream stage. With this picture of harnessing the best of the current situation and connecting it to the ought-to-be future of the education system, we can create an ideal solution to tackle every hindrance of our institution.

Furthermore, with the preferred future state in mind, the emphasis during the design stage was to devise and come together on the actions the group required to perform to attain the results the stakeholders chose. Stakeholder feedback will help design steps to achieve results by adding the recognition criteria for a successful delivery.

4.1.4. Deliver

The last stage of AI is dependent on the previous steps. However, the main focus of this stage is to determine ways to sustain and support the actions planned in the design stage. In this portion, the participants could recognize support essential to upholding the positive shifts in the program through working together.

Moreover, the themes that arose from the participants' utterances regarding how to sustain and support the previously mentioned actions in the design stage of the AI are personal and

collective upskilling, seeking the assistance of the local government units, and promoting the program through social media platforms. Further down are sample narratives of the participants on how to deliver their vision for the Tele-Aral program.

“...seek help sa mga teachers na nagpapabasa para makakalap ng teaching strategies...”-Participant 2 (Personal and Collective Upskilling)

“...I would suggest to the local government unit head to continue the program in order to provide job for displaced teachers and to assist the students in their lessons...”-Participant 3 (Seeking the Assistance of the Local Government Units)

“...through different social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, and such...”-Participant 5 (Promoting the Program through Social Media Platforms)

According to the participants, these three ways are vital to sustaining the program's existence to cater to more learners. First, teachers must have the initiative to improve their skills to improve teaching and learning practices. With the evolving world with various emerging tools and platforms to deliver instruction, educators must be in sync with these constant changes. Second, since the Tele-Aral program provides free tutorial sessions to ~~the~~ learners, the source of funding is vital to keep the program going. To address this concern, the hand of the local government unit of Taguig City is necessary to provide funding assistance to the program. In return, teachers should have extensive access to quality education for struggling learners.

Correspondingly, the Department of Education should benchmark this practice of the Tele-Aral program by providing its teachers with professional development and training that will tackle the problems of the lagging quality of education in the Philippines. Following the recommendation of Thompson (2022) regarding how to prevent further learning loss and recover education. The DepEd should look into tailor-fitting the instructions to the learners' needs, concentrating on the foundational skills, and providing and warranting that teachers can effectively support the learning needs of students.

Therefore, the deliver stage of AI offers new illustrations of the future and is maintained by fostering a communal objective and a time of ongoing understanding, modification, and improvisation.

4.2. Implications in Education

With the input derived from this study, it is vital to consider that school reforms should be rooted in the strengths and successes of its stakeholders, thus conducting a positive approach. With appreciative inquiry, the education administrator will dwell on utilizing the institution's past and present performances and link them to envisioning the school's future, therefore practicing a forward-thinking approach.

Likewise, a study implies that appreciative inquiry efficiently offers a deep space for experts, educators, and researchers regarding emerging and innovative practices (Sargent & Casey, 2021). So, educators can gain various opportunities by utilizing this strengths-based approach instead of the conventional problem-based method. It is noteworthy that educators must not only support students in discovering their strengths but utilize them in their learning. Similarly, teachers should support developing student self-confidence, promote productive behaviors, and encourage life-long learning interests.

In the same way, Kadi-Hanifi et al. (2014) noted that teachers and learners involved in an AI endeavor communicate their encounters and discover how the method can be applied in practice. In the course of action, they talk about their learning from experience and ascertain the strength of visualizing development based on listening to constructive voices. Therefore, AI realizes the unexploited positive potential of an educational institution. For instance, a standard may concentrate on a system's prospects, skills, attitude, and importance. The breakthrough of capability utilizes the energy essential to assist a transformation entrenched in innovation, breakthrough, and improvement.

With the guidance of appreciative inquiry, education stakeholders can use its process to refine and tailor the instruction. One can retain those teaching approaches and intervention that works and discard those that do not. With this, we can improve and contextualize the curriculum in the present, which might lead and dictate its future. We all know that education is a no-one-size-fits-all umbrella; hence, AI can guide us in improvising and redirecting our every step to providing quality and inclusive education to our learners.

4.3. Limitations of the Study

This study has various methodological limitations that further studies can improve. First, there might be issues with the research sample and selection. Because of the constraints of time and situation, only those teachers from one barangay of the city of Taguig were the data source for

the study. This limited geographic scope may not represent those teachers in the entire country, and the sample size may not be sufficient to capture the whole experiences of the educators in the *Tele-Aral* program. Secondly, the data collection is conducted using teleconferencing software. This limits the establishment of an authentic company culture due to connectivity issues, distractions, and background noises. Similarly, I missed some of the non-verbal cues portrayed by the participants during the interviews and FGDs, which might be significant to analyzing data.

Therefore, further studies resolving this study's limitations must be done. Thirdly, time constraints and conflicts arising from cultural and personal bias might affect the study's legitimacy. Thus, a thorough methodological approach and practices must be made in the future to address all these limitations being enumerated.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the exploratory findings from this study, the appreciative inquiry appears to be helpful in many ways for the stakeholders of the *Tele-Aral* program, like the teachers examined in this study. In particular, the present study participants shared that the program was helpful because it allowed the education stakeholders to benefit from it during a challenging situation. One of the highlights of these benefits is that the *Tele-Aral* program had an influential scaffolding role in student learning. Hence, learners are still remotely assisted and guided with their academic work. The findings indicated that AI might help lessen the learning loss brought by the ongoing pandemic.

Anchoring on the initial findings, all the participants envisioned the program to become successful, thus, becoming an institution and a regular program to cater to more students, not just from the City of Taguig but also the entire country. With these visions, they could devise necessary actions to allow their dreams to come to light. These actions include exerting their best efforts, such as doing their jobs well. In addition, they will promote the program on various social media platforms to reach more in-need learners.

On the other hand, sustaining the designed actions is vital to pushing the attainment of the goal of the program, which is to ensure that no child is left behind. Therefore, participants conceptualized the following activities to sustain the *Tele-Aral* program. These activities include personal and collective upskilling, seeking the assistance of the local government units, and promoting the program through social media platforms.

Furthermore, I recommend that education stakeholders explore using appreciative inquiry in making various school reforms. Likewise, future researchers are encouraged to make parallel studies focusing on the limitations of this study.

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