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## Differentiating the Level of the School Leaders' Positive Traits Anchored on Appreciative Inquiry Attributes: Inputs to Improving Teachers' Collaboration and the School-Based Management Level

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### ABSTRACT

This study used Quantitative, evaluative, and descriptive research designs to determine the school leaders' Appreciative Inquiry (AI) level of practice and which among the AI practices predict improvements in the school leaders' collaboration that can be used in crafting AI strategies. One-Way Analysis of Variance, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation, and Multiple Regression were used in this study. The researcher made-questionnaires were administered to the 157 school leaders that were grouped based on their administrative function. The findings were articulated based on the data gathered and the analysis made: 1. School heads had the lowest AI level among the school leaders, but they were found to have the highest perception results when it comes to the SBM components practices; 2. there was a low to moderate positive correlation among all the variables related to SBM components and the school leaders' AI level practices in terms of discovery, dream, design, and destiny; 3. the SBM components variables were found to be "very important" and contributory factor to a higher SBM level. 4. Among the phases of AI, Design and Destiny predict high collaboration in which, for every one (1) unit increase in the school and school leader's AI level, there was a corresponding increase in the SBM performance. It was concluded that school heads may set good examples as AI practitioners to effectively promote collaboration. Schools may use the suggested strategies as they are anchored on the best practices of the school leaders and are found to be predictors of high SBM performance.

### INTRODUCTION

The researchers believed that the only way to implement change successfully is through collaboration which is a way to leverage the educational system in the country. The Department of Education (DepEd) supports decentralizing the decision-making authority through the School-Based Management (SBM) program. SBM is tailored based on the collaborative efforts of the stakeholders. It provides equal opportunities for every school to grow; however, SBM requires tedious preparations where school leaders and stakeholders need to work together to achieve the goal of becoming an independent school body. To improve and level up the SBM of the school, the school leaders and the stakeholders must have a strong bond of camaraderie to implement the change. One way of improving teachers' collaboration is by adopting positive management strategies that can replace the traditional way of identifying organizational problems. One of the current positive approaches to educational change is the Appreciative Inquiry (AI). It is strengths-based learning, change, planning, and implementation approach. It engages stakeholders in the process of acknowledging individual and collective strengths, designing goals, creating innovative approaches, and planning organizations to maximize potential (Buchanan, 2014; Riopel, 2019).

### Research Questions

This study is sought to determine the AI level practices

of the school and school leaders and generally focused on the development of AI strategies that specifically answers the following questions:

1. What are the school leaders' AI practices that predict a high level of collaboration?
2. Is there a significant difference in the AI level of practices of the school leaders, particularly the school heads, grade leaders/key teachers, and SBM/SIP coordinators, in terms of the 4D Model of Appreciative Inquiry?
3. What AI strategies can help improve school leaders' collaboration?

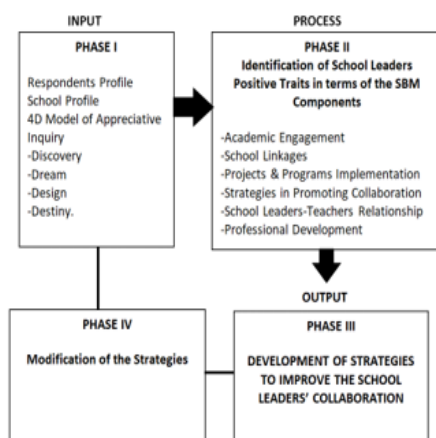
### Research Framework

This study employed the Input-Process-Output (IPO). The model was used as a guide in designing strategies to improve the AI level of the school leaders, The study was composed of four phases. Phase 1 was the input in which the 4-D Appreciative Inquiry model was explained, and the collaboration strategies were also discussed as they may help develop AI strategies. The second phase was identifying the schools' best practices and the AI level of the school leaders. The third phase was the respondents' answers used in developing positive strategies to improve the teachers' collaboration using the 4D Model of Appreciative Inquiry. The fourth phase was the modification of the strategies in which the interventions may be improved.

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**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

### Research Significance

This study was deemed beneficial to the educational system as it may help improve collaboration among teachers and school leaders. Moreover, it benefits the following:

### Theory

This study may give importance and validity to the effectiveness of Appreciative Inquiry. It may also contribute to improving the school leaders' collaboration that may result in positive improvement and development of school's best practices such as the dynamism of school academic engagement, expansion of school linkages, proper implementation of school's projects and programs, the collaborative strategies that fit the school's culture and environment, the positive relationship of teachers and administrators and the active professional development program of teachers.

### Practice

The study may help improve the school leaders' educational management skills in promoting change in their organizations. It may also help explore a positive approach in dealing with various problems encountered during the transition period of change. Moreover, the study would help increase camaraderie, mutual understanding, respect, and cordial, professional relationships with colleagues.

### Policy

School leaders may use this study to guide them in implementing the Appreciative Inquiry Approach in their schools. The outcome of this study may help them evaluate and assess the level of AI skills in their schools. It may offshoot from the formulated strategies in this study new guiding principles to be implemented in their schools. The study may be used for the reconstruction of policy-making with regards to the improvement of teachers' collaboration and SBM level.

### Social action

This study may serve as a reliable source of information

relevant to the use of the AI approach and promote collaboration in educational institutions. Moreover, this study may serve as a tool for setting the parameters on when, where, and how to start the process of change by identifying the AI level of the school and the people in the organization. The AI level of the school may be used to determine and set the parameters to what extent change can be made.

### Hypotheses

1. School leaders' SBM practices have no significant difference on the degree of AI levels in terms of discovery, dream, design, and destiny.

2. The school leaders' AI level practices have no significant relationship on the school's SBM level components for improving teachers' collaboration.

### Scope and Limitations

This study aimed to determine the AI level of the school and school leaders and their best practices to improve collaboration, as these are the two (2) bases for developing AI strategies. The study was limited only to evaluating the school leaders' AI level by using the school's six (6) SBM components practices that help improve teachers' collaboration. The study did not include the issues and concerns related to management and resources, leadership and governance, curriculum and learning, accountability, and continuous improvement. However, a portion of the four SBM principles related to collaboration was tackled as the six (6) SBM components are under its umbrella. The study's respondents were limited only to school leaders with administrative functions as school head, head teacher, grade leader/key teacher, SBM and SIP leaders, and coordinators from schools with SBM level 3 in the division level or Regional Qualifiers. The respondents were from the seven (7) divisions in Laguna, such as Calamba, Cabuyao, San Pablo City, San Pedro, Sta Rosa, Binan, and Laguna, composed of 157 school leaders.

### Definition of Terms

To facilitate better understanding of this study, the following terms were operationally defined.

### Appreciative Inquiry

It refers to the method used by the researchers in determining the AI level practices of the respondents. Catherine Moore (2021) defined AI as a collaborative strength-based approach to changing organizations and other human systems.

### Collaboration

It refers to the ability of learning leaders to participate and get involved in various school activities freely. Moreover, it is a strategy to improve the SBM rating of the school by using the 4D Model of Appreciative Inquiry.

### 4D-Model of Appreciative Inquiry

It refers to the four (4) stages of Appreciative Inquiry



formulated by David Cooperrider, such as discovery, dream, design, and destiny. These four stages were used to distinguish and categorize the various strategies to be used to improve the learning leaders' collegiality.

### Determination

It refers to the preliminary process of appreciative inquiry created by the researcher, and it is considered the first stage before conducting the 4D model.

### School-Based Management (SBM)

It refers to the institutionalized program of DepEd for all public elementary and secondary education. This program gives the school the authority to plan and create relevant programs that can help improve the four principles of SBM such as leadership and governance, curriculum and learning, accountability and continuous improvement and management and resources.

### School Head

It refers to the principal and or head teacher as a school leader whose administrative functions is to facilitate, initiate, intervene and evaluate programs and projects and to function as the final decision maker.

### SBM Level

It refers to the accredited level score/rating given or rated by the SBM district and the Philippine Accreditation System for Basic Education (PASBE) accreditors.

### SBM Regional Qualifier

It refers to the school that receives SBM endorsement for SBM regional qualification validation for level 3.

### School Leaders

Refer to the school heads and teachers with administrative functions such as the principal, head teachers, grade leaders, key teachers, SBM coordinators, and SIP coordinators.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

School leaders have different ideas and perspectives when managing and implementing organizational change. The diversity of the academic leaders' ideas and their various expertise may be used and put together to form innovative solutions through collaboration. Ribeiro (2020) defined collaboration as working together and solving problems that lead to more innovation, efficient processes, increased success, and improved communication.

The researchers believed that the only way to implement change successfully is through collaboration which is a way to leverage the educational system in the country. The Department of Education (DepEd) is now supporting decentralizing the decision-making authority from the central office to DepEd's schools through the School-Based Management (SBM) program. To address and support the Republic Act 9155, commonly known as the "Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001," DepEd adopted School-Based Management,

which sets the framework and the general direction of educational policies and standards (Cutillon, 2021). One of the current and widely popular approaches of the 21st century, which may be used to improve collaboration, is Appreciative Inquiry (AI). It is an organizational approach that can be used as a new method for educational change. It is strength-based learning, change, planning, and implementation approach. It engages stakeholders in the process of acknowledging individual and collective strengths, designing goals, creating innovative approaches, and planning organizations to maximize potential (Buchanan, 2014; Riopel, 2019).

Cooperrider introduced the 4D Appreciative Inquiry Model, which includes discovery, dream, design, and destiny; however, in 1990, Ronald Fry agreed to add Define as the first phase of Appreciative Inquiry (Banton, 2022).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) can be used in quantitative research. The majority of the study related to AI usually uses qualitative analysis. However, according to Cockell & McArthur-Blair (2020), AI is not only confined to research that requires stories to be written but there are cases where it requires statistical data. In the study of Galindo (2020), the author used quantitative analysis on the positive effects of Appreciative Inquiry on the instructional innovation of the English Language to EFL students. Galindo used the AI process to explore the positive effect of EFL students.

Tangidy and Sowiyah's (2020) study supported that competent school heads in managing school programs shared decision-making with teachers and other stakeholders. Based on their study on principals' collaborative leadership, they found out that the role of leadership in schools influences the success of the collaborative process.

Gardner & Matviak (2020) expounded that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration highlighted its importance and effectiveness. People in the organization are open to working and planning together to overcome complex problems. Based on the study of Gardner & Matviak, the top 10% of the most highly collaborative workers helped grow their business during the crisis and continued the upward trajectory. The second group declined slightly during the crisis. Their revenues recovered after a year, and the third group with very poor collaboration still has not recovered from the time of crisis.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

The study used a quantitative, evaluative, and descriptive design to determine the AI practices of the school leaders and to describe how the practices were manifested in the SBM program at the school. The study determined the school leaders' AI best practices in the school's discovery, dream, design, and destiny in their SBM program. All the determinant variables were used to formulate a positive approach to improve the teachers' collaboration.

### Research Locale

The study's respondents were the school leaders composed of the school heads/head teachers, grade leaders/key teachers, and the SBM/SIP coordinators from seven (7) divisions in Laguna areas such as Cabuyao, Calamba, San Pedro, Sta Rosa, Binan, San Pablo, and the Division of Laguna. The selected schools were based on the SBM regional qualifiers as validated by their division as SBM level three (3) or advanced. The participating schools were selected based on their divisions' high performances and best practices. The school's collaboration practices were used as bases for creating positive strategies.

### Population And Sampling Design

This study employed the researcher-made survey questionnaire to the schools with SBM level three from the seven (7) divisions in the Laguna area. The study was conducted composed of 157 school leaders from the 27 schools that participated in the study for the SY 2022-2023. The data collected were used as bases for the development of the AI strategies.

### Research Instruments

The validated researcher-made questionnaire was administered to collect data and determine the AI level

practices of the school and school leaders.

The four (4) point Likert Scale was used in the study to eliminate the "neutral possibility," which forced the respondents to answer accurately. The instrument was composed of the respondents' demographic profile, school profile; the open-ended questions that helped determine the pulse of the respondents, the school's Appreciative Inquiry practices, the learning leader's Appreciative Inquiry and collaboration practices, and the School's SBM components practices. The questionnaires were administered to school leaders, particularly, the principal, head teacher, key teacher/grade leader, SBM/SIP leaders, and coordinator whose school is a regional qualifier or division level 3.

### Data Gathering Procedure

This study evaluated the school and the school leaders' AI practices. The best practices were used in developing AI strategies to improve the teachers' collaboration and participation in school projects and programs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the collected data presented in figures and tables and the Proposed 5D Stages and the AI Strategies.

**Table 1:** Collaborative strategies

Strategy	Characteristics/Activities	Di	Dr	De	Des
1. Leading	Be a responsible leader Share responsibility through the division of labor Assign focal person Form small group Conduct the formulation of committee	/	/	/	/
2. Planning:					
a. Goal Plan	Form small group discussions Conduct group interaction/discussion Provide framework and guidelines Conduct regular meetings	/			
b. Input Plan	Execute project awareness activity Conduct regular meetings	/	/		
c. Process Plan	Work as a team Conduct regular meetings			/	
d. Outcome Plan	Perform proper and well-organized documentations Conduct regular meetings				/
e. Sustainable Plan	Set the time frame and targets Keep and track records Monitor and evaluate school's projects and programs Conduct benchmarking Strengthen the four Pillars of SBM				/
3. Communication	Encourage and maintain open communication Participate in the Inter school collaboration	/	/	/	/
4. Relationship	Build trust Exhibit good rapport	/	/	/	/
5. Motivation	Giving Intrinsic and Extrinsic Appreciations to Stakeholders (Parents, Teachers, Students and people involved in the projects and programs)	/			/

Legend: Dis- Discovery, Dr-Dream, De-Design, Des-Destiny, /- present

Based on the open-ended questions asked by the researchers, collaborative strategies were formulated. The activities included in table 1 were taken from the respondents' responses, which were coded based on themes such as leading, planning, communication, relationship, and motivation. It was also shown from the table that the school leaders practiced the strategies

listed in terms of discovery, dream, design, and destiny. In this study, leading is very important in all the stages of Appreciative Inquiry. Tangidy & Sowiyah (2020) strengthened the idea of the leadership role in the success of collaborative processes. Leaders should know how to spot potential leaders that can be tapped as focal persons in every group or team created

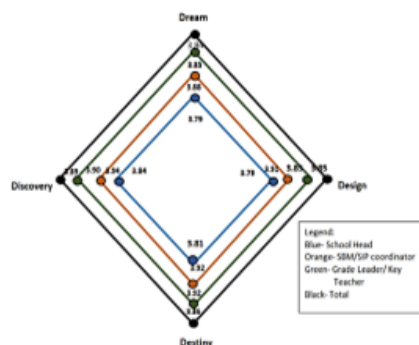


Figure 2a. School Leaders' AI Practices

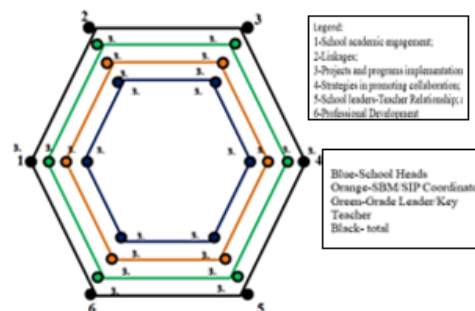


Figure 2b. SBM components practices

Figure 2. Web graph of the school leaders' level of appreciative inquiry and the SBM components practices

The web graph presented in fig. 2a showed the school leaders' level of Appreciative Inquiry practices of the respondents based on their answers to the open-ended question. It was affirmed that the SBM/SIP coordinators had a higher collaborative performance than the other school leaders. On the other hand, school heads had the lowest collaborative performance among the school leaders. Ironically, school heads should have higher collaborative performance than the other school leaders,

for they were the highest leaders in the school. The graph presented in fig. 2b revealed that the school heads had higher perceptions of the importance of the six (6) SBM components than the SBM coordinators and grade leaders. As shown in figure 2, SBM coordinators had higher AI levels than the school heads. Although the school leaders perceived that the SBM components were very important, some SBM coordinators perceived that some variables were not fully practiced.

Table 2: Test of difference (ANOVA) in the school leaders perceptions on SBM components practices

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Discovery	Between Groups	0.145	2	0.073	2.018	0.136
	Within Groups	5.534	154	0.036		
	Total	5.679	156			
Dream	Between Groups	0.144	2	0.072	0.997	0.372
	Within Groups	11.128	154	0.072		
	Total	11.272	156			
Design	Between Groups	0.242	2	0.121	1.931	0.149
	Within Groups	9.659	154	0.063		
	Total	9.901	156			
Destiny	Between Groups	0.222	2	0.111	1.655	0.194
	Within Groups	10.319	154	0.067		
	Total	10.541	156			

The table showed no significant difference in the level of the school leaders' individual practices of AI in terms of discovery, dream, design, and destiny. The findings revealed that the school leaders' responses

had no significant difference because they have been given opportunities to lead, and their level of practice is probably the same per school as they work collaboratively and function as one school.

Table 3: Correlation between the school and school leaders AI level and the SBM level components

School Academic Engagement			Linkages		Projects And Programs Implementation		Strategies In Promoting Collaboration		School Leaders-Teacher Relationship		Professional Development	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Discovery	.267**	.431**	.431**	.438**	.318**	.432**	.353**	.424**	.367**	.561**	.467**	.544**
Dream	.380**	.476**	.414**	.597**	.473**	.463**	.461**	.401**	.545**	.467**	.406**	.452**

Design	.418**	.551**	.530**	.580**	.524**	.492**	.420**	.580**	.443**	.617**	.472**	.570**
Destiny	.444**	.582**	.542**	.585**	.515**	.492**	.437**	.477**	.437**	.575**	.458**	.528**

Legend: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). A-School AI Level Practices, B-School Leaders AI Level Practices

The findings showed that there was a low ( $r=.267$ ) to moderate ( $r=.617$ ) positive correlation among the variables, which means that the teachers from schools with higher levels of AI practices tend to perform better in the SBM in terms of the components of teachers' collaboration. Similarly, the teachers whose perceived levels of AI practices were also the same ones with higher levels of collaboration as a measure of their SBM performance. Furthermore, all these correlations were statistically significant. The result may suggest that

the attainment of better performance in the schools in SBM is significantly associated with their higher level of practice of AI. Garner & Matviak (2020) affirmed that collaboration significantly affects the company's performance. The employees with highly collaborative attitudes helped grow the business and recovered their revenues after a year of pandemic. However, the group with very low collaboration still has not recovered from the time of crisis.

The finding showed that the school leaders' individual AI

**Table 4:** Regression analysis on AI practices of schools and school leaders as predictors on the improvement of collaboration

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.004	0.205		4.898	0.000
Individual School Leaders practices in terms of Design	0.275	0.074	0.321	3.722	0.000
School AI Practices in terms of Design	0.233	0.050	0.286	4.647	0.000
Individual School Leaders practices in terms of Destiny	0.235	0.069	0.284	3.414	0.001

Legend:  $R = .752$ ,  $R\text{-squared} = .565$ ,  $Adj. R\text{-squared} = .557$ ;  $F(3,153) = 66.333$ ,  $p < .001$

practices in terms of design ( $B=.275$ ,  $t=3.722$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and destiny ( $B=.235$ ,  $t =3.414$ ,  $p<.005$ ) significantly predict the school leader's collaboration, which means that for every 1 unit increase in individual practices as to design and destiny, there are .275 and .235 increases in the performance of SBM in terms of school leader's collaboration, respectively. Moreover, the perceived level of school AI practice in terms of design ( $B=.233$ ,  $t=4.647$ ,  $p<.001$ ) significantly predicts school leaders' collaboration. That is, for every 1-unit increase in school AI practice in terms of design, there is a corresponding increase of .233 in the SBM performance in terms of school leaders' collaboration. As gleaned from Table 4, it was found that among the two variables of AI, only design and destiny had significant relationships with the school leaders' AI level and the SBM components. The findings indicate that collaboration with the internal and external stakeholders is more needed and important in the two phases of Appreciative Inquiry. In the design phase, more people need to collaborate as the design phase needs to answer: Who are the people involved? What are the deliverables? How do the projects positively impact the organization? On the other hand, Destiny also needs more collaboration with the stakeholders to sustain the projects (Banton, 2022).

Several studies about Appreciative Inquiry were anchored on qualitative research; however, Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2020) explained that quantitative research is used as a process with regard to discovery and design. However, based on the study's findings, it was revealed that destiny could also be measured and quantified aside from the design.

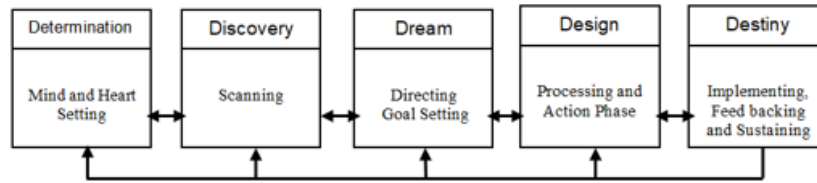
The result showed that there was a significant relationship between the school leaders' AI level of practice and the SBM components in terms of design and destiny. In the study of Galindo (2020), quantitative analysis was used on the positive effect of AI on the instructional innovation of the English language to EFL students and found that there was a significant relationship.

### The Realization Of The Study

The suggested collaborative strategies using the enhanced stages of Appreciative Inquiry were formulated to address and improve teachers' collaboration. Based on the result of the descriptive analysis using the statistical tools of frequency, standard deviation, one-way analysis of variance, Pearson product-moment correlation, and regression analysis, the researchers have formed an approach that would suffice the strategies and best practices of the school with SBM level 3. The innovation will help schools improve their SBM practices and Teachers' collaboration.

The study found that all correlations were statistically significant, such as the school leaders' AI levels and the six (6) SBM component practices. The result concluded that the higher the level of AI practices, the better schools' performance in their SBM. It was also found that only design and destiny had higher predictors of collaboration. The result led the researcher to formulate strategies using the 4-D stages, with an additional preliminary stage used as collaborative strategies to improve the school's SBM level, as shown in Figure 3.

Acceptance for change results from preparations



**Figure 3:** The proposed 5-D stages of appreciative inquiry collaboration

before, during, and after the change is introduced to the organization. Employees who are adaptive to change are those who have high AI skills that can easily adjust to change positively. One main factor why change is more likely to become successful is because of the adaptable people in the organization. School Leaders should have the will to prepare the team for the change. Although the stakeholders should initiate change as it is one of the determinants for high SBM levels among public schools in the Philippines, it is still the responsibility of the school leaders to shape change.

Once the people in the organization are already ‘adaptable,’ then the 4D model of Appreciative Inquiry may be used. The school leaders seeking to shape the school culture should have a firm grasp of the school’s current situation. Environmental Scanning, understanding, and analyzing the current school’s situation are necessary to determine the type and the extent of the change to be implemented. Change is needed and should fit the school culture and environment, whether a change is transformational or evolutionary.

It was suggested, however, that before using the 4D

model of appreciative inquiry, it is necessary to process the personality of the people in the organization. This stage is called determination, which refers to the idea of determining the pulse, heart, and voice of the people in the organization. The researchers suggested that to begin the process of change, it needs everyone’s heart to be in it, and this can only be done through the “determination process.” Based on the result of the study, it found out that discovery and design have lower collaboration; for this reason, it is important that all members of the team must have attuned and prepared their hearts to change. Environmental Scanning is necessary to test whether the change may be accepted or not. Once it is found out that the majority of the members in the organization are ready for change, then it is time to do the first stage of appreciative inquiry, which is discovery, followed by a dream, then design, and the last phase is destiny. The arrows, on the other hand, represent the team’s decision as to whether there is a need to go back to the previous phase if necessary or continue to the next phase as feed backing and evaluation of the strategies used in all collaboration strategies under the AI Approach.

**Table 5:** The proposed 5-d stages of appreciative inquiry strategies

Strategy	Characteristics/Activities	Determination	Discovery	Dream	Design	Destiny
1. Strategic Determinants a.Observing b.Interviewing c.Identifying d.Determining	Conduct environmental Scanning Prepare people for the change	/	/			
2. Channelling and Communicating	Encourage and maintain open communication	/	/	/	/	/
3. Building Relationship	Build trust Exhibit good rapport with the internal and external stakeholders	/	/	/	/	/
4. Leading	Have a sense of responsibility Delegate and share responsibility Assign focal person Form Small Group Conduct the formulation of committee	/	/	/	/	/
5. Planning: a. Goal Plan	Form small group discussions Conduct group interaction/discussion Provide framework and guidelines Conduct regular meetings	/	/			



b. Input Plan	Execute project awareness activity Conduct regular meetings Provide feedback		/	/		
c. Process Plan	Work as a team Conduct regular meetings Provide feedback				/	/
d. Outcome Plan	Perform proper and well-organized documentations Conduct regular meetings Provide feedback		/	/	/	/
e. Sustainable Plan	Conduct Sustainable Solutions through: -setting the time frame -keeping track records -Monitoring/Evaluation and Bench Marking -Strengthening the four pillars of SBM	/	/	/	/	/
6. Managing Resources	Create and establish a well-planned and sustainable Projects and Programs	/	/	/	/	/

Table 5 shows the strategies of the proposed 5D Stages of Appreciative Inquiry.

As can be gleaned from the table, in every AI phase, there are corresponding strategies that may be used by the schools, from the planning down to the implementation and sustainability of the project. All strategies require determination for checks and balances. It is also a way of telling the team that the school is concerned about their personal and professional well-being; it is a strategy to monitor whether the project or change is effective. The four senses of determination are the necessary tools to determine the feelings, emotions, reactions, and perceptions of the affected people for the change or projects to be implemented. It also helps shape the discovery and dream phases of the change. The senses of determination are: observing, interviewing, identifying, and determining. Observation is the very first step when doing environmental scanning. School leaders must have good eyesight and hearings to determine and identify the needs and strengths of the team. The second sense is interviewing. The school leaders must have a sense of urgency when follow-up is necessary.

The follow-up on the observed need and strengths can be done by asking questions. One of the good points of AI leaders is the ability to ask questions. The third sense is identifying. Once the observation and Interviews are done, school leaders should identify the team's strengths. Then the last sense is determining, which is very crucial since it is now the stage where all the strengths are weighted based on the urgency of the projects or change to be made.

All the phases of Appreciative Inquiry need channeling and communication. Open communication is one of the prime movers of positive change, with trust, respect, and understanding as the fruits of having communication open to all. Doyle (2020) agrees that keeping communication open can increase collaboration.

Building a good relationship takes time. As one of the AI strategies, it is considered the heart of all phases. All the phases of AI require good rapport with other stakeholders to realize the change.

Leading is a strategy to measure the school leaders' ability

in decision-making, accountability, and responsibility. Based on the result of the study, school leaders should share responsibility by assigning a focal person/form committee and creating a small group to grasp and monitor progress quickly.

The next strategy is planning. Planning is divided into four stages: goal plan, input plan, process plan, and outcome plan. The strategy helps create a strategic plan for every phase of the project. A goal plan refers to the setting of objectives for the project. The vision and mission of the school must be incorporated into the school's projects and programs to be implemented. Input plan, on the other hand, refers to the people, resources needed, and tools used to carry out the project. The process plan refers to activities and strategies for how the projects are done and accomplished. The last plan process is the outcome plan. Leaders should know and learn how to foresee the project's outcome ahead to prevent or minimize issues and concerns that come along. A project without a sustainable plan is exposed to peril. One of the problems that the school leaders experience from past school projects is sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary to have a sustainable plan to make the project or the change last. Good planning of the resources has to be addressed to sustain the project.

### Research Implications

This study determined the significant relationship between the School Leaders AI practices and the school SBM Components' level of practice and which among the school and school leaders' best practices predict improvements in the school leaders' collaboration. Based on the results of the statistical data that were analyzed and interpreted, the researcher formulated the following findings based on the research questions and the statement of the problem presented in chapter one. The following were the salient findings of the study:

1. Based on the gathered data and analysis of the open-ended questions answered by the respondents, it was found out that the collaborative strategies and SBM practices of the schools with high SBM ratings were helpful for the formulation of the proposed collaborative AI Strategies.

2. The majority of the respondents perceived the school's level of Appreciative Inquiry practices as "very high" in terms of the four stages of AI as Discovery, Dream, Design, And Destiny. The findings showed that the school leaders had a higher AI level in Design and Destiny which also proved that school leaders had high AI collaboration in projects and programs implemented. However, based on the self-assessment results, it was found that a margin of 0.06% of the school leaders believed that their level of collaboration was below average, and 2.50% of the respondents perceived their level of collaboration as very low. This affirmed that some school leaders perceived the SBM program as a burden and considered it an additional workload regarding the preparations of artifacts and the mode of verification documents. Moreover, some school leaders were unaware of the school's best practices which only strengthened the school leaders' recommendation to support the faculty by providing training and seminars related to school-based management.

3. The majority of the school leaders perceived that the school AI degree level of practice when it comes to Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny was very high. The result shows that school leaders with high AI levels are most likely to have high SBM ratings, and this can prove that AI as an approach to increase collaboration is significantly correlated to a high SBM level.

4. The study found that the six (6) SBM components were all predictors of SBM practices and found them as factors contributing to the SBM level.

5. Based on the calculated one-way analysis of variance, the result showed that there was no significant difference in the degree of AI level practices of the three (3) school leaders in terms of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. The result proved that the school leaders were working collaboratively on the same goals and directions.

6. The correlation result using the Pearson product-moment correlation as the statistical tool found low to moderate positive correlations among the variables related to SBM components and the school and school leaders' AI level practices. The findings revealed that the teachers with high AI levels tended to perform better in the SBM. Moreover, the school leaders with higher AI level practices were also the same school leaders that had higher levels of collaboration.

7. Using the Multiple linear Regressions, it was found out that the schools' and school leaders' AI practices in terms of Design and Destiny significantly predicted high collaboration. The result reveals that for every one (1) unit increase in the school or school leader's AI level, there is a corresponding increase in the SBM performance.

8. The result that only Design and Destiny had high collaboration led the researchers to develop a new stage and formulate strategies anchored on the best practices of schools with high SBM levels to improve the teachers' collaboration under discovery and dream. In contrast, the design and destiny phase of Appreciative Inquiry will be enhanced.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based from the findings of the study, the conclusions were drawn: The finding that there was a significant relationship between the school leaders' AI level practices and the school SBM level components on the improvement of teachers' collaboration attested that the hypothesis should be rejected. It was then concluded that all the variables used under the six (6) SBM components may be used to measure the AI and the best practices of the school as an assessment/evaluation in giving positive feedback on the school's programs and projects before, during, and after the implementation. It was also concluded that the proposed 5-D Stages of AI and the strategies suggested in this study may be used and adopted by the schools with low SBM levels as they were all tested and proven to be effective based on the best practices of the schools with high SBM levels. Moreover, the participating schools in this study may revisit their strategies, and collaborative practices under discovery and dreams as the result of the study showed that only design and destiny had high collaboration. Furthermore, the school heads, on the other hand, may set good examples for being AI practitioners as the approach is affirmed to be effective in improving teachers' collaboration and helps improve the School-Based Management rating. Moreover, the SBM leaders and coordinators may continue the best practices of the school and find ways to sustain the projects and programs implemented.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were formulated:

1. The result of this study may serve as a guide and a reliable source of information relevant to the use of the Appreciative Inquiry to promote collaboration in educational institutions in such a way that (a.) the validated instrument in this study may be used as an assessment tool to evaluate the AI practices of the school and to determine the extent of change be made and (b.) the proposed AI collaborative strategies using the enhanced stages of appreciative inquiry may be used as they were formulated based on the best practices of the schools with high SBM levels.

2. The study conducted only highlighted the best practices and the AI level of school leaders with high SBM ratings; qualitative research may be made to compare the schools with poor SBM levels and schools with high SBM levels in order to determine the effectiveness and significant difference of the AI levels of teachers.

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