Advancing archives and records management professionals in Africa

Shadrack Katuu
Department of Information Science, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

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Abstract

Purpose – The advancement of a profession depends on factors such as firm education, training programmes and vibrant professional associations. The purpose of this study is to provide baseline information on archives and records management (ARM) professionals from Africa, including their views on education and training programmes. Related studies have been limited to investigating the experiences of graduates from a few institutions within a limited jurisdiction. Similar studies have not been conducted by African-based ARM associations.

Design/methodology/approach – This study's survey approach was administered electronically. Two surveys explored themes through 10 research questions in three categories: background information; characteristics of the education; and types of courses and extent covered during the study.

Findings – The two surveys had 107 and 179 respondents, respectively, domiciled in 19 African countries. In both studies, about 75% of the respondents had an undergraduate- or master-level qualification. Between 69% and 87% of the respondents from the first and second surveys, respectively, had completed their educational programmes within their home countries. There was varied sentiment on the types of courses and level of coverage within their studies. Legal and technology aspects were less covered in the curriculum than core subjects.

Originality/value – To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first with findings from ARM respondents across several African countries. It provides insight into the demographics and educational programmes. This study's unique contribution provides baseline data for more detailed and nuanced studies that will explore data and investigate patterns within and among individual countries on the continent.

Keywords Africa, Records management, Surveys, Archives, University education, Education curriculum

Paper type General review

1. Introduction

The development of a profession is dependent on several aspects including a firm intellectual foundation through education and training programmes as well as developing a strong sense of camaraderie through professional associations. To continuously develop the Archives and Records Management (ARM) discipline, records professionals have monitored development in these two arenas through mechanisms such as surveys. On the one hand,

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educational institutions have surveyed existing and former students to gain insight on the quality and relevance of their programmes (Benoit and Force, 2019; Wallace, 2000). On the other hand, professional associations have surveyed membership to gain insight on demographic information, member needs and satisfaction, as well as remuneration and other conditions of employment (Berzins, 1982; Doyle, 2012). While these are common phenomena in the Global North, it is less common in the Global South. In Africa, while some education institutions with ARM programmes have conducted surveys, the few ARM professional associations that exist have not conducted surveys similar to their global peers.

This article shares the results of two surveys conducted amongst records professionals across the African continent. The surveys were part of a larger research endeavour conducted by the African Team of the InterPARES Trust (IP Trust) project, which is a multi-year interdisciplinary project investigating the long-term preservation of authentic digital records (Ngoepe, 2022). This discussion has made a deliberate effort to cite copiously, particularly publications related to the Global South that would otherwise not receive much visibility in Global North discussions.

2. Archives and records management profession

The role of the ARM profession is the management of records generated and maintained by both public and private sector institutions. Professionals are expected to manage both analogue documentary formats as well as records of digital age with all their emerging challenges. These include the long-term preservation of trustworthy records in the face of complex legal issues and technological innovations such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, blockchain and complex enterprise-wide systems (Duranti and Rogers, 2019; Hofman and Katuu, 2022; Katuu, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022b; Katuu and Ngoepe, 2015; Léveillé, 2015; Montgomery, 2015).

2.1 Archives and records management education and training

Education and training of records professionals in Africa is as complex as the continent's nuanced legal, cultural and sociopolitical history. Each of the 54 countries has great variance amongst and, in many cases, within themselves. While education and training history is often traced back to two centres set up with the assistance of international partners in Senegal and Ghana in the 1970s, South Africa's education and training history dates to the 1940s (Harris, 2000). Many national efforts emerged in the 1980s (for instance, Kenya and Nigeria) and 1990s (for instance, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe). The pattern of national development ranges from Kenya, with over a dozen educational institutions, to those like Botswana, with one or two educational institutions. A significant number of countries have between 3 and 12 educational institutions, including Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. There are also nuanced differences with some countries such as Eswatini, Lesotho and Malawi that do not have their own indigenous educational institutions. These countries participate in shared ownership of institutions such as Eastern and Southern African Management Institute jointly owned by ten countries that include Eswatini and Malawi (Eastern and Southern African Management Institute, 2021). Another example is the Institute of Development Management jointly owned by three countries: Botswana, Eswatini and Lesotho (Institute of Development Management, 2021).

In most countries, higher education systems are made up of a complex interaction of elements, including stakeholders or actors and assets (infrastructure and equipment), regulated by a policy framework to produce learning outcomes (RISE, 2021). These systems comprise complex relationships that constitute disparate interactions among people, economies, government structures, laws, ethics and cultural norms (Lusigi, 2019). According to education commentators, the situation in many graduate-level universities in Africa

includes a low number of qualified staff, outmoded curricula and educational methodologies based on rote memorization (Aarts *et al.*, 2020). In many institutions, learners may be viewed as embryonic professionals rather than as academic creatures who primarily assimilate and analyse concepts (Katuu, 2009; Schaeffer, 1997). Therefore, to continuously transform to meet learning outcomes, it is necessary to evaluate each individual element, as well as the interactions among them.

While individual countries may conduct these evaluations separately, there is also the place for assessing the elements within a larger geographic expanse, such as a region or continent, to assess the impact on a profession or discipline. One of the evaluation mechanisms is a tracer study. These studies are sometimes referred to as follow-up studies because the primary activity is to trace a group of individuals before collecting and analysing information on the changes that have occurred based on exposure to an intervention (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, 2011). Several tracer studies have been conducted over the past five decades, including one that evaluated education programmes as well as employment experiences of graduates from six institutions in the USA from 1964 to 2007 (Yadav, 2021). In addition, Senekal and Munro (2019) conducted a systematic literature review of graduate tracer studies published between 1995 and 2016. Of the 23 studies included in the article, 8 studies were from countries in the Global North, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and USA. The other 15 studies were from the Global South countries, including Botswana, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Philippines, South Africa and Uganda (Senekal and Munro, 2019). Amongst the studies, 10 evaluated the education programme, six focussed on employment trends and seven had agenda beyond the employment and programme evaluation purposes (Senekal and Munro, 2019). On the African continent, at least seven tracer studies have been conducted since the 1990s that evaluated ARM programmes in educational institutions, validated learning outcomes and assisted curriculum review processes, as shown in Table 1.

However, to date, there have been no published tracer studies on ARM graduates that go beyond individual institutions.

2.2 Archives and records management professional associations

Among the earliest ARM professional associations to be formed were Verenigang van Archivarissen in 1891, Association des Archivistes Français in 1904, Association des

Country	University	Department/School
Botswana Aina and Moahi (1999)	University of Botswana	Department of Library and Information Studies
Kenya Mwai *et al.* (2017)	Technical University of Kenya	Department of Information and Knowledge Management
Malawi Chipeta and Chawinga (2018)	Mzuzu University	Department of Information Science
Namibia Nengomasha and Chiware (2009)	University of Namibia	Department of Information and Communication Studies
South Africa Shongwe and Ocholla (2011)	University of Zululand	Department of Library and Information Studies
Uganda Lutwama and Kigongo-Bukenya (2004)	Makerere University	East African School of Library and Information Science
Zimbabwe Noko and Ngulube (2015)	National University of Science and Technology	Department of Records and Archives Management

Table 1.
Selection of tracer studies conducted by African education institutions

Archivistes et Bibliothécaires Belges in 1907 established in The Netherlands, France and Belgium, respectively (Corbett, 2015). Over the course of the past 130 years, the number of ARM professionals have grown considerably. Currently, there are an estimated 1,300 professional associations in ARM globally (Corbett, 2015). In a number of countries there is a tendency to have two separate professional associations, one for records managers and another for archivists. For instance, in the USA and Australia, archivists have the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), whereas records managers have Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) International as well as Records and Information Management Professionals of Australasia, respectively. However, in other jurisdictions there is either only one association for both sub-disciplines or if two existed before, they have since merged such as Archives and Records Association (ARA) in the UK and Ireland.

Over the past four decades, professional associations have conducted surveys exploring a variety of issues. For instance, in 1980, ASA conducted a survey of salaries and conditions of employment for professionals in Australia (Berzins, 1982). ASA continued with membership surveys in other years including in 1993, 1996 and 2003 (Davidson, 1997; Grady, 1995; Loo, 2004). Another association that has conducted multiple surveys is the SAA including a salary survey in 1996 (Society of American Archivists, 1996), an education needs survey in 2004 (Walch *et al.*, 2006), a members needs and satisfaction survey in 2011 (Doyle, 2012) and an employment survey in 2015 (Society of American Archivists, 2015). In 2017 both ARMA International and ACA published member surveys that revealed how members felt about their respective associations (ARMA International, 2017; Association of Canadian Archivists, 2017). A unique collaboration occurred in 2014 when the ARA and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals jointly commissioned a national workforce mapping study. This resulted in receiving over 10,6000 survey responses from professionals in the library, archives, records, information management and knowledge management domains in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Archives and Records Association and The Library and Information Association, 2015).

Currently, there are two visibly active national ARM associations in Africa, namely, the Kenya Association of Records Managers and Archivists and the South Africa Society of Archivists. In addition, there are number of intermittently active associations, including, the South African Records Management Forum and the Records and Information Association in Botswana (RIAB) established in 2005 and 2008, respectively (Mojapelo and Ngoepe, 2020; Records and Information Association in Botswana, 2021). However, none of these associations has published members surveys akin to those published by their global peers.

2.3 Justification for an African baseline survey of records professionals

As noted in the preceding sections, there have been no published surveys conducted by ARM professional associations in Africa or published by ARM education programmes that span more than the single institution. Therefore, the aim of this article is to share results of surveys conducted within a larger research endeavour by the African Team of the IP Trust project. The larger study was known as the education case study (AF01) whose objective was identifying gaps in ARM education and training programmes in Africa. There are several publications on the history and research process of the overall study (Katuu, 2015, 2020, 2022a; Katuu and Ngoepe, 2014; Katuu and Ngoepe, 2017) as well as the outcomes and impact of the study (Katuu, 2022a; Ngoepe *et al.*, 2022a; Ngoepe *et al.*, 2022b; Ngoepe and Saurombe, 2021) However, those publications as well as the research team reports only provided a synopsis of the survey activities that contributed to the research (Katuu *et al.*, 2018a,2018b, 2018c). The objective of this article is to outline the methodology, findings and

discussion of results from the two surveys conducted during the course of the IP Trust case study.

When the SAA conducted their survey in 2004, it was considered the comprehensive survey of individuals in the profession designed to collect baseline demographic data on professionals in the workforce in the USA. The study identified the knowledge and skills archivists needed to do their jobs and adapt to future demands, and gauged the capacity of graduate and continuing education programmes to meet the expectations (Society of American Archivists, 2022). In similar vein, this article outlines a study of two surveys conceived in order to provide baseline demographic data on African records professionals. However, unlike surveys by the SAA or other African education institutions, this study collected information across the African continent and not just within a single jurisdiction. In the case of at least three survey respondents, they were domiciled outside the African continent, specifically New Zealand, Sweden and USA. Additionally, the study identified characteristics of educational programmes as well as solicited respondents' level of satisfaction with the nature of courses offered in ARM education programmes. For these reasons, the surveys did not only serve to support the overall IP Trust case study but also should serve to inform ARM educators and practitioners across the continent and the world.

3. Methodology

The study used a survey approach to collect primary data from all or part of a population to determine the incidence, distribution and interrelationships of certain variables within the population, allowing associations between factors to be mapped and measured (Hakim, 2000). The study used electronic questionnaires as the data collection technique. Learning from surveys conducted by professional associations as well as educational institutions as discussed in the preceding section, the study developed ten research questions in three categories:

(1) background information;

(2) characteristics of the education programme; and

(3) types of courses and extent covered during the study, as shown in Table 2.

The two surveys of the study were administered in 2017 and 2020 as online surveys through snowball sampling using Survey Monkey. The number of respondents were 107 and 179, respectively.

4. Findings

In reporting the findings of the surveys, this section describes the results following the three-category structure outlined in the previous section.

4.1 Background information

Figure 1 shows the responses to Question 1. Over the course of the two surveys, respondents were domiciled in 19 different African countries as well as 3 countries outside the continent. The first survey had respondents from 16 countries, including two respondents who did not indicate their domicile location. The second survey had respondents from 17 countries. Some countries were only represented in one of the studies. For instance, the first survey had Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, whereas the second survey had Lesotho, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sweden and Tunisia. Lastly, two respondents in the first survey skipped the question.

Survey category	Questions
Background information	(1) In what country do you live?
	(2) Which of these professions most closely resembles your position?
Characteristics of the education	(3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
	(4) What was the structure of your highest-level education programme?
	(5) Where did you complete your highest level of education?
	(6) How long has it been since you attained your highest level of education?
Types of courses and extent covered during the study	(7) To what extent was a course on *an introduction to information technology* covered in your most recent academic programme?
	(8) To what extent was a course on *an introduction to law for the archives and records profession* covered in your most recent academic programme?
	(9) To what extent was a course on *managing current records* covered in your most recent academic programme?
	(10) To what extent was a course on *preservation of digital records* covered in your most recent academic programme?

Table 2.
Survey questions used in the first and second tracer studies

Figure 2 shows the responses to Question 2. It demonstrates that, over the course of the two surveys, respondents identified with 18 professions (i.e. 13 professions in the first survey and 17 professions in the second survey).

4.2 Characteristics of the education programme

Figure 3 shows the responses to Question 3. In the first survey, the leading qualifications were master's degree (50.50%), undergraduate degree (24.75%), doctorate degree (16.83%) and certificate or diploma (7.92%). The ranking of the leading qualifications in the second survey changed, starting with undergraduate degree (41.57%), master's degree (35.39%), certificate or diploma (11.80%) and doctorate degree (11.24%). Lastly, one respondent in the second survey skipped the question.

Figure 4 shows the responses to Question 4. In the first survey, the preferred structure of the education programme was a mix of course work and research (40.59%), only research (24.75%), mostly course work (20.79%), only course work (9.90%) and mostly research (3.96%). In the second survey, the order was a fair mix of course work and research

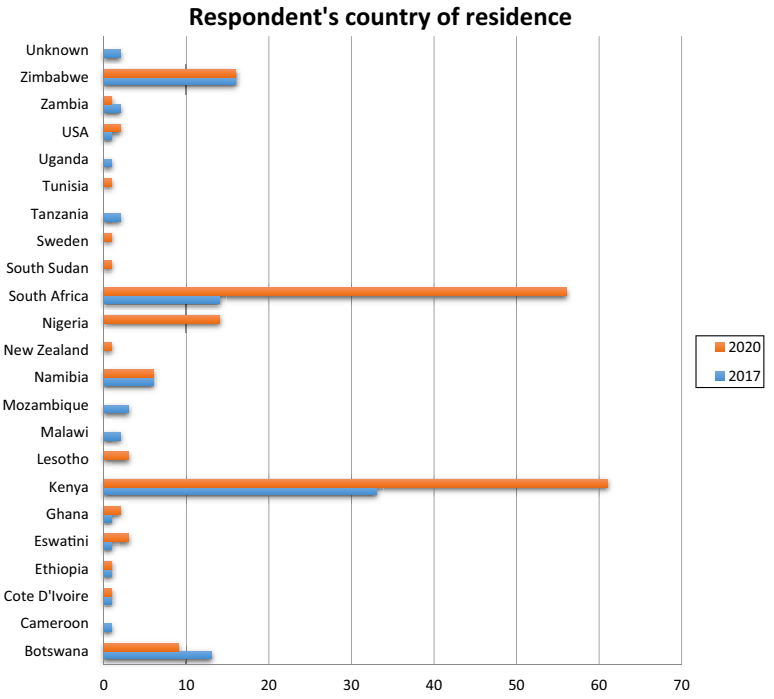

Figure 1.
Responses to Question 1

(38.55%), mostly course work (29.61%), only research (12.85%), mostly research (12.29%) and only course work (6.70%).

Figure 5, which shows the responses to Question 5, demonstrates that the leading location where respondents completed their education in the first survey was their home country (69.31%), within Africa but outside their home country (21.78%) and outside Africa (8.91%). The order remained the same in the second survey. However, the percentages changed significantly: home country (87.15%), within Africa but outside their home country (8.38%) and outside Africa (4.47%).

Figure 6 shows the responses to Question 6. In the first survey, the order in duration since graduation was 1–3 years (31.68%), 4–7 years (30.69%), less than 1 year (13.86%), 8–14 years (11.88%) and more than 14 years (11.88%). In the second survey, both the order and percentages changed slightly: 1–3 years (37.64%), 4–7 years (28.09%), 8–14 years (16.29%), less than 1 year (10.67%) and more than 14 years (7.30%). Lastly, one respondent in the second survey skipped the question.

4.3 Types of courses and extent covered during the study

Figure 7 shows the responses to Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10.

On Question 7, regarding the course on information technology, the order in the first survey started with low coverage (39.60%), course not included (25.74%), moderate coverage (24.75%) and high coverage (9.90%). In the second survey, the order and percentages changed slightly: low coverage (31.46%), moderate coverage (30.90%), course not included (20.79%) and high coverage (16.85%). One respondent in the second survey skipped the question.

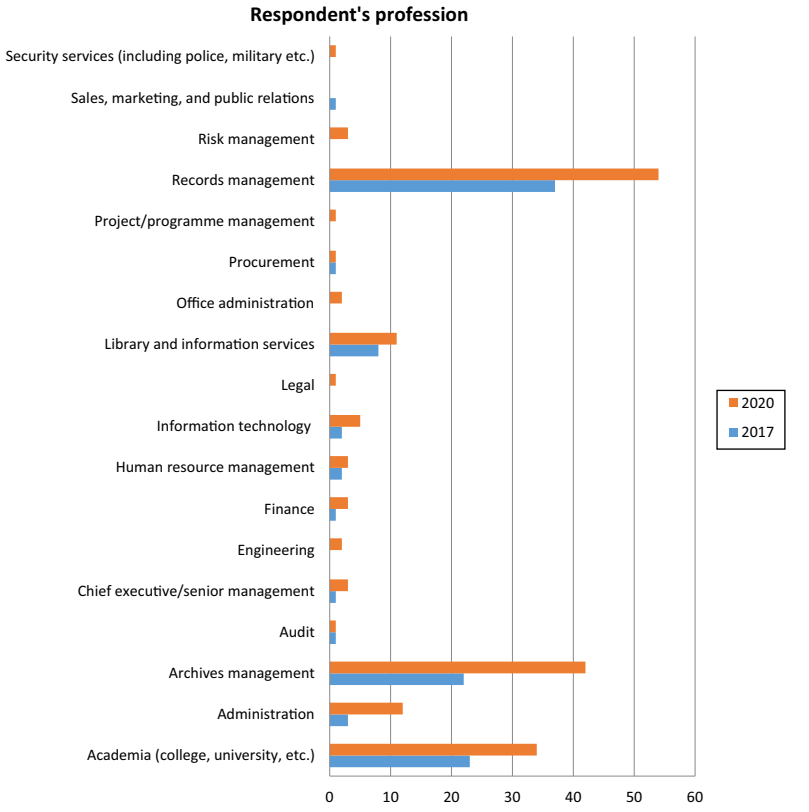

Figure 2.
Responses to Question 2

On Question 8, regarding the course on law, the order in the first survey started with course not included (29.00%), moderate coverage (28.00%), low coverage (26.00%) and high coverage (17.00%). In the second survey, the order and percentages changed significantly: moderate coverage (31.46%), low coverage (28.65%), high coverage (20.22%) and course not included (19.66%). One respondent in each study skipped the question.

On Question 9, regarding the course on managing current records, the order in the first survey started with high coverage (60.61%), moderate coverage (19.19%), course not included (14.14%) and low coverage (6.06%). In the second survey, the order and percentages changed slightly: high coverage (42.05%), moderate coverage (31.25%), low coverage (14.77%) and course not included (11.93%). Two respondents in the first survey and three respondents in the second survey skipped the question.

On Question 10, regarding the course on preservation of digital records, the order in the first survey started with moderate coverage (30.69%), low coverage (25.74%), course not included (24.75%) and high coverage (18.81%). In the second survey, the order and percentages changed slightly: moderate coverage (33.15%), low coverage (24.72%), high coverage (24.16%) and course not included (17.98%). One respondent in the second survey skipped the question.

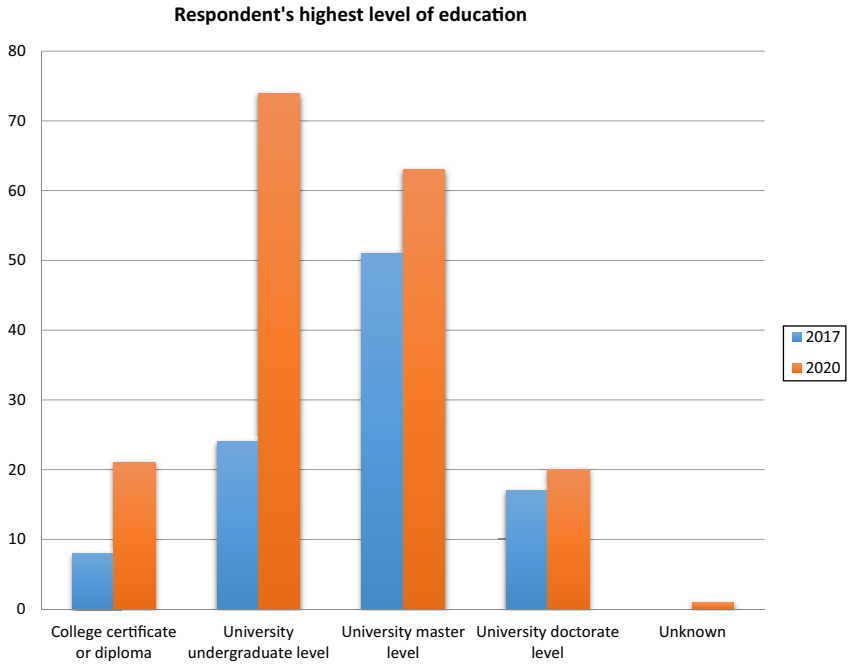

Figure 3.
Responses to Question 3

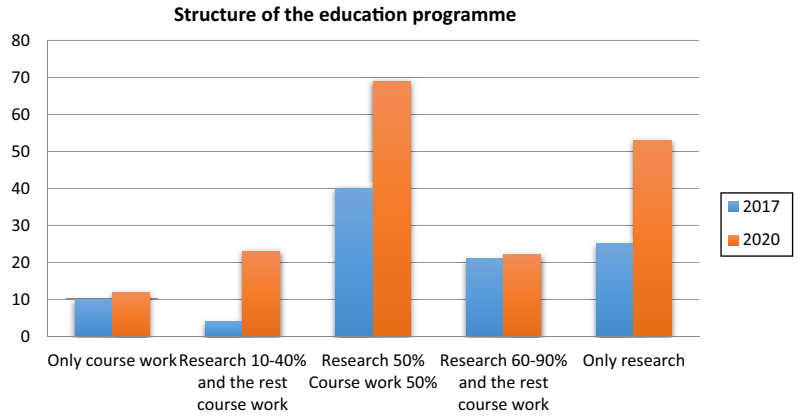

Figure 4.
Responses to Question 4

5. Discussion

The purpose of this section is to interpret the significance of the findings as well as consider implications.

5.1 Question 1

Table 3 shows that the top five countries in the first survey were Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. These collectively accounted for 83.33% of the respondents.

The top five countries in the second survey were Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Botswana, which collectively accounted for 87.45% of the respondents.

There are several patterns worth noting. First, Kenya led in both surveys, with slightly over 34% of the respondents. Several speculations could be made based on preceding discussions in this chapter. For instance, Kenya has almost a dozen educational institutions and an active professional association, which suggests a large pool of graduates who could respond (Ambira, 2019; Katuu, 2022c). Zimbabwe held second and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively. It had a substantial decrease of about 8%, even though the number of respondents was the same in both surveys. Therefore, the reduction is attributed

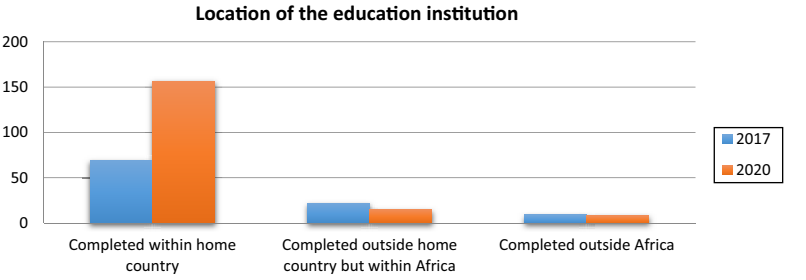

Figure 5.
Responses to Question 5

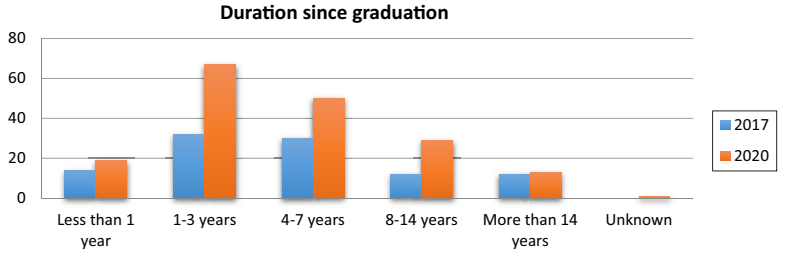

Figure 6.
Responses to Question 6

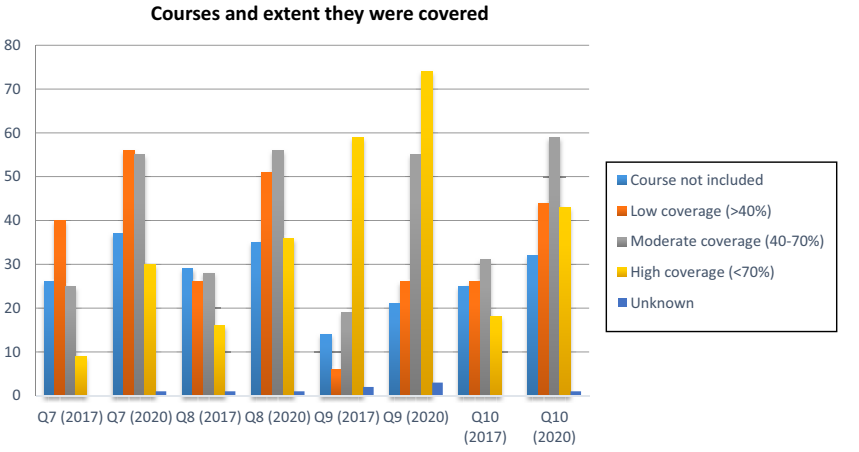

Figure 7.
Responses to Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10

to the increased total number of respondents in the second survey. South Africa held third and second positions in the first and second survey, respectively. It had a substantial increase of over 17% from the first to the second survey, suggesting the success of the snowballing mechanism used to solicit respondents in the second survey. Botswana held fourth and fifth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a decrease of over 8% from the first to the second survey.

Namibia held the fifth position in the first survey; however, it was not in the top five positions in the second survey, even though the number of respondents in both surveys was the same. Nigeria held the fourth position in the second survey; it had no respondents in the first survey. Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe may have featured in the top five positions in both surveys because the prominence of national researchers within the IP Trust Africa Team that contributed by distributing the online survey within their circles of influence (InterPARES Trust, 2019).

5.2 Question 2

Table 4 shows that *Records Management* and *Archives Management* sub-disciplines held first and second positions, respectively, in both surveys. For purposes of this study, the two sub-disciplines were considered separately in this question because they are often categorized separately in the work environment (Shepherd *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, together they accounted for a total of 59.4% and 53.63%, respectively, which is expected for conventional Records Professionals. *Academia* held the third position in both surveys, including its slight reduction of less than 4%, even though there was an increase of absolute numbers. This may be due to the number of respondents who identify as working for educational institutions. Nonetheless, it may not be surprising, considering that the key researchers on the Africa Team are academics who likely distributed the online surveys to their colleagues. *Library and Information Services* held fourth and fifth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a slight reduction of just below 2%. While the library science discipline has been closely connected with Records profession, the figures in the two surveys demonstrate a diminishing role (at least amongst the surveyed graduates in the Records profession). Finally, *Administration* held fifth and fourth positions in the first and

Survey choice	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	Zimbabwe
First study	13 (13.13%)	33 (34.34%)	6 (6.06%)	0	14 (14.14%)	16 (16.16%)
Second study	9 (5.03%)	61 (34.38%)	6	14 (7.82%)	56 (31.28%)	16 (8.94%)

Table 3. Top five responses to Question 1

Survey choice	Records management	Archives management	Academia	Library and information services	Administration
First study	36 (36.63%)	33 (22.77%)	23 (21.78%)	8 (7.92%)	3 (2.97%)
Second study	54 (30.17%)	61 (23.46%)	34 (18.99%)	11 (6.15%)	12 (6.70%)

Table 4. Top five responses to Question 2

second surveys, respectively. It had an increase of slightly less than 4% from the first to the second survey. This discipline is also often associated with Records professions. Therefore, the surveys demonstrate the diminutive influence amongst the surveyed graduates. The top five responses collectively accounted for between 85% and 92% of the professions identified by respondents. This demonstrates the overwhelming dominance of the top five professions over the remaining professions.

5.3 Question 3

Table 5 shows that respondents who chose master's-level qualification led in both surveys, even though the percentage reduced significantly from the first to second survey, by almost 9%. Respondents who chose an undergraduate-level qualification were second position in both surveys, even though the percentage increased significantly from the first to second survey, by almost 11%. Respondents who chose a certificate or diploma-level qualification were fourth and third positions in first and second surveys, respectively, with an increase of almost 5% from the first to second survey. Respondents who chose a doctorate-level qualification were third and fourth positions in the first and second survey, respectively, with a decrease of slightly over 5%. Overall, master's and undergraduate levels, when combined, total between 75% and 76% in the first and second surveys, respectively, which dominates the other qualifications. On its own, this observation may not be very significant; however, it informs the choices made, particularly for Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10.

5.4 Question 4

Table 6 shows that the option of *fair mixture of coursework and research* led overwhelmingly, with a percentage reduction from the first to second survey of about 2%. The option of *only research* was second and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a decrease of over 12%. The option of *mostly course work* was third and second positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a significant increase of almost 9% from the first to second survey. The option *only course work* was fourth and joint fourth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a 2% increase over the two surveys. The option *mostly research* was fifth and joint fourth positions in the first and

Table 5.
Responses to Question 3

Survey choice	Master's level	Undergraduate level	Certificate or diploma	Doctorate
First study	51 (50.50%)	25 (24.75%)	8 (7.92%)	17 (16.83%)
Second study	74 (41.57%)	63 (35.39%)	21 (11.80%)	20 (11.24%)

Table 6.
Responses to Question 4

Survey choice	Fair mixture of coursework and research	Only research	Mostly course work and minimal research	Only course work	Mostly research and minimal course work
First study	41 (40.59%)	25 (24.75%)	21 (20.79%)	10 (9.90%)	4 (3.96%)
Second study	69 (38.55%)	23 (12.85%)	53 (29.61%)	20 (11.24%)	20 (11.24%)

second surveys, respectively, with a 7% increase over the two surveys. It is peculiar that the two options *fair mix of coursework and research* and *only course work* varied by just about 2%, whereas the other options varied between 7% and 12%.

5.5 Question 5

Table 7 shows that respondents who completed their education within their home country led overwhelmingly, with a percentage increase from the first to second survey of almost 19%. Respondents who completed their education outside the home country but within Africa were consistently second, with a percentage decrease from the first to second survey of almost 13%. Finally, respondents who completed their education outside the African continent were third, with a percentage decrease of over 4% from the first to second survey. Overall, respondents who completed their education in their home countries were overwhelmingly the majority, which tallies with observations in the literature that only a small percentage of Records professionals undertook education and training outside the African continent (Khayundi, 2011). In the larger discussion of education and training, this suggests that any transformation work should be done within the home country for optimal positive impact.

5.6 Question 6

Table 8 shows that respondents who completed their studies between years 1 and 3 at the time of the survey led overwhelmingly in both surveys, with a percentage increase of 6% from the first to second survey. Respondents who completed their studies between years 4 and 7 at the time of the survey were second position in both surveys, with a percentage decrease of about 2% from the first to second survey. Respondents who completed their studies in less than 1 year at the time of the survey were third and fourth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a percentage reduction of 3%. Respondents who completed their studies between years 8 and 14 at the time of the survey were fourth and third positions in first and second surveys, respectively, with a percentage increase of 5%. Respondents who completed their studies more than 14 years at the time of the survey were consistently fifth position in both surveys.

Table 7. Responses to Question 5

Survey choice	Completed within home country	Completed outside home country but within Africa	Completed outside Africa
First study	70 (69.31%)	22 (21.78%)	9 (8.91%)
Second study	156 (87.15%)	15 (8.38%)	8 (4.47%)

Table 8. Responses to Question 6

Survey choice	Less than 1 year	1–3 years	4–7 years	8–14 years	More than 14 years
First study	14 (13.86%)	32 (31.68%)	31 (30.69%)	12 (11.88%)	12 (11.88%)
Second study	19 (10.67%)	67 (37.64%)	50 (28.09%)	29 (16.29%)	13 (7.30%)

Overall, the two categories of respondents who completed their studies between years 1 and 7 accounted for between 61% and 63% of all respondents in the first and second surveys, respectively. This may suggest several things. First, respondents may have had an amount of enthusiasm in engaging in the studies specifically, and professional discussions in general. Second, respondents may have access to the Internet, which in an African reality is not universal (and when available, it is relatively more expensive). Studies have shown that for many Africans, use of the Internet for anything beyond basic needs would likely be carried out at a work environment (Lembani *et al.*, 2020).

5.7 Question 7

Table 9 provides the list of topics outlined in the survey for respondents to assess the extent of the coverage in Question 7.

Table 10 shows that the option of *low coverage* was leading in both studies, even though the percentage reduced significantly from the first to second survey by slightly over 9%. The option *course not included* was second and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with the percentage reduced by 5% from the first to second survey. The option of *moderate coverage* was third and second positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with the percentage increasing by slightly over

Question	Topics covered in each course
(7) To what extent was a course on *an introduction to information technology* covered in your most recent academic programme?	• Introduction to hypertext markup language • Introduction to structured query language and relational database management systems • Database design for records and archives users • Digital imaging; digital preservation • Archival trusted digital repositories and repository certification • Software development lifecycle and the records and archives professional • Technology and the changing landscape of records and archives work in the 21st century • Virtualization, emulation and migration, etc.

Table 9.
Topics covered in course in Question 7

Survey choice	Course not included	Low coverage	Moderate coverage	High coverage
First study	26 (25.74%)	40 (39.60%)	25 (24.75%)	10 (9.90%)
Second study	37 (20.79%)	56 (31.46%)	55 (30.90%)	30 (16.85%)

Table 10.
Responses to Question 7

6% from the first to second survey. The option of *high coverage* was fourth position in both the first and second surveys, respectively, with the percentage increasing by 7% from the first to second survey.

It is concerning that between one-fifth and one-quarter of the respondents did not have this course covered in their education programme. Additionally, more than half the respondents either did not have the course or had low coverage when it was present. On the other hand, less than 83% had high coverage of the content of this course. Over 75% had either an undergraduate or master's degree, which raises concerns regarding the content of the curriculum. Finally, there is additional concern that the title and contents of the course demonstrate that this is an introductory course. When the responses are examined in totality, it suggests this is strategically the most critical of the responses, particularly when looking at technological trends and in keeping with concerns raised in other tracer studies, as well as literature reviewed regarding preparing graduates for a digital future (Eastwood, 2006; Ngoepe, 2017).

5.8 Question 8

Table 11 provides the list of topics outlined in the survey for respondents to assess the extent of the coverage in Question 8.

Table 12 shows that the option of *course not included* was first and fourth position in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a significant reduction of 10%. The option of *low coverage* was third and second positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a slight increase of 2% from the first to second survey. The option of *moderate coverage* was second and first positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with a slight increase of about 2.5% from the first to second survey. The option of *high coverage* was fourth and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with an increase of slightly over 3% from the first to second survey.

Question	Topics covered in each course
(8) To what extent was a course on *an introduction to law for the archives and records profession* covered in your most recent academic programme?	• Overview of the national legal system • Copyright and intellectual property law relevant to the records and archives profession • Emerging trends including Cloud computing and social media • Freedom of information and protection of privacy • Legislation and case law relevant to records and archives professionals • Managing legal risks and liability in contract, tort, and criminal law relevant to records and archives professionals • Principles of evidence law applied to the records and archives profession • Records retention and improper destruction of evidence, etc.

Table 11.
Topics covered in course in Question 8

Considering that most of the options move only slightly (except the option *course not included*) suggests that the course seems to have been generally consistent. It may have improved slightly over the course of the two surveys.

5.9 Question 9

Table 13 provides the list of topics outlined in the survey for respondents to assess the extent of the coverage in Question 9.

Table 12. Responses to Question 8

Survey choice	Course not included	Low coverage	Moderate coverage	High coverage
First study	29 (29.00%)	26 (26.00%)	28 (28.00%)	17 (17.00%)
Second study	35 (19.66%)	51 (28.65%),	56 (31.46%)	36 (20.22%)

Table 13. Topics covered in course in Question 9

Question	Topics covered in each course
(9) To what extent was a course on *managing current records* covered in your most recent academic programme?	• History and development of the management of current records • Theoretical conceptualizations of the record • Records management concepts, theories, standards, and frameworks • Business systems and functional analysis • Records classification system design and implementation • Records retention and disposition authority development and implementation • Managing records creation and capture • Managing records storage and use • Managing and implementing records disposition, and destruction • Developing records management policies, procedures, and programmes • Risk identification, assessment, and management • Business continuity planning and vital records protection • Technology and its impact upon records and recordkeeping systems, etc.

Table 14 shows that the option of *course not included* was third and fourth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with an almost 3% reduction between the first and second surveys. The option *low coverage* was fourth and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with an almost 8% increase between the first and second surveys. The option *moderate coverage* was second position in both studies, with an increase of slightly over 12% between the first and second surveys. The option of *high coverage* was first position in both studies; it had a decrease of slightly over 18% from the first to second survey.

First, the drastic reduction in the option of *high coverage* may look concerning. It may be considered right-sizing of the option between the first and second surveys, considering a larger pool of respondents in the latter study. Nonetheless, even with the reduction, the option was overwhelming. When figures from the options *high coverage* and *moderate coverage* are combined, they remain above 70% over the course of the two surveys. This may suggest a certain amount of satisfaction with the course amongst most respondents.

5.10 Question 10

Table 15 provides the list of topics outlined in the survey for respondents to assess the extent of the coverage in Question 10.

Table 16 shows that the option of *course not included* was third and fourth positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with an increase of slightly over 7% from

Survey choice	Course not included	Low coverage	Moderate coverage	High coverage
First study	14 (14.14%)	6 (6.06%)	19 (19.19%)	36 (60.61%)
Second study	21 (11.93%)	26 (14.77%)	55 (31.25%)	60 (42.05%)

Table 14. Responses to Question 9

Question	Topics covered in each course
(10) To what extent was a course on *preservation of digital records* covered in your most recent academic programme?	• The concept of record in the digital environment • Cloud computing • Concepts, principles and methods guiding the reliable and accurate creation, maintenance, appraisal, and long-term preservation of digital records • E-mail and Web preservation • Existing standards and models related to digital recordkeeping and preservation • Metadata and archival description, etc.

Table 15. Topics covered in course in Question 10

Survey choice	Course not included	Low coverage	Moderate coverage	High coverage
First study	25 (24.75%)	26 (25.74%)	31 (30.69%)	19 (18.81%)
Second study	32 (17.98%)	44 (24.72%)	59 (33.15%)	43 (24.16%)

Table 16. Responses to Question 10

the first to second surveys. The option of *low coverage* was second position in both studies, with a slight reduction of 1% from the first to second survey. The option of *moderate coverage* was first position in both studies, with an increase of about 3% from the first to second survey. The option of *high coverage* was fourth and third positions in the first and second surveys, respectively, with an increase of 6% from the first to second survey.

It is concerning that between 17% and 24% of the respondents did not have the course covered in their education programme. Additionally, between the two surveys, around one-quarter of the respondents stated that the course had low coverage. When combined, these figures amount to between 41% and 51% in the second and first studies, respectively. Over 75% had either an undergraduate or master's degree, which raises more concern regarding the content of the curriculum. Finally, there is additional concern that the title and contents of the course demonstrate that this is an introductory course. When all the responses are examined in totality, it suggests this is strategically the most dire of the responses, particularly when looking at trends in preservation of digital records and in keeping with concerns raised in other tracer studies, as well as literature reviewed regarding preparing graduates for a digital future (Ashley and Misic, 2019).

5.11 Overall

Based on responses to questions related to background information, the two surveys had respondents domiciled in 19 different African countries as well as three countries outside the continent. This demonstrates a significant representation out of a possible 54 African countries, which increases the prospect of applicability of observations. It is noteworthy that, while many studies look at Records Professionals as falling within a single profession, in the work environment, Records Management and Archives are often viewed as separate sub-professions. In this study, between 53% and 58% of the respondents identified as either, with the former having the edge over the latter.

Based on responses to the question related to characteristics of the education programme, the two surveys reveal that over 70% of the respondents had either undergraduate- or master's-level education. Additionally, between 38% and 40% of the respondents felt that their education programmes had a fair mix of coursework and research. Depending on institutional and national requirements, this could be interpreted as either reasonable or not good enough. Therefore, it needs to be assessed in conjunction with other observations. For example, between 69% and 87% of the respondents completed their formal education programmes within their home country. And, between 44% and 47% of the respondents completed their education programmes within the last three years of each of the studies. When taken together, these observations suggest a reliability of the responses for the individual courses in the survey.

Based on responses to questions on individual courses, there is concern about the high percentage of respondents who admitted that introductory courses were not included in their education programme. Regarding the introduction to technology, the figure was between 20% and 25%. The introduction to law's figure was between 19% and 29%. The figure for preservation of digital records was between 17% and 24%. On the other end of the spectrum, the percentage of respondents who admitted high coverage of identified course content for the courses was very low. In particular, the introduction to technology figure was between 9% and 16%. Introduction to law's figure was between 17% and 20%. The figure for preservation of digital records was between 18% and 24%. Only the management of current records course had favourable assessment from respondents, with between 42% and

60% stating there was high coverage of the course content identified. This suggests that education programmes have a lot of work to both introduce and improve the course content to match with modern curricula requirements. As noted in this chapter, this effort needs to include all the stakeholders, particularly professional associations.

6. Concluding remarks

This study conducted two surveys targeting Records professionals from Africa and that were administered online in 2017 and 2020. While the study provided valuable information on the education environment in Africa, there are more questions than answers. This work was a quest to demonstrate major research deficits. Amongst them is acknowledging nuances within countries. For instance, respondents were domiciled in only 19 of the 54 countries on the continent. In most cases, there were less than five respondents per country. Nonetheless, even with the limited data obtained, it is also worthwhile exploring additional insights amongst respondents within individual countries. That said, future studies, particularly those investigating specific jurisdictions, could strive for wider representivity among ARM professionals. Such efforts would begin to address a reductionist temptation for oversimplifying trends and observations that plagues many studies on the continent. This study offers the unique contribution of providing baseline data for more detailed nuanced studies. Finally, as noted at the beginning of the article, this study drew from the larger research endeavour by the Africa Team of the IP Trust research project and makes a modest contribution to advancing the education and training of ARM professionals on the African continent.

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Corresponding author
Shadrack Katuu can be contacted at: 35920068@mylife.unisa.ac.za