

# Exploring Librarians' Perceptions of Training Effectiveness through the Lens of the Kirkpatrick Model

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## Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the librarians' training program at Arellano University using Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model, which examines training outcomes through four levels: Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results. Guided by the Input-Process-Output framework, the study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design to explore librarians' perceptions and experiences regarding training effectiveness. Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, documentary analysis, and observations involving ten librarians from seven Arellano University campuses selected through purposive sampling. The interview guide was validated by experts, and data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that participants positively perceived the training because of facilitator expertise, relevance to job functions, supportive learning environments, practical soft-skills content, and the immediate applicability of acquired knowledge. At the learning level, the training enhanced technical competencies, communication skills, understanding of library systems, ability to manage user concerns, and professional confidence. Behavioral outcomes showed sustained application of learned skills through improved communication, teamwork, documentation practices, and cataloging procedures. At the results level, participants reported improvements in service quality, operational efficiency, user satisfaction, team coordination, and institutional reputation. These findings indicate that the training program effectively supported both individual professional development and organizational performance. The study concludes that the librarians' training program was effective across all four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model and recommends the institutionalization of a formal training policy framework, continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, regular program reviews, and strengthened post-training support. This study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by promoting continuous professional development and workforce competence among librarians. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening academic library services, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and supporting the long-term adaptability of academic institutions in a changing information environment.

**Keywords:** Academic Libraries, Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, Librarian Training, Organizational Performance, Professional Development, Training Effectiveness, Workplace Behavior

## 1. Introduction

Academic libraries play a vital role in supporting teaching, learning, and research by providing access to relevant information resources. The effectiveness of these libraries largely depends on the competence and continuous professional development of librarians. Training and development programs enhance librarians' knowledge, skills, productivity, and service quality, enabling them to respond to evolving technological and information demands. This study examines the effectiveness of training programs among librarians at Arellano University using the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model: reaction, learning, behavior, and results.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Academic and research libraries rely on competent personnel to deliver quality services to their users. According to Abba and Dawha (2009), libraries seek efficient staff to effectively serve their communities. Librarians' competencies can be enhanced through education and training programs, which contribute to improved service delivery and professional growth (Upriyadi, 2020). Training and development address organizational challenges by improving productivity, work quality, morale, skills, and leadership continuity while supporting institutional growth (Olaniyan and Ojo, 2008). At Arellano University, librarians regularly participate in conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, and in-house training programs to strengthen communication skills, technological competence, and understanding of emerging library systems. Despite challenges associated with technological adaptation and digital library tools, librarians continue to engage in professional development activities to remain effective and relevant in their work environment (Temboqe, Andrew, 2018).

### **1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Librarian Training Effectiveness**

Literature consistently emphasizes the importance of training and development in improving librarians' performance, satisfaction, and service quality. Staff development strategies such as on-the-job training, skills training, online learning, seminars, workshops, mentoring, and conferences contribute to professional competence and job effectiveness (Izah, 2022; Das and Singha, 2023; Anyanwu, 2024; Asiedu, 2023). Training enables librarians to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for effective job performance (Beach, 2018). Libraries increasingly require personnel capable of supporting users in digital information retrieval, database searching, and technology-based services, making continuous professional development essential (Holt, 2000). Studies further indicate that staff training enhances productivity, job satisfaction, service quality, motivation, organizational commitment, and professional growth (Anyaegbu & Wali, 2019; Yaya, 2019; Ogunbanjo, 2021; Onyia & Aniogbolu, 2011). Research also highlights challenges affecting training effectiveness, including financial constraints, inadequate institutional support, limited training facilities, and the absence of clear training policies (Dalmacio, 2023; Iwuchukwu, 2020; Imam et al., 2020). Nonetheless, sustained investment in professional development contributes significantly to improved work performance, technological competence, and organizational effectiveness (Alala, 2021; Oduwole, 2004; Agada and Tofi, 2020; Adamu et al., 2023; Rosle et al., 2022; Nwokeocha, 2024).

### **1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Librarian Training and Development**

Globally, libraries continue to prioritize staff development to address changing information environments and technological advancements. Studies from Nigeria, Indonesia, and other countries emphasize the importance of continuous training, retraining, and professional development to ensure librarians remain capable of meeting contemporary information needs (Upriyadi, 2020; Omosekejimi, Eyaufe, Nwobu and Nweke, 2019; Isibika, et al., 2021). Nationally, librarians are encouraged to participate in continuing professional development activities to maintain professional competence and improve service delivery. Academic libraries in the Philippines recognize the value of conferences, seminars, training courses, and lifelong learning opportunities in strengthening librarians' professional capabilities (Duguil, 2023; Abangan et al., 2024). These developments underscore the growing need to evaluate the effectiveness of training initiatives within academic library settings.

### **1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Librarian Training Effectiveness**

This study is anchored on Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model (1959), which evaluates training effectiveness through four levels: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The reaction level examines participants' satisfaction and perceptions of training. The learning level assesses knowledge and skills acquired during training. The behavior level evaluates the application of learned competencies in the workplace, while the results level measures organizational outcomes resulting from training interventions. The study also adopts the Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework. Inputs consist of librarians' experiences and perceptions regarding training programs. The process involves data gathering through interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. The output focuses on determining training effectiveness and proposing a training and development program for Arellano University librarians.

### **1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale**

Despite the recognized importance of professional development, studies have identified challenges such as limited training opportunities, inadequate funding, and the absence of management policies guiding librarian training and development (Iwuchukwu, 2020; Dalmacio, 2023). Furthermore, Jan, S. U., & Jan, R. (2023) found that insufficient training limits librarians' ability to provide modern library services and adapt to emerging trends. While librarians at Arellano University regularly participate in professional development activities, there remains a need to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs from the perspective of librarians themselves. Assessing training through the Kirkpatrick framework provides deeper insight into librarians' reactions, learning outcomes, behavioral changes, and perceived organizational results. The findings may support the development of more responsive and effective training initiatives for library personnel.

### **1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education by supporting the continuous professional development of librarians who contribute to effective teaching, learning, and research services. It also relates to SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth through the enhancement of workforce competencies, productivity, and professional performance within academic institutions.

### **1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability**

The study contributes to educational sustainability by strengthening the competencies of librarians who support academic and research activities. It also supports institutional sustainability by promoting effective training systems that improve service quality, organizational performance, and workforce development. Through evidence-based recommendations for librarian training and development, the study may contribute to the long-term effectiveness and adaptability of academic libraries in a rapidly evolving information environment.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive phenomenological design to explore librarians' perceptions of training effectiveness. This approach enabled the researcher to engage in epoche or bracketing to minimize personal biases and understand participants' experiences from their own perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study emphasized describing the nature and meaning of these experiences through thematic analysis of interview data (Moustakas, 1994).

### 2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted across seven campuses of Arellano University. These campuses served as the research setting because their librarians actively participate in professional development and training programs designed to enhance library services and operations.

### 2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were ten (10) librarians from seven campuses of Arellano University. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: they must be employed as librarians at Arellano University, have at least three years of service, and have actively attended training programs. Their experiences provided insights into the effectiveness of librarian training initiatives.

### 2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met the established criteria. Data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes. Open-ended questions allowed participants to freely share their experiences and perceptions. The researcher employed bracketing to reduce bias throughout the data collection process (Maxwell, 2013). Documentary analysis was also conducted to support and validate interview findings.

### 2.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview guide designed to gather participants' perceptions of training effectiveness. The guide allowed flexibility through follow-up questions to obtain richer responses. The instrument was validated by the research adviser and five library experts to ensure the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the questions.

### 2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first secured approval from the PUP Research Ethics Committee and the research adviser before conducting the study. Qualified participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with participants' consent. After transcription, participants reviewed the transcripts for accuracy. Documentary analysis was likewise undertaken to supplement interview data and support thematic interpretation.

### 2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded to identify significant statements, recurring concepts, and emerging themes. Codes and themes were organized and interpreted through a narrative explanation-building approach. Participant identities were protected through the use of codes such as P1, P2, and P3. The thematic coding process followed the principles described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### 2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participants received complete information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including voluntary participation and withdrawal at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of participant codes and the removal of identifying information from transcripts and reports. All recordings and documents were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Participant well-being was prioritized throughout the study, and member checking was conducted to ensure the accuracy and faithful representation of participants' responses.

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## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Reaction to the Training Program

#### 3.1.1 Increased Engagement Due to Facilitator Expertise

Participants reported that facilitator expertise significantly enhanced their engagement during the training. They described the facilitators as knowledgeable, well-prepared, and capable of delivering structured and interactive sessions. The credibility and mastery of the facilitators increased participants' trust in the training and sustained their interest throughout the sessions. These findings support the Reaction level of the Kirkpatrick Model, where participants' satisfaction is

influenced by facilitator competence and delivery quality. The results align with Agada and Tofi (2020), Das and Singha (2023), Echem (2022), Chris-Israel and Madu (2022), Kimaro (2022), and Nazil et al. (2022), who emphasized that facilitator expertise promotes engagement, motivation, and readiness to learn.

### **3.1.2 Alignment of Training with Job Functions**

Participants viewed the training positively because it addressed their actual duties and workplace responsibilities. They indicated that the training content reflected real library operations, including handling user concerns and performing routine library functions. The use of relevant examples and practical activities strengthened their appreciation of the training. This finding demonstrates that relevance to professional responsibilities contributes to positive training reactions. The result supports the observations of Agada and Tofi (2020), Obim (2023), Asiedu et al. (2023), Anyim (2021), Anyaegbu and Wali (2019), Echem (2022), and Nazil et al. (2022), who noted that role-specific training increases satisfaction, engagement, and perceived usefulness.

### **3.1.3 Positive Emotional Response to the Training Environment**

Participants expressed satisfaction with the overall training environment, describing it as engaging, interactive, and supportive. Group activities, case studies, and collaborative discussions contributed to a positive learning atmosphere and encouraged active participation. The findings suggest that a supportive learning environment enhances participants' emotional readiness to learn. This supports the work of Agada and Tofi (2020), Fasola (2022), Tumba and Temboge (2018), Duguil et al. (2023), and Nazil et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of psychologically safe and participatory training environments in fostering learner motivation and engagement.

### **3.1.4 Practicality of Soft-Skills Content**

Participants valued the inclusion of communication and interpersonal skills in the training. They recognized that effective communication and teamwork are essential components of library service and contribute to workplace effectiveness. This finding indicates that participants perceived soft-skills training as practical and directly applicable to their professional responsibilities. The result is consistent with Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), Babatunde et al. (2021), Osiesi et al. (2022), Anyanwu and Mbagwu (2024), and Nazil et al. (2022), who emphasized the role of interpersonal competence in improving service delivery, teamwork, and job satisfaction.

### **3.1.5 Immediate Applicability of Technical Content**

Participants reported immediate application of technical knowledge gained from the training. Skills related to conflict management, workplace communication, and operational procedures were quickly integrated into daily tasks, reinforcing the perceived value of the training. The ability to apply learning immediately contributed to participant satisfaction and confidence. This supports the findings of Ogunbadejo (2021), Jan and Jan (2022), Echem (2022), Ijeh et al. (2024), Mbagwu and Madu-Malachy (2022), Kimaro (2022), and Nazil et al. (2022), who found that training perceived as directly useful encourages learning transfer and sustained professional development.

## **3.2 Learning Outcomes of the Training Program**

### **3.2.1 Acquisition of Specific Technical Skills**

Participants reported gaining technical competencies in library software, reference services, circulation management, and workflow processes. They expressed greater confidence in using library systems and performing technical tasks independently. These findings demonstrate successful learning outcomes at the second level of the Kirkpatrick Model. The results support Isah (2020), Echem (2022), Asiedu et al. (2023), Ijeh et al. (2024), and Nazil et al. (2022), who identified technical skill acquisition as a key indicator of effective professional development among librarians.

### **3.2.2 Development of Interpersonal Communication Strategies**

Participants developed a stronger understanding of communication and teamwork as essential professional competencies. They recognized the importance of effective communication in improving collaboration, workplace relationships, and service quality. The findings indicate that the training enhanced participants' interpersonal awareness and professional attitudes. This is consistent with Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), Babatunde et al. (2021), Osiesi et al. (2022), Anyanwu and Mbagwu (2024), and Nazil et al. (2022), who highlighted the role of communication training in strengthening professional effectiveness and organizational commitment.

### **3.2.3 Clear Understanding of New Systems Introduced**

Participants demonstrated a clearer understanding of newly introduced systems and procedures after the training. They reported improved knowledge of task checklists, cataloging standards, and search assistance techniques, enabling them to perform library functions more effectively and accurately. These findings indicate that the training enhanced participants' procedural and system-related knowledge. Consistent with the Learning level of the Kirkpatrick Model, the results suggest that participants developed a stronger understanding of operational processes and professional standards. This supports the findings of Isibika (2021), Echem (2022), Asiedu et al. (2023), Kimaro (2022), and Nazil et al. (2022), who emphasized



that system-focused training improves procedural knowledge, confidence, and readiness to perform professional responsibilities.

#### **3.2.4 Improved Ability to Manage User Concerns**

Participants reported learning strategies for handling difficult situations, managing user expectations, and addressing service-related concerns. They also gained ICT and digital resource management skills that enhanced their ability to respond to user needs effectively. The findings suggest that the training strengthened participants' understanding of service management and user-centered practices. In line with the Learning level of the Kirkpatrick Model, participants acquired knowledge that improved their preparedness to resolve user concerns and provide quality service. These results support the work of Anyim (2021), Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), Asiedu et al. (2023), Udoudoh et al. (2023), and Nazil et al. (2022), who found that professional development improves librarians' responsiveness and service competence.

#### **3.2.5 Increased Confidence in Performing Tasks**

Participants expressed greater confidence in carrying out professional responsibilities, including handling complex inquiries, coordinating tasks, maintaining service accuracy, and protecting user information. They felt more capable and prepared to perform their duties independently. These findings indicate that the training enhanced self-efficacy and professional assurance. According to the Kirkpatrick Model, confidence is a significant learning outcome because it reflects successful acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills. The results align with Echem (2022), Kimaro (2022), Isibika (2021), Udoudoh et al. (2023), and Nazil et al. (2022), who reported that training strengthens librarians' confidence and readiness to perform complex responsibilities.

### **3.3 Behavioral Changes Following the Training**

#### **3.3.1 Frequent Use of Learned Tools in Daily Tasks**

Participants consistently applied the tools and techniques introduced during the training in their daily work. They reported using these tools for user assistance, coordination, record management, and routine library operations, demonstrating sustained application of learning. These findings indicate successful transfer of training into workplace practice. At the Behavior level of the Kirkpatrick Model, participants demonstrated observable and consistent changes in work performance through the regular use of acquired competencies. This supports the findings of Agada and Tofi (2020), Ogunbadejo (2021), Echem (2022), Osiesi et al. (2022), Udoudoh et al. (2023), and Kimaro (2022), who emphasized that continuous application of learned skills is a strong indicator of successful behavioral change.

#### **3.3.2 Changes in Communication Approach with Users**

Participants reported becoming more professional, calm, and intentional in their communication with users. They consciously modified how they responded to concerns and managed difficult interactions, resulting in more constructive and effective service encounters. These findings demonstrate meaningful behavioral transformation in communication practices. Consistent with Kirkpatrick Level 3, participants translated communication knowledge into observable workplace behavior. The results support Babatunde et al. (2021), Isibika (2021), Jan and Jan (2022), and Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), who found that communication-focused training improves interpersonal interactions, emotional regulation, and service quality.

#### **3.3.3 Improved Collaboration with Team Members**

Participants reported better collaboration and coordination with colleagues following the training. Improved communication, greater professionalism, and increased awareness of team dynamics contributed to smoother interactions and stronger workplace relationships. The findings suggest that communication improvements extended beyond user interactions and positively influenced teamwork. In line with Kirkpatrick Level 3, participants demonstrated observable behavioral changes that supported collaboration and collective performance. These results are supported by Babatunde et al. (2021), Isibika (2021), Jan and Jan (2022), and Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), who emphasized the importance of communication competence in strengthening teamwork and organizational effectiveness.

#### **3.3.4 Adoption of New Documentation Practices**

Participants reported consistently following the documentation procedures introduced during the training. The new practices became part of their regular work routines and contributed to greater accuracy and compliance with organizational standards. These findings indicate successful integration of training into operational procedures. At the Behavior level of the Kirkpatrick Model, participants demonstrated sustained adherence to standardized documentation practices. This supports the findings of Ijeh et al. (2024), Mbagwu and Madu-Malachy (2022), Anyim (2021), and Asiedu et al. (2023), who found that training promotes procedural consistency, accountability, and operational reliability.

#### **3.3.5 Consistent Application of Cataloging Methods**

Participants reported regularly applying cataloging standards and procedures learned during the training. These methods became embedded in their daily work and contributed to improved accuracy and consistency in library operations. The

findings demonstrate successful behavioral transfer of technical competencies. Consistent with Kirkpatrick Level 3, participants adopted and maintained professional cataloging practices in their routine responsibilities. These results align with Anyaegbu and Wali (2019), Duguil et al. (2023), Echem (2022), and Kimaro (2022), who emphasized that sustained adherence to cataloging standards enhances service quality and institutional efficiency.

### **3.4 Organizational Results of the Training Program**

#### **3.4.1 Improved Quality of Library Services**

Participants observed improvements in the accuracy, organization, efficiency, and professionalism of library services. They noted that training contributed to better service delivery and enhanced overall operational performance. These findings indicate that the effects of training extended beyond individual learning and behavior to influence institutional outcomes. Consistent with Kirkpatrick Level 4, the results demonstrate that training contributed to improved service quality and organizational effectiveness. This supports the findings of Agada and Tofi (2020), Osiesi et al. (2022), Udoudoh et al. (2023), Duguil et al. (2023), Cobbalah (2015), and Kimaro (2022).

#### **3.4.2 Faster Service Turnaround Time**

Participants reported that services and transactions were completed more quickly because staff became more familiar with procedures and systems. They also noted increased capacity to assist more users within shorter periods. These findings indicate improved operational efficiency resulting from training. In accordance with the Results level of the Kirkpatrick Model, the training contributed to faster service delivery and greater responsiveness to user needs. This finding is supported by Ogunbadejo (2021), Jan and Jan (2022), Udoudoh et al. (2023), and Kimaro (2022), who found that professional development enhances efficiency and service responsiveness.

#### **3.4.3 Greater User Satisfaction Based on Feedback**

Participants observed more positive responses and appreciation from users following the implementation of training-acquired practices. User feedback reflected increased satisfaction with the quality and efficiency of library services. These findings suggest that training positively influenced users' perceptions of library services. At Kirkpatrick Level 4, increased user satisfaction serves as evidence of successful organizational outcomes. The results are consistent with Fasola (2022), Duguil et al. (2023), Echedom and Ezeogu (2020), and Osiesi et al. (2022), who emphasized the relationship between staff competence and user satisfaction.

#### **3.4.4 Better Team Coordination Across Units**

Participants reported improved coordination among staff members, clearer role understanding, and reduced confusion in daily operations. These changes contributed to smoother workflows and more efficient service delivery. These findings indicate that the training strengthened organizational alignment and teamwork. Consistent with the Results level of the Kirkpatrick Model, improved coordination represents a broader institutional outcome that enhances collective productivity. The findings support Chris-Israel and Madu (2022), Anyim (2021), Agada and Tofi (2020), and Osiesi et al. (2022), who identified teamwork and coordination as important outcomes of effective staff development programs.

#### **3.4.5 Enhanced Institutional Image Due to Service Improvements**

Participants observed that users and other departments increasingly viewed the library as reliable, efficient, and professional. The improvements in service quality and operational effectiveness contributed to a more positive institutional reputation. These findings indicate that the training generated benefits extending beyond individual and departmental performance. In line with Kirkpatrick Level 4, enhanced institutional image reflects a significant organizational outcome resulting from sustained improvements in service delivery and professional practice. This finding is supported by Cobbalah (2015), Fasola (2022), Agada and Tofi (2020), and Duguil et al. (2023), who emphasized that effective staff development contributes to stronger organizational reputation and stakeholder confidence.

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## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study concludes that the librarians' training program was effective across the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model. Participants positively received the training because of its relevance, quality facilitation, and supportive learning environment. The program enhanced technical knowledge, communication skills, system understanding, and professional confidence. These learning outcomes were consistently applied in workplace practices through improved communication, collaboration, documentation, and cataloging procedures. Consequently, the training contributed to better service quality, faster service delivery, improved coordination, higher user satisfaction, and a stronger institutional image, demonstrating its value in supporting both professional development and organizational performance.

The university should institutionalize a formal training policy framework and implement a structured monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the continuous effectiveness of librarian training programs. Regular annual reviews should be conducted to assess training relevance and impact, while future programs should continue integrating both technical and

soft skills components. Post-training support mechanisms should be strengthened to sustain behavioral changes, and the proposed librarians' training program should be adopted as a continuing professional development model. Further studies may also be conducted to examine the long-term impact of training on organizational performance, service innovation, and institutional effectiveness.

The study was limited to librarians of Arellano University and focused on evaluating training effectiveness using the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model. The findings were based on participants' lived experiences and perceptions gathered through interviews, which may not represent the experiences of librarians in other institutions. Furthermore, the study primarily examined immediate and observed outcomes of training and did not extensively assess the long-term sustainability of training effects on organizational performance and institutional reputation.

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### Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest and received no external funding for this study. The researcher acknowledges the librarians who voluntarily participated in the study and Arellano University for permitting the conduct of the research. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data were collected through non-invasive methods, including interviews and observations. To protect privacy and confidentiality, no identifying information was disclosed, and participant identities were anonymized through assigned codes.

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