

Motivations of choosing archival studies as major in the i-School:

Viewpoint between two universities across the Pacific Ocean

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Abstract

Purpose

This study explores the learning and career motivation of the students who have chosen archival studies as their major in their master's degree programs, which has scant prior research.

Methodology

We use a qualitative interview method to investigate the students' opinions and underlying reasons. Nine students from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and University of British Columbia (UBC), both members of the i-School, were interviewed. Considering the responses and our research questions, we applied content analysis techniques to summarize data gathering from interviews into five themes to better interpret the meanings behind them.

Findings

Despite different development stages of archives sectors in Hong Kong and Canada, the learning and career motivation factors of these students from both universities share some similar characteristics and can also be divided into intrinsic factors (such as personal interests, personalities) and extrinsic factors (such as prior working experience, working environment, nature of archives work, and development of the archives field). Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors significantly influenced them in choosing archival studies as major in their graduate studies.

Practical implications

These findings can help educators and professions review and improve the curricula as well as promote the profession to the public and attract more people to pursue their studies in the archives field.

Originality

Scant studies discussed the career development and education motivation of archivists, especially related to Asia.

Introduction

Being an archivist is a fascinating and meaningful job. As the International Council on Archives (ICA) promotes, “there are not many jobs where it can be said that what you do today will matter hundreds of years from now. An archivist or recordkeeper needs a passion for history, an eye for detail, and a strong commitment to service. The return is to be a custodian of society’s memory.” (International Council on Archives, 2020) People who wish to be engaged in archival works may take courses and even enroll in degree programs.

In academia, scant researches explored the career development and education of archivists. In most archival management literature, researchers focused on the processing and preservation of archives, such as records management, archives appraisal, and other issues on the digital records management and technology, rather than investigating archives career or curriculum development. So, people outside the archives field know little about the latest trends and career development of archivists. Therefore, this motivates our comparative study of students from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) of archives major to investigate their career and learning motivations, particularly the factors that influenced their decision of choosing this major. Since the relevant topic is rarely studied in Asia, this study could fill in the research gaps and provide new insights into the effectiveness of the current approach to archives professional education and help the i-Schools attract more students to become archivists as their future career. The findings of such studies may provide new insights into the effectiveness of the current approach for recruitment and help the profession conduct workforce planning (Lo *et al.*, 2016). The findings of this study are thus valuable to educators of archival studies, current students, and practicing archivists. Furthermore, this study could provide future research directions regarding the motivations, education, careers of the profession.

We selected masters’ students at HKU and UBC because the development stages of archives sectors in Hong Kong and Canada are different (immature vs. mature). However, as both of them are members of the i-School, we can have a holistic understanding of archives learning and career motivations in different parts of the world. To fulfill the purpose of this study, we investigated the differences in factors (social, educational, personal, and professional) that influenced the MLIM/MAS students at these two universities to choose archival studies as their major. So, the following research questions would guide this study:

- RQ1. What are the students’ career paths and motivations in the archival studies programs at these two universities?
- RQ2. How do both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence their career choices and decisions?

Literature Review

To examine the research gap and bring new insight into the field, we review the literature related to archives professions' career paths, motivations, and career development.

Career path and motivations of the archives profession

According to the Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States (A *CENSUS) conducted in 2004, only about 40% of the interviewees held MLIS-equivalent degrees. It seems it is not a must to get a relevant master's degree to apply for archivist jobs. Still, a related postgraduate qualification is a plus in Hong Kong, Canada, and many other countries. The pathway to a career in the archives field is usually unstraightforward as most archivists have prior work experience to become a professional. In the Hong Kong Government, the professional pathway has long followed UK's practice to become an archivist. Typically, one needs to gain a first degree in history or social science, and then an accredited postgraduate qualification such as programs recognized by the Archives and Records Association for further promotion (Lo, 2015) and possessing some must-have skills and preferably some prior related working experience. The corporate archives in Hong Kong also prefer candidates with a master's degree. The pathway to becoming an archivist in Canada is similar to the US, i.e., a first degree and a postgraduate qualification recognized by professional organizations such as the Association of Canadian Archivists (2020).

As motivation is a crucial element for students' success in learning and working after graduation (Jovanovic and Matejevic, 2014), we should understand what types of motivations influence them to pursue a study and career. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) attempts to identify distinct types of motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000a, 2000b), namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic motivations refer to performing activities for one's inherent satisfaction (such as interest and joy) rather than for some separable consequence. Further, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) (Deci and Ryan, 1985) addresses specific factors in social contexts that explain variability in intrinsic motivation. Besides, Jovanovic and Matejevic (2014) proposed that students' individual interests are crucial to their intrinsic motivations, which internal and external factors may influence. For example, prior working experiences with positive performance feedback would increase people's interest to be enhanced intrinsically and motivate them to pursue a career and study.

Extrinsic motivations refer to performing activities for some separable outcome and goal, in contrast to intrinsic motivations. Ryan and Deci (2000b) pointed out that extrinsic motivations can vary significantly in their relative autonomy, reflecting self-regulation and external control. In other words, intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the enjoyment and challenge entailed rather

than because of external pros, rewards, or pressures. Meanwhile, Jovanovic and Matejevic (2014) concluded that the effectiveness of promoting any of these intrinsic and extrinsic motivations depends on the personality, nature of activities, and the environment.

Career choices and decisions

On the other hand, some theories explain the impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on people's motivations, choices, and careers. The Theory of Vocation Development (TVD) (Super, 1953) explains how intrinsic factors may affect career development. This theory indicated that knowing the individual's life stages is essential to understanding the individual's vocational preference because a person would change their time and environment to their vocational preferences. Ho et al. (2016) concluded that people's career choices are intrinsically motivated by personality and vocational self-concepts, which can be developed as a lifelong process with different development stages.

The Theory of Vocation personalities and work environments developed by Holland (1959, 1997) explains how intrinsic factors affect career development. In this theory, Holland postulated that individual occupations are based on one's personality and introduced six types of occupational personalities and environments, namely, Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Thus, people intend to work in a job when there is a good fit between their personality type and the characteristics of the work environment to let them exercise their abilities and skills. As a result, people's career choices are intrinsically motivated by personality.

Thirdly, the Learning Theory of Career Counseling (LTCC) developed by Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Jones (1976) explains how extrinsic factors affect academic and career development. Four factors influence career decision-making and development in this theory, namely genetic endowments and special abilities, environment conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. Environmental conditions and events could be regarded as extrinsic factors because they are related to people's input and rewards. This theory provides some explanations on why people enter or change into a particular educational program or occupation.

Furthermore, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent and his colleagues (1994; 2002; 2009) explained how extrinsic factors affect academic and career development by understanding the processes through which people develop education or vocational interests and make career choices. According to the SCCT, people develop goals to pursue academic and career-relevant activities consistent with their interests, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations (social cognitive variables). Other social contextual factors include gender, barriers, financial constraints, support systems, and communities influencing their academic and career choices. These social contextual factors are extrinsic.

Last but not least, an integrated model of career change developed by Rhodes and Doering (1983) explained how both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect career changes. This model considers an individual's motivations in undergoing career change to be influenced by job and career dissatisfactions, as well as organizational, personal, and environmental factors (such as work performance, age, financial constraints, and labor market conditions).

In summary, these researches have shown that prior working experience would have an impact on individuals' academic and career choices. Further, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors also matter. However, to the best of our knowledge, there are scant studies related to the archives profession yet.

Research Methodology

This research applies a qualitative research method because this study focuses on exploring why those students chose archival studies as their major. Using a qualitative method can provide more valuable and richer information, which quantitative methods cannot provide, especially at this exploratory stage. In particular, using semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data is one of the most productive data gathering methods in qualitative research to reveal the underlying reasons for an individual's opinion (Leedy and Ormord, 2015). This process enables the participants to express their feeling and explain their ideas in their own words so that investigators can get crucial and valuable information. At the same time, the researchers can ask follow-up questions to clarify something immediately.

Data collection

We conducted semi-structured interviews through email and messaging software (WeChat and WhatsApp) to collect data. Each interview approximately took 1 hour in length and contained 23 questions (see the Appendix for details). All participants were voluntary and asked the same set of open-ended questions to maintain consistency amongst the data. Emails had been sent to the respective participants beforehand to seek their consent to conduct the interviews, explaining the purpose and procedures of this research.

Selection and sampling

As we are looking into the possibility of a joint degree between HKU and UBC, students from the archival studies concentration of MLIM (Master of Science and Information Management) program of HKU and those from the MAS (Master of Archival Studies) of UBC were chosen for this research. Further, both institutes are members of the iSchools. As the HKU archives studies concentration just started in 2015, there were only around 20 such students in total. Finally, six students of HKU and three students of UBC participated in this study.

Research results and analysis

The 23 interview questions focused on the students' views towards the archivist profession by pursuing a graduate degree in the archival studies major. This research applied content analysis techniques to summarize data gathering from interviews into themes to better interpret the meanings behind (Flick *et al.*, 2007; Bryman, 2012). In considering the responses as well as our research questions, we identified the following five themes: participants' background; skills and knowledge transferable to future archives work; external factors influencing participants to enter the archives field; internal attitudes influencing participants to enter the archives field; and development of the archives field influencing participants to enter the field.

Participant's background

Table 1. Coding for the participants' background

Theme	Coding	
	HKU	UBC
Gender	4 Female, 1 Male	2 Female, 1 Male
Diversified previous education	Human resources; History; computer science; technology; Business administration; Language Studies (both English & Chinese); Library and information science; professional accounting; engineering	English and World Literature; English & Medieval Studies Master degree majors; History
Archive-related previous job	Civil servant at archive; Archivist at Leg Co; Corporate archives manager; intern in an archival organization; archival department of HKU	Part-time in archive; part-time archival technician; intern in an archival organization
Unrelated previous job	Librarian; secondary school teacher; IT system developer; Freelancer; deputizing hospital administrator; automotive technician manager	Part-time library assistant; library staff; museum staff

It was essential to know the participants' backgrounds to better understand how they make study decisions in different social contexts. Therefore, the participants were asked questions about their previous studies, work experience, relation to archival studies, and if they were considering a major career change.

Table 1 summarizes the participants' background, which indicates that nine participants were from diversified education and background, ranging from history and business to computer science and the library and IT industry. The research results also showed that a majority of them have some prior archive-related working experience.

Skills and knowledge transferable to future archives work

As most participants had work experience in other professions, they were asked about their working skills and professional expertise and considered them contributing to their future archives work. They were further asked about their overall impression of the nature of archives work to explore their understandings of the nature of archives work. Table 2 summarized the participants' anticipated contribution of their previous professional knowledge. Most of them expected their prior domain

knowledge (such as LIS, IT, and business) and experience would benefit archives jobs. Besides, they thought collection and management skills, as well as professional attitudes, were essential.

Table 2. Coding for participants’ anticipated contribution of their previous professional knowledge

Theme	Coding	
	HKU	UBC
Domain / professional knowledge from prior professions	IT expertise and database knowledge for testing systems in IT and library industry; library knowledge in cataloging and digitization of print and non-printing materials; business knowledge for organizing exhibitions and training.	Library knowledge for cataloging and digitization of print and non-printing materials;
Collection and management skills	Background in library and archives to help collection services, reference services, IT and business setting;	
Professional attitude	Analytical thinking, detail-minded;	Communication skill; teamwork skill

Professional/Personal factors influencing participants to enter the archives field

To identify what factors influenced the participants’ career and study decision, this set of questions focused on the reasons behind the participants’ decision to take archives as their major. Table 3 summarizes the professional and personal factors influencing participants to enter the archives field.

When participants were asked of their motivations, four out of nine participants considered personal interest to motivate them to pursue archival studies, two considered professional reasons that influenced them, and three considered both personal interests and professional reasons that motivated them. Participants’ interests included: interest in the programs, interest in working with archives, a broad spectrum of interests, archival studies being a challenging field, etc. They also explained that professional reasons included benefits to future archives work and current job requirements for a relevant master’s degree.

Table 3. Coding for participants’ factors toward to the archives field

Theme	Coding	
	HKU	UBC
Personal interests	Hot topic in city; broad spectrum of interests; archives work is challenging	Interested in working with archives
Professional reasons	Current job requirement; helpful for future archives work	Helpful for my future archives work

Attitude influencing participants to enter the archives field

To gain a better understanding of their career and study decisions in different social contexts, Table 4 summarizes the participants’ attitudes that influenced them to enter the archives field and their impressions of future employment. When participants were asked if they expected archive-related jobs soon after graduation, five (HKU students) out of nine participants felt pessimistic because only a few

corporate archives and related institutions in Hong Kong might not provide many job openings. On the other hand, the other four (1 HKU & 3 UBC students) participants felt optimistic. However, when they were asked about the overall impression of the future of archives jobs, almost all of them had a positive feeling and experience with archives and their environment. Moreover, most of them thought archive-related jobs would have a good remuneration, but four expressed that this was not a major reason for their consideration as they were young full-time students.

Table 4. Coding for participants’ attitudes towards archive-related jobs

Theme	Coding	
	HKU	UBC
Positive / Negative attitude	Negative attitude - most HKU students are pessimistic as only a few corporate archives in HK and not many job openings; limited related institutions in Hong Kong	Positive attitude - most UBC students are confident of finding a job soon after graduation
Positive experience in archive	Learn a lot and develop an interest in corporate archives; just like to be close to history	Enjoy the experience in archival work; just like to be close to history
Remuneration	High salaries; stable income, not a major problem for this factor	
Archives workplace	Respected and act professionally/ independently; supported by the manager; concentrated, focused, interesting; conform and peaceful of an ideal archival department/institution	A place close to the archives; equipped with some advanced facilities
work towards in different kinds of archives institution	Government archives; universities; NGO; Corporate Archive; LegCo Archives	A community-focused archives or museum; municipal archives; academic institution, examples like Thomas Fisher Rare book library, British Library, British Museum, the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, and the Bodleian Libraries.

Development of archives field influencing potential participants

Finally, we asked questions on the participants’ understanding and feeling about the overall impression of the archives profession and development of the archives field. Table 5 summarizes the development of the archives field that had influenced participants’ choices. Regarding the future of the archival profession, most HKU students felt not too optimistic currently, but both HKU and UBC students considered digital archives would be the future. The primary reason why HKU students had a negative attitude was that the Archives Law is not yet legislated in Hong Kong.

As for the participants’ perceptions of the difference between archivists and librarians, most thought the general public poorly understood archivists’ role and confused it with librarians’. They thought that archivists and librarians performed similar tasks of organizing materials, but they did not know archivists manage different materials with different rules and principles. Another reason was that they thought no formal training course from certificate to postgraduate levels in archival studies had been offered in Hong Kong until HKU started a new concentration in “Archives and Records

Management” under their MLIM program in 2015. However, the HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) has been offering postgraduate certificates and other individual short courses for quite some time. Further reasons include few jobs opening in this field in Hong Kong and low public awareness in archives in Hong Kong.

Table 5. Coding for participants’ understanding of the archives field

Theme	Coding	
	HKU	UBC
Development of archives law	No archives law causes some difficulties for archives management, e.g., the practices of records and archives management especially the records disposal and retention is not being monitored; all public records with historical and enduring values, even legal and fiscal purposes that created by the government and its departments; non-government organizations are not adequately preserved and provided timely public access	Canada has Archives Law; Archives law is well developed; digital archives is the future; a move towards the digital and the preservation of born-digital records
Poorly know the archivist	No one knows other friends work as a professional archivist	
	Confused the function of librarians and archivists, people always think that librarians and archivists both need to organize materials, so that librarians could take up any jobs related to information management.	
	Few job opening in this field; extremely low public awareness of archives and records management in HK; few archivists in HK with academic qualifications; lack of such professional courses in HK; lack of formal training course; inadequate promotion of the archives profession	Unfamiliar with the archives law situation in Canada.

Discussion

Table 6. Intrinsic factors versus Extrinsic factors

Intrinsic Motivation Factors	Extrinsic Motivation Factors
Being interested in the nature of archives work; Being close to history, and the nature of archives work allows digging out the background information; Being close to history, and the nature of archives work allows digging out the background information; Derive the enjoyment from performing archives work; fit into the personality, which is cautious and patient.	Requirements of archives profession; Stressful working environment; Conform and peaceful of an ideal archival department/institution; High salaries; stable income; Poor labor market condition; Poor impressions of the archives field; Being able to transfer existing job skills, professional knowledge and other abilities to future archives work

This study has investigated various factors that motivate students’ choice of archival studies as their major. We found that most of the participants made this decision due to a variety of factors, including intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These factors are summarized in Table 6. These different factors were found to be consistent with some previous studies. For example, we may refer to the integrated model of career change developed by Rhodes and Doering (1983) that labor market conditions and financial status are major influential factors. To further understand these factors, we further discuss these two main types of factors in the following subsections.

Intrinsic motivation factors

According to the literature, most participants would choose archival studies as they are interested in the nature of archives work. Jovanovic and Matejevic (2014) indicated that individual interest is a critical intrinsic motivation. In our study, the participants' interest is a key intrinsic factor influencing them in their decision because seven out of nine participants expressed personal interest as their main motivation to pursue this major. As for how they developed this interest, most participants had prior working experience in library or archives-related fields. Such working experience enables them to understand the nature of archives work and the working environment, leading them to positive impressions and attitudes towards archives work.

Meanwhile, personality is another factor to increase their interests. One participant considered archives work fits into her personality as archives work needs caution and patient to deal with different tasks. Another participant considered archives work challenging, and he loved facing challenges. Such motivations align with Holland's (1959, 1997) theory of vocational personalities and work environments that individual occupations should better match an individual's personality like personality, personal interests, and working environment. In this study, we found the relationships among these factors positively motivate them to pursue a graduate study in the archives field accordingly.

Furthermore, the participants' values associated with the job influenced students and the decisions they made (Lo et al., 2017). Two participants loved history and wished to work in archives, which they thought being close to history and thus would enable them to dig out the background information of something exciting, and they would enjoy organizing such historical information.

Thus, all these intrinsic factors (such as personal interests, personalities, and prior working experience) influenced the students to pursue their major in the archives field.

Extrinsic motivation factors

On the other hand, extrinsic factors influenced their decisions as well, such as requirements of the archives profession, working conditions and environment, labor market conditions, development of the archives field, and stable employment.

At present, archives law has not yet been legislated in Hong Kong, which is a rare exception amongst developed regions of the world as the majority of the world's jurisdictions, including China, Macau, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, have Archives Law. Without Archives Law, the Hong Kong Government has been using administrative directives and guidelines to regulate government records management. However, such measures have limited means of enforcement as there are no penalties for breaches. So, in June 2013, a sub-committee of the Law Reform Commission has begun to review the current situation and conduct a comparative study

of the relevant laws in other jurisdictions to make appropriate recommendations on possible reform proposals where necessary. (Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong, 2017).

For a long time, the biggest employer for archivists is the Hong Kong Government (Lo, 2016). In recent years, the number of archives-related jobs from universities and private sectors such as the HSBC (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) and the Swire Group, is slowly increasing (Hong Kong Archives Society, 2018), showing the archives sector in Hong Kong is quite immature. The concentration in Archives and Records Management of HKU's MLIM degree launched in 2015 was the only archives-related master program in Hong Kong. However, even though the archives law consultation is in progress, the concentration was closed in fall 2019.

In contrast, as the archival profession in Canada is much more mature, students and even the public have a clearer picture of the industry. The Association of Canadian Archivists was established in 1975, recently representing over 600 hundred archivists in Canada (Association of Canadian Archivists, 2020). As its website claims, Canada has two national archives and 13 provincial/territorial archives. ACA regularly publishes its journal *Archivaria* and organizes conferences and activities, which, no doubt, helps its members develop their careers. Among the archives master's programs in Canada, the UBC's Master of Archival Studies program, launched in 1981, is the first graduate program of its kind in North America (Eastwood, 1983; The University of British Columbia, 2019).

According to one HKU participant, her current employment contract required her to enroll in HKU's MLIM program, choose archival studies as her major, and successfully graduate to renew her contract. One participant from UBC indicated that she wanted to promote from a para-professional to a professional level in the archives field, but she did not have the professional qualification. ARA and ACA require a relevant postgraduate degree in the career path. Thus, the requirement of the archives profession was indeed a vital extrinsic factor to motivate them.

On the other hand, an HKU participant opined that her current working environment was so stressful that she considered changing her career to the archives field. Further, two participants described that their impression of the archives working environment is comfortable, peaceful, and respectful to stay in or change to the archives field, respectively. Rhodes and Doering (1983) stated that job dissatisfaction and environmental factors influence individuals in making career decisions. In particular, stressful working environments caused job dissatisfaction and would trigger career change in turn (Lo *et al.*, 2017). In contrast, if the working environment could provide an ideal workplace, employees would have better performance to meet their outcome expectations (Lent *et al.*, 1994). Our findings were in line with these two previous studies, and thus working condition and environment was another extrinsic factor influencing their decisions.

Further, a Hong Kong participant working in a government archive mentioned the archives profession provides excellent remuneration and thus would attract people to consider career changes. However, only two participants considered salary cut in job change as a problem as they had a family, while the other seven participants were young students who did not consider this a problem. Therefore, financial constraints were other factors influencing their decisions, especially for middle-aged employees with family constraints.

Furthermore, the labor market condition and development of the archives field is another extrinsic factor influencing their decisions. As stated by most HKU participants, the labor market of the archives field in Hong Kong is small, and the future development of the archives field is pessimistic because there are limited job openings for archivists and no Archives Law. There are few archivist job openings because few organizations can afford to develop an archive. Even if these organizations can afford to establish their archives, they often just recruit “librarians” to deal with their archives, because they are not aware of the difference between professional librarians and archivists. The HKU respondents believed this was caused by the absence of Archives Law in Hong Kong and inadequate advocacy of the archives profession. Therefore, even participants enrolled in the HKU master program did not consider changing the current career extrinsically influenced by the weak labor market condition and the uncertain development of archives law.

In contrast, all three UBC respondents showed an optimistic view of the archives field and labor market condition, because Canada has archives law, and the Association of Canadian Archivists provides governance to the archives field. Further, high public awareness of archivists has created more job opportunities. So, they enrolled in master’s degree programs as influenced by external job environment factors. According to SCCT (Lent et al., 1994; 2002; 2009), people pursue academic and career-relevant activities consistent with their interests and self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and other social contextual factors (such as community, support systems). Rhodes and Doering (1983) also indicate that labor market conditions influence an individual’s motivations in career changes. Thus, the situations of Canada in this study match these theories, while their interest, in contrast, more drove the HKU students.

Moreover, the findings indicated that most participants from HKU and UBC had rich and diversified educational and occupational backgrounds. Plus, they considered their current job skills and valuable knowledge for their future archives work. These findings are consistent with Krumboltz’s theory (1976) on career selection that extrinsic factors are linked with social and environmental context (such as environmental conditions, learning experiences, task approach skills, etc.) to constrain and facilitate the decision making on career selection. Further, as our society is information-driven with extensive adoption of new technologies, archivists require diverse skills and abilities to perform the

work better. Thus, as the participants have more relevant job skills and knowledge (such as collection and management skills, IT knowledge), it would indeed help their future archives work.

Therefore, our findings indicated that extrinsic factors such as working conditions and environment, nature of archives work, development of the archives field, etc., influenced the students in making their decisions to pursue graduate study in the archives field.

Recommendation

Based on the above findings, we propose some suggestions to the educators and professions of the archives field in Hong Kong. First, as the results show that prior working experience in archives has a positive impact on their decision, we would like to call for the archives industry to provide internship or work placement opportunities for students to enhance their skills, build up confidence in the future work, and strengthen their understanding in the real archives jobs. Second, the findings show that inadequate advocacy of the archives profession caused many negative effects in the job market and students' choices as their careers. Therefore, we would suggest that educators and archives professions work together to organize public talks, exhibitions, and other events to promote the archives profession to attract people to enter this field and let the public and organizations understand the importance of archives to create more job opportunities. Third, the findings show that participants of HKU have a pessimistic view of the future archives field as Hong Kong has no archives law and the public awareness of archives. To better improve public awareness of archives, the government should enact the archives law as soon as possible. Also, the archives profession and educators should cooperate to push the government towards legislation (Lo et al., 2016).

Last but not least, adequate education and training opportunities are vital. HKU should continue to provide an Archives and Records Management concentration to provide a master's level education platform for training future archivists and attract faculties with specialties in Archives further to develop the concentration into a full-scale archives degree. Alternatively, collaboration with other universities with more experience in archivist education, such as UBC, to provide a joint program or a top-up program is also a viable option. Meanwhile, the decade-long efforts of HKU SPACE in providing the programs for Postgraduate Certificate in Archival Studies, Executive Certificate in Archives Management, and the Postgraduate Diploma in Archival Studies should be very much commented.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study used a qualitative interview method to collect and analyze the data gathered from students enrolled in the archives majors at both HKU and UBC. By investigating their educational background, current employment status, attitudes towards, and perceptions of the archives field, this

study has identified the individual participant's motivations for their decision to pursue a graduate study.

According to the aim of the study and the findings, some conclusions are drawn. First, the study divided the students' learning and career motivation factors into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Besides, this study discovered that prior working experience in the archives positively impacted their decision to pursue a graduate study in the archives field. Furthermore, we found that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced the participants to pursue their graduate study in the archives field.

Therefore, gaining a better understanding of these students' career decision-making could provide opportunities for the archives educators and professions to review and improve the current curricula and attract more students to enroll in archives programs, thus better attracting and preparing the students for their future archivist careers.

Limitations and continuing work

In this study, there are some limitations. First, it is the unbalanced participant numbers. There are only three participants at UBC to participate in this interview, but there are six participants at HKU. So, it would be better to invite more participants at UBC to participate in the interviews to make it consistent with the participants' number of HKU and gain more comprehensive data in a future study. Yet, the current article can still satisfy the main objective of exploring the problems of the archivist profession in Hong Kong. Second, this study only invites students to interviews to provide their views on archival studies. However, most of them may not understand the archives profession deeply. So it would be better to invite archivists to express their opinions on the current situations of the archives profession in Hong Kong and Canada to collaborate on further findings, such as career development and the profession as a whole. Despite these limitations, this is one of the few studies, and the findings are still valuable to the current archives educators and professionals to disseminate the importance of archives to public attention. On the other hand, we are investigating the use of social media to promote archives usage (Mukwevho & Ngoepe, 2019) and archivist education.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Career path and motivations

1. Please introduce yourself and tell me what you studied for your Bachelor’s degree? Was your undergraduate degree somewhere related to Archival studies?
2. What is your current employment status? Full-time student or working part-time OR full-time? What is your current occupational status?
3. What motivated you to pursue Archival studies as your major in MLIS? Sheer personal interests or for practical reasons? Or a combination of both?
4. What was the highest degree obtained before undertaking the MLIS program?
5. What is your previous/current occupational status before starting the Archival studies in the MLIS program?
6. Did you have any other non-LAM-related careers? Are you currently considering a career change?
7. Are you undertaking this MLIS degree (majoring in archival science) – for career advancement reasons or you are aiming for a career change?
8. Do you know anyone (friends, relatives) who is working as a professional archivist? If yes, how do they describe the nature of their work as archivists?

Career choices and decisions

9. Please describe your overall impression of the nature of archives work, and the archives environment as your future workplace.
10. How did you develop an interest in archives work? Why do you think becoming an archives professional would be a feasible career change option for you?

11. What kind of working skills and professional knowledge that you currently possess, and you think could contribute to your future archives work?
12. Are you optimistic in terms of finding archive-related employment soon after your graduation?
13. After your graduation, what kind of archival institutes would you like to work in? E.g., university archives, business archives, government archives (Public Records Office, LegCo Archives, etc.), insurance companies, banks (HSBC), Asia Art Archive, Tung Wah Hospital Museum Archive, Po Leung Kuk Museum Archive, Hong Kong Kung Fu Digital Archive, etc.
14. Please tell me how much you understand about the archives law situation in Hong Kong/Canada?
15. Are you familiar with the Archives Action Group (set up in HK) and what they do?
16. Archival Science versus Library Science – what are the differences in terms of their professional practices? Why do you think many local archivists (esp. working in local universities) do not need to understand the same kind of professional training or have the same professional qualifications as it is in other developed countries? - and many of them are just librarians-turned-archivists – who have taken a few crash courses in archival science.
17. In your opinion, what is the future of the archival profession in Hong Kong/Canada? Do you think the professional community would place increasing emphasis that only fully qualified archivists are allowed to work in Hong Kong/Canada?
18. Why do you think there are a lot more students who want to study MLIS to become librarians and NOT archivists?
19. When you tell your friends, relatives, or family members that you want to become an archivist by undertaking this program at HKU/UBC, what are their initial reactions? Are they supportive of your decision?
20. Do you think professional archivists play an important role in safeguarding social justice?
21. When people say, becoming an archivist only requires common sense, all you need is to take a few crash courses on the weekend. The professional qualification for them is just to give archivists more bargaining power for their community – e.g., to be recognized as professionals, like accountants, lawyers, so that you could ask for a higher salary. Do you agree above and why?
22. Do you agree that the career path to becoming a professional archivist is too long when compared with librarians –the financial rewards are not high and it does not guarantee employment after graduation, like medical nurses or school teachers?
23. Undertaking a career change - would it imply that you would have to go through a significant salary cut - would this be a problem for you and your family?