

Reimagining the future of a business education program using appreciative inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Rethinking the future of education has fueled momentum for large-scale change after the significant effects of the global pandemic. This momentum for change may require large amounts of positive affect by affirming and appreciating what works well during difficult times rather than identifying and understanding problematic areas. This study made use of appreciative inquiry in reimagining the future of a Business Education program in a private tertiary institution in the Philippines. Using naturalistic approach, 35 business education students and three teachers were interviewed using positive questions that amplify the positive core of the college. The participants unleashed the strengths of the college such as the implemented flexible modular setup, availability of the repository of educational resources, efficient communication during online learning, empowered student council, and group collaborations. Through inquiry and dialogue, participants co-created the reimagined future of the College of Business Administration which is a more flexible and inclusive means of delivering the Business Education Curriculum and upgraded and holistic learning experiences for the learners. Through the use of appreciative inquiry, the participants collectively leveraged the best practices of the college and their envisioned future to design high-impact strategies that can move the college decisively to its reimagined future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The influx of unexpected circumstances, such as the global pandemic, has confronted school stakeholders with numerous challenges and opportunities in the field of education. The physical closure of schools worldwide might have made the young and more socially disadvantaged learners more deprived of learning, but the shift has proven that homes can be viable learning spaces for children [1]. Teachers grappled in implementing school curricula not specifically designed for online learners, but schools thrived for quick adoption of new technologies, curricula, and pedagogies. Schools have been responsive, proactive, and resilient to undertake a critical assessment of current policies and procedures to anticipate changes in the future [2].

Teaching and learning environments have changed on a dramatic scale for all school stakeholders due to the restriction and guidelines imposed by the national government. As an effect, countries have augmented the importance of the use of information technology in education to ensure learning continuity. The Philippines, a developing country, took rapid steps toward digital transformation in education and started

implementing the application of distance learning, teaching, and assessment approaches in the mainstream, far more than what we had ever seen prior to the pandemic [3].

In the Philippines, some educational institutions may already have strong online systems. Other smaller universities struggle under the weight of the demand since online and technical support, aside from academics, should also be in place. The circumstances, including the pandemic, have coerced the implementation of massive educational reform. Universities were also compelled to undergo significant changes and developed their management and working mechanisms in order to satisfy the evolving teaching-learning needs of academicians, students, and parents.

This pandemic period has had a huge effect on the whole of educational society in general [4]. The onset of the global pandemic requires schools to implement online emergency remote teaching abruptly. Online learning, which was considered an alternative delivery of education has been placed in the mainstream. With the Philippines recovering from the ravage of the pandemic, schools have been rethinking the present and future of education. From this point of view, the educational systems may become more prepared and resilient against possible future circumstances by employing more innovative, interactive, and inclusive online learning strategies [5], [6]. The future of education will definitely encapsulate the plethora of educational modalities and strategies, emphasis has shifted from the conventional to the contemporary.

Higher education institutions offering Business Education Programs are among those significantly affected by the changes given that these programs prepare business education for the real corporate world. In a certain survey involving 90 business school leaders in the United States, 83% of respondents said the pandemic would have a lasting impact on their program [7]. In India, the pandemic posed serious threats to the smooth functioning of finance education in their business schools. This involves general and specific pedagogical issues related to finance education where some innovations at the institute and individual instructor levels were incorporated to maintain the desired learning outcomes among students [8]. In the Philippines, higher education institutions formed their respective Education Continuity Plan that explains the processes and policies that should be enforced in times of health crisis [9].

The present study explored the perceptions and experiences of students and teachers towards the delivery of business curricula in the College of Business Administration (CBA) in a private higher education institution in the Philippines. The CBA implemented a fully online learning approach over the past two years and divided the course offerings into a modular setup. This study made use of the appreciative inquiry (AI) approach in exploring the best practices of the college, using these to reimagine their aspirations for the future of the college, and design specific courses of action to make their aspirations a reality. The findings of this study do not only benefit the business education stakeholders who are interested to know the best practices of a college providing online education in times of pandemic but the study has a methodological contribution- the use of appreciative inquiry in promoting positive change by appreciating the strengths of the organization and encouraging collective efforts to dream of a better future.

This study aims to explore the use of a positive organizational lens in improving the business education program of a private tertiary institution after being affected by the global pandemic using the appreciative inquiry approach. Specifically, it sought answers to the following research questions: i) What are the best practices and exemplary actions implemented by the College of Business Administration in delivering online business education during the pandemic period? (discovery); ii) How do the stakeholders envision the future of the business education program during the post-pandemic period? (dream); iii) How can the stakeholders actualize the re-imagined business education program from where they are now? (design); iv) How should the college support and sustain success in the re-imagined business education program in the future? (destiny).

Appreciative inquiry is an approach to personal and organizational changes that uncovers what fuels human systems to function at their best. It is based on the assumption that the program's strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are transformational in nature [10]. It does not advocate the what-is-not-working and "root cause" mindset but promotes a positive organizational approach [11] with the assumption that there is something that will always work in every human system, thus considered a positive, strength-based change approach [12].

Some authors argue that AI is akin to action research because both can contribute to real change and can help understand relevant issues in new ways and to challenge the status quo [13]. In this way, AI designs inquiries to address and solve problems and promote transformational change. With the abrupt and unprecedented changes such as the COVID-19 global pandemic that shifted the practices and priorities of different organizations, AI can be a useful strengthening systems approach that can understand better their positive potentials that can be used in the future instead of digging into the deficits [14]. Furthermore, the framework that uses positive questioning to engage individuals in enhancing their environment is what makes AI distinctive compared to other organizational inquiries and approaches [15].

A number of empirical researches in the past made use of appreciative inquiry. AI was employed in a research university to explore which teaching practices positively influence student well-being [16]. AI was also used in accreditation and measuring institutional activities in higher education [17]. It was also used in a case study in understanding how administrators of Alabama schools develop contextual best practices for strategic planning and implementation to support students [18]. Furthermore, AI was implemented to facilitate students' voice in their research class where they participated in the process of defining research topics, and in using different methods to explore their school experience [19].

There were several stages of appreciative inquiry, namely discovery, dream, design, and destiny. The first stage of AI involves the process of uncovering the positive and prideful experiences of the participants with respect to the central phenomenon being studied [20]. The strengths, best practices, and sources of positive experiences and success are identified in this stage. This answers the question, "What gives life?". After identifying the positive stories, the participants are encouraged to identify their dreams, wishes, hopes, and aspirations for the department. It is the stage where the best practices and positive experiences discovered in the previous stage are used to envision what the future might become [21]. This answers the question, "What could be?"

The stories in the discovery stage and the imagination from the dream stage are combined and used to create the plan and structure to move forward [22]. In this stage, the participants together with the researchers gather to identify the steps to consider in reaching the vision. Concrete actions and priorities are needed to achieve the dream. This answers the question, "What should be?". This is the last stage of AI where those who are involved build on the previous stories, vision, and action plan in the earlier stages to create arrangements that will maintain the momentum for those involved [22]. The destiny phase articulates positive transformation among participants who are empowered, connected, and cooperative which will help the department to continue to improve and innovate in bold ways. It answers the question "How to sustain?".

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This naturalistic inquiry made use of a case study research design. Case study research explores a particular phenomenon or issue within a bounded system, using various methodologies [23]. The sudden shift to online learning due to the health crisis and how the business education program withstands all the challenges to thrive is the phenomenon explored within a bounded system, in this case, a private tertiary institution. In this study, students and teachers' perceptions, opinions, and experiences were the main sources of data.

The researchers involved 35 students and four teachers as participants in the study. There are 16 Marketing Management students, 12 Financial Management students, and 7 Human Resource Management students who were interviewed. Interview and observation were the main data-gathering tools and the following questions based on the different stages of appreciative inquiry were drafted and validated by external evaluators before the actual data-gathering procedure as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview question

Stage	Question
Discovery	What are your positive experiences in the business program when the college suddenly shift to online learning because of the pandemic? What are the unique attributes and practices of your college during online classes? What practices of the college work best for you when everything shifts to online? What do you appreciate the most while taking business courses online?
Dream	Based on your identified positive experiences in studying your courses online, how do you want things to be for the College of Business Administration in the future? With your positive experiences in the online business education program, what further opportunities can you think of for its future?
Design	What should be done to make your dreams for the College of Business Administration a reality? What changes need to be considered to design the future you have imagined for the college? What practical elements need to be in place to make the business program more ideal and responsive to its stakeholders?
Destiny	What should the college do to ensure the success of the re-imagined business education in the program? How should the college empower the stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and school administrators) to keep them involved and contributory in order to sustain the success of the re-imagined future of business education?

After permission to conduct was granted by the Institutional Research Office of the College, online interviews were conducted via Zoom. Google Forms were also administered to supplement the live online interviews. The gathering procedure was implemented from January to April 2022. Informed consent and ethical considerations were sought to protect the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the gathered data.

The researchers employed thematic analysis in processing the data. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set [24]. This approach provided the researchers with a flexible approach to determine the rich, detailed, and complex patterns of data. Also, triangulation across respondents and member-checking were incorporated to establish the validity of qualitative findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Stories of best practices and positive experiences during online class: Discovering what gives life to College of Business Administration during the pandemic

The participants identified the strengths, best practices, and sources of the vitality of the College during the online setup. This is the discovery stage following the appreciative inquiry framework. The weaved stories of the participants revealed five themes, namely i) Flexible Modular Learning Setup; ii) Availability of Repository of Educational Resources; iii) Efficient Communication; iv) Empowered Student Council; v) Group Collaboration.

3.1.1. Flexible modular setup

The implemented modular setup was perceived to be effective in responding to the needs of the homeschooled business students which gave them flexible time frames [5], a manageable amount of academic requirements, and a better work-life balance. The change in learning structure where students used to take all their enrolled courses in a semester simultaneously provided the students more time to study and made them more focused to learn course contents [25] since topics are presented to them in manageable chunks. This is even more favorable to some business students who are working part-time while studying online.

“One of the positive things I’ve experienced in the implemented modular system during our 2nd year is the fact that it gave us more time to focus more on our subjects. We took the courses divided into manageable modules which make learning simplified. We were able to accomplish all course requirements because of the implemented flexibility by our teachers and the modular system increased our focus, engagement, and productivity.” (Financial Management Student 6)

“I am working while I am studying online. I appreciate how the lessons are given in a modular setup because we can flexibly revisit our lessons in case we will miss any of the synchronous discussions because of our work. The modular approach helps us to balance our study, work, and life as a whole.” (Marketing Management Student 2)

With the students’ reporting how academic workloads have been accumulating and becoming their backlogs, the participants shared that their academic productivity and achievement have improved significantly because they felt less stress in accomplishing overwhelming activities. Also, their teachers extended their considerations in designing flexible time frames for students to accomplish their tasks without sacrificing the standards and quality of learning. The College of Business Administration has been sensitive to the situation of their students, more particularly those who need to work part-time to finance their own education.

3.1.2. Availability of the repository of educational resources

The sudden shift to online learning tendered significant hurdles among course instructors to modify their curricula and prepare materials that will aid online learners [7]. Remarkably, one of the best practices of CBA that is vital to the success of its program is the availability and full access to educational resources relevant to its courses. The participants commended the college for efficiently providing the materials that are of great help to students to learn their lessons anywhere, anytime. Course instructors provide the CBA learners with a compendium, which serves as a comprehensive learning tool kit for the students in a modular format. Aside from this, instructors prepared advanced video lectures that can be watched by students online and offline. Along with the compendium, video lectures, presentation slides, and supplemental activities are provided to students to reinforce their learning.

“Upon enrollment, the College provided us with a flash drive in which all the materials that we will be needing in our courses are stored. We can always refer to these materials and resources every time we miss our synchronous classes or when we have online examinations. The uploaded video presentations and other meaningful materials are also provided to us.” (Human Resource Management Student 1)

“I appreciate how organized the College is in terms of reinforcing the faculty in providing students important learning materials. Knowing that we have access to different materials can make us feel confident that we can learn even without the presence of our teachers.” (Marketing Management Student 4)

The participants substantiated how access and availability of learning materials and resources are vital in ensuring positive experiences among learners. With the students being expected to be responsible for their own learning, they should be given a sense of structure in the online classroom, particularly the kind of materials that can enrich their learning experiences. Through this AI process, students were able to discover what worked well for them in this online learning modality.

3.1.3. Efficient communication

With the students and teachers working in a learning environment with no physical proximity, efficient communication is vital to the teaching-learning process. In the discovery phase, students and teachers are delighted to share that they experience timely, convenient, and meaningful communication. Social media has been a driving force of efficient communication, making all announcements, memoranda, feedback, and monitoring possible. Remarkably, students appreciate their teachers who have been very responsive and accommodating to their queries and concerns in online learning [26]. They also shared that aside from the very welcoming nature of their course instructors, they felt the genuine concern and affection of their teachers which gave them assurance in this challenging period of online learning.

“We are regularly informed about important updates in our courses. I never lost track of what to do and what to submit because social media is very efficient as a communication platform.” (Human Resource Management Student 5)

“Our professors are very accommodating about our needs and concerns. They make sure that they respond to us promptly. I can feel that they truly care for our welfare and because of this, we are comfortable in sending them personal messages when we have concerns and this increased our motivation and engagement.” (Financial Management Student 8)

In general, the online learning experiences of the business students are inclusive, motivating, and almost authentic. This is because of the efficient communication and supportive online learning environment fostered by the course instructors and the College as a whole. Having faculty members who regularly stay online to accommodate students is indeed an exemplary practice of the college since poor faculty response has been one of the most common complaints among online students in the past.

3.1.4. Empowered student council

One of the themes that transpired in the discovery stage of AI is how the students appreciate the role of the student council in helping the department realize its goals and implement its departmental activities. In the case of the CBA, student council officers were perceived to provide inspiring leadership and assistance to their peers. The council that serves as the voice for the entire student body and wholeheartedly works with teachers and administrators helps in the success of the REIMAGINED learning program. Young Managers Professionals Alliance for Corporate Triumph (YMPACT) was empowered to make the learning environment in the CBA more organized, more efficient, and more bolstering in terms of the total learning experiences of the students. YMPACT is dedicated to serving as a medium of expression of ideas and aspirations, promoting and protecting the welfare and interests of Business Administration students, asserting a dynamic, responsible student leadership, achieving a high level of moral, social, and intellectual growth, and strengthening the common ties that bind the administration.

“We appreciate what our college is doing for us during the pandemic period more especially when we heard it from our peers and friends. Our student leaders served as effective middlemen between the college and the students. This helps us appreciate what the college is doing for us.” (Marketing Management Student 1)

YMPACT stands as the leaders and icons of the institution towards inspiration and citizenship. It helps the students in discovering their full potential as future student leaders of society. Through leadership and management, they also provide an avenue for students to utilize and enrich the theories imparted by the school. YMPACT also assists the school's Supreme Student Council in maintaining discipline, order, and fairness inside the institution. Conclusively, they promote integrity, which will assist the school in continuously making the right, ethical decisions to achieve its goals. The participants recognized and appreciated the role of these young leaders in helping the school provide them with positive learning experiences.

3.1.5. Group collaboration

Group collaboration and social interaction are inevitable in any learning environment. However, the onslaught of the pandemic challenged collaborative learning opportunities. While their teachers are confronted with challenges on how to substitute the social experiences of students in online learning, they still were able to enact and facilitate group collaborations and small group activities among the learners with more flexibility since the learners are physically separated from each other. Students were given the opportunity to meet and work [1] with their peers online in making a business case analysis, strategic management plan, and research writing. According to the participants, group collaborations and team works make their academic tasks easier to accomplish because they help each other and learn more because they brainstorm and strategize collectively.

"I prefer group works because I can get things done with the help of my classmates. Also, I am very comfortable working with my peers and this is something that I have been missing since the pandemic." (Financial Management Student 4)

The College of Business Administration was perceived to be successful in catering to the needs of the students during online learning because of their continuous implementation of a collaborative learning approach. It indeed made the learning experiences of the students more memorable by recognizing the value of interdependence in learning. In this study, the AI approach was able to elucidate the crucial role of group collaborations in online learning among students since these provide learners an opportunity to solve problems and exercise their creativity and curiosity while having fun with their peers.

3.2. Envisioning the future of CBA: Dreaming and imagining the Business Education Program

With the schools gradually preparing for the next-to-new normal period in education, reimagining the future of the CBA necessitates perpetuating and reinforcing what worked well during online learning. The impact of the pandemic opens more possibilities for the flexible delivery of education, one that is unimaginable and unfathomable. The participants hope that CBA will continue to provide flexible means of delivering curricula that consider the vital needs of the learners, their personal challenges, and the permanent changes brought by the pandemic. They perceived that modular learning could bring positive effects in the long run by allowing provisions for a more focused and structured learning approach to various content, which is more advantageous to students who work part-time. The reimagined future for the business education program is one that deliberately considers the students' conditions and welfare by reinventing and streamlining the business education program to make it more responsive and inclusive to all.

While taking the plight of every learner as the envisioned future for the college, the participants also accentuated that CBA should further upgrade its curriculum and expand more learning opportunities. They envisage the college providing learning activities that will make them more corporate-prepared global citizens. Some participants stressed the importance of upgrading their communication skills for them to become confident business managers. The college is expected to provide more holistic learning experiences among students—one that can simulate the real corporate world. This is a crucial envision of the college considering the competitive corporate world the students will be facing after graduation. As a whole, the second stage of the appreciative inquiry helped the researchers identify the participants' dream for the College of Business Administration in the future, which is to be more flexible and learner-focused and have an upgraded and competitive business education curriculum.

3.3. Designing the reimagined Business Education Program: Actions based on the discovery and dream stages

In this stage, the participants together with the researchers identified possible steps to consider in reaching the envisioned futures. The college needs concrete actions and priorities based on their experiences and future aspirations. Table 2 discusses the initial stages of appreciative inquiry. In the design stage, the discovered positive core of the college and its envisioned future from the respondents are combined. The

reimagined future of the College of Business Administration incorporates its perceived strength and the wish list of its stakeholders for its optimal improvement. In the third phase of the AI framework, the participants designed possible options to make the envisioned dream a reality.

Table 2. Initial stages of appreciative inquiry

Discover: What works?	Dream: What might be?	Design: What should be?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible Modular Setup - Availability of the Repository of Educational Resources - Efficient Communication - Empowered Student Council - Group Collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More flexible and inclusive means of delivering the Business Education Curriculum Upgraded and Holistic Learning Experiences in the Business Education Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing students options to choose their preferred learning modality - Effective Feedback System - Streamlining course activities consistent with the course goals and modular setup - Hiring more business professionals and field experts - Providing academic competitions and activities that will make them more confident business education students

Inclusivity and flexibility of education are what business education students aspire for the College of Business Administration in the future. Students experienced personalized learning in the comfort of their respective homes during the pandemic and they found the teaching practices of the CBA already inclusive and flexible. However, with the present trajectory in the academe where academic activities have been going back to normal, the participants conceived the CBA to provide them with options to choose their preferred learning modality. Personalized learning is what the students want to experience in the future from the college. Personalized learning is described as a pedagogical philosophy that refers to a host of efforts and learning modalities that tailor learning and development for each learner [27]. Allowing students to choose whether they want to learn face-to-face, online, or blended does not only provide them academic freedom but empowers every learner to make important decisions for their own learning.

Communication has been crucial during online learning between the teacher and the students. Teachers communicate with students online through different electronic mediums to relay important announcements, provide learning activities, and monitor students' performance. Thus, a more inclusive education calls for a more effective feedback system for the college. The business education students reflect that teachers need to provide specific feedback and guidance on how to improve their work. As they independently work with their tasks at home, they need teachers who give regular, ongoing, and thoughtful feedback that give premium to the process, not just the end results. This is supported by a study that posited that feedback that is specific and geared towards a particular task, informative, reflective, and consistent are hallmarks of effective communication in every classroom, regardless of the learning modality [3].

In addition, the CBA students hoped for upgraded and more holistic learning experiences in their program. To make this a reality, the participants avowed that course activities should be revisited to ensure that they are aligned with the course goals. This is imperative because the modular setup runs for six consecutive weeks only. The lessons were compressed, and activities and assessments were overwhelming considering the fast-paced academic periods to cover all of them. Hence, teachers and college deans must revisit, evaluate, and streamline course activities and upgrade the business curricula. In this way, only the most relevant, and most useful activities are given to the learners. This, in turn, will give the learners ample time to submit quality outputs. All this means that there is a need to streamline the business curriculum which means prioritizing more depth and less breadth. Different ways were suggested how to streamline the curriculum like integrating requirements across subjects, using power standards, and revisiting old work with new thinking, among others [28].

The business students also appreciate their professors whom they perceived as experts in their own fields. As CBA upgrades its services, they see the need for the college to continuously hire business educators, researchers, and practitioners who are specialists in business and management. Teachers' academic preparations, work experiences, and relevant certifications make them the instructional experts who can provide upgraded and holistic learning experiences that the students deserve. The same is stressed where the quality of teachers is strongly correlated with students' achievement and where high-quality teachers played a more crucial role for socially and economically disadvantaged learners. The CBA needs teachers who have adequate knowledge and skills and can determine the student's needs for them to become better business practitioners in the future. Also, flexibility is crucial in business schools since these is a defining feature of business leaders and managers [29].

Lastly, the participants urged the college to instigate academic competitions and activities that will make them more confident business education students. Some students acknowledged their worries and insecurities as students specializing in business such as their lack of confidence especially in communication, inadequate knowledge and skills in management, and research skills for the real business world [30]. The

pandemic has taken away from them various opportunities to prepare for the real business world setting through different completions and activities. Hence, part of what they desired the college to be included in the reimagined future is the resumption of these activities. The participants value the importance of simulation activities, competitions, and collaborative activities that will help them practice their business management skills.

3.4. The CBA destiny: Sustaining success of the reimagined future of Business Education Program

Table 3 further discusses the other stages of appreciative inquiry namely dream, design and destiny. The last phase of the AI process involves identifying the ways to support and sustain the planned actions in the Design stage. The participants identified specific courses of action that uphold the positive changes and work together to protract the significant changes. As the college gears towards a flexible and more inclusive delivery of business education programs, they should consider administering sensing forms to students to determine their learning modality preferences. Students' voices, opinions, and concerns should be heard, and they should be given space to share these at least with the school authorities. This will make every academic decision consultive in nature where the students will feel they are being taken good care of in the long run. Also, the teacher feedback system should be reinforced during meetings, seminars, and training as this is proven to be an effective pedagogy toward optimum academic inclusivity.

Table 3. The dream, design, and destiny stages of appreciative inquiry

Dream: What might be?	Design: What should be?	Destiny: How to sustain?
More flexible and inclusive means of delivering the Business Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing students options to choose their preferred learning modality - Effective Feedback System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administering Sensing Form - Reinforcing the value of Effective Feedback System among teachers
Upgraded and Holistic Learning Experiences in the Business Education Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Streamlining course activities consistent with the course goals and modular setup - Hiring more business professionals and field experts - Providing academic competitions and activities that will make them more confident business education students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Periodic conduct of Curriculum Evaluation and designing of Curricular Maps - Rigid Hiring and Employment Process - Empowering Student-Leaders to design activities spearheaded by the College Faculty

Curriculum evaluation is an inevitable aspect of school curriculum implementation which provides the basis for curriculum policy decisions and innovations. The teacher-participants shared that streamlining course activities consistent with the course goals and modular setup will necessitate them to revisit the curriculum. Since revisiting the curriculum is an important facet in creating a research-based and reflexive pedagogy, teachers are empowered to make informed decisions about the curriculum and instruction. Creating a curricular map can help them understand better the gaps, redundancies, and overlapping activities across courses and levels. The faculty should devote time to evaluating their curricula to make the envisioned dream for the college a reality in terms of providing the learners with upgraded and holistic learning experiences. In terms of hiring more business professionals and field experts, the college and the human resource department should scrutinize judiciously all the teacher-applicants and give premium to their academic preparations and expertise. This is to ensure that only the highly qualified faculty will be hired.

Lastly, making the student-leaders involved in organizing activities and competitions can be beneficial to the college. Since students' involvement and leadership in extra-curricular activities are proven to be valuable in the academe. These specific actions need to be executed by the college with the participation of all relevant stakeholders to make the reimagined future of CBA sustainable and impactful.

4. CONCLUSION

Appreciative inquiry does not only underscore the strengths of a program, but it can motivate the stakeholders to be involved in the re-imagining process and encourages ownership of what the program is to become. In this study, AI was used to understand the best practices of the College of Business Administration of a private tertiary education where the participants developed their shared and strategic plan and designed specific actions to implement and sustain their initiatives and innovations. The strengths of the college are the flexible modular setup, availability of the repository of educational resources, efficient communication during online learning, empowered student council, and group collaborations. These positive cores were used to aspire to the reimagined CBA in the future with two provocative propositions such as more flexible and inclusive means of delivering the Business Education Curriculum and upgraded and

holistic learning experiences for the learners. Flexibility is crucial in business schools since this is a defining feature of business leaders and managers.

In this study, the participants leveraged the best practices of CBA and their envisioned future to design high-impact strategies that can move the college decisively to its reimagined future. The participants underscored the importance of providing the students with options to choose their preferred learning modality and for teachers to implement an effective feedback system. There is also a need to streamline course activities consistent with the course goals, hire business professionals and field experts, and provide academic competitions and activities that will make them more confident business education students. As the participants implement and sustain their initiatives, they urged the college to administer sensing forms, reinforce the value of an effective feedback system, do a periodic evaluation of the curriculum, implement a rigid hiring process for employees, and empower student-leaders for student activities.

The use of AI in this study has empowered the participants to initiate and sustain organizational changes brought about by the global pandemic in a Business Education Program. In essence, there is always something that will work in every organization even in provocative situations and this positive core (strengths) has proven that it gave life to the CBA in difficult times during the pandemic. The present study provided the participants an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about their strengths and of the college, who they are at their best, and what happens they are at their best. Through inquiry and dialogue, AI was able to shift the attention and action of the participants from problem analysis and capitalize on their positive core to fuel worthy ideals and productive possibilities for the future. In this study, the shared images of the reimagined future of the Business Education program are well grounded on the affirmation and appreciation of the participants on their unleashed positive core.

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