

# Open Access Concept and the Viewpoint of Academic Staff in Turkish Universities to the Institutional Repositories<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Open access that is accepted as a standard method to access the publications which are supported by the public funding has been increasingly important today since it removes the legal, commercial and technological obstacles and makes research results much more visible. When the related literature is examined, although there were various studies on open access and institutional repositories after the beginnings of the millennium in Turkey, no study examining the attitudes towards the institutional repositories is found. Today, there are many universities in Turkey having problems with constituting institutional repositories and many of these problems are caused by the insufficient interest of the academic staff on the issue. Gathering data to understand the attitudes and opinions of the academic staff towards open access and institutional repositories of the academic staff -who do/will participate in the institutional repositories of the universities with their works- is a prerequisite to the solution of the problems, dissemination of the open access and institutional repository awareness among the academic institutions and creation of an environment of mutual cooperation. In this context, the target population of the study where the descriptive method was employed was restricted with the academicians of two universities, one of which achieved the transition processes to the institutional repository and the other continues to its workings to achieve this. The research data is gathered via documentary research, questionnaire and interview techniques. The findings of the research are expected to reduce the current problems of open access and institutional repository and clarify the determination of more participatory policies for the future.*

**Keywords:** Open access, institutional repositories, open access policy, university libraries, Turkey

## 1. Introduction

The electronic publishing has moved ahead of the printed publishing by developing through the opportunities provided by internet and its popularity has increased day by day and therefore this creates alternatives in access to the scientific knowledge. One of these alternatives is the publishing applications based on the open access thought. Presenting the scientific researches' result to the large masses' access as to be resource for the other researches is the irreplaceable priority of the scholarly communication. While the monopolistic positions of the traditional publishing houses in printed and electronic publications have complicating the spread of the scientific knowledge with the price and access barrier, it has led the birth of open access thought (Coşkun, Bayram, HoltandKarasözen, 2007). The open access thought, starting with the free publication of the scientific publication on internet, has brought out several hundred peer-reviewed electronic academic journals as well as a few of the e-edition archives in 1990s. These publishing applications, providing free access to the electronic products is called as "open access publishing" (Björk, 2004). The concept of "open access" has come into existence with the supporters like Stevan Harnad (1994) from the mid-1990s (Allen, 2005, p. 8).

However, the term of open access was used for the first time at the meeting which was held by the Open Society Institute in Budapest in 2001 and where open access supporters came together. Besides this, this meeting became the reason of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (Velterop, 2005, p. 4).

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Open Access, according to the definition in the declaration in Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002, is the openness of the scientific literature to the public without any charge for their all kinds of lawful use in addition to their availability for access, read, save, copy, print, scan, index, hyperlink to the complete text, transfer to the software as data via internet with out any financial, legal or technical restriction (Budapest, 2002). However, the requirement required to be fulfilled is to be appropriately made the citation to the author in order to realize all of them. Open access is handled only in terms of the author in the definition of the Open Access Initiative. Whereas a majority of publishers signs publishing agreements or alias copyright agreements, taking over the publication and distribution rights of the work with the author before publishing the work. Much as the intellectual property law at the national and international levels allows for the use of scientific literature for education and research purposes in certain circumstances especially through the libraries, the publishers may impose various restrictions on electronic publications by using the abovementioned agreements. For this reason, the open access necessitates the participation of the publishers as well as of the authors. Furthermore, another point not mentioned in definition is where and under which conditions the studies subject to open access are stored. A new meeting themed open access was held with the participation of scientists, librarians, publishers, scientific societies and funding agencies at the United States of America (USA) Howard Hughes Medical Institute in April, 2003 nearly two years after the Open Access Institute's meeting. The open access publication was defined in the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing (Velterop, 2005, p. 5; Bethesda, 2003), published after this meeting and two conditions has been set in order that a work be an open access publication. According to the first condition, a license should be taken from its author and copyright owner. According to the second condition, the aforesaid publication should be stored long-term in institutional repository (IR) formed by the academic institutions and similar organizations together with this license.

A third meeting was held about the "Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" by the Max Planck Society in Germany in the same year. This meeting extended the discussion by including the humanities and in conclusion produced the Berlin Declaration (Velterop, 2005, p. 6). The Berlin Declaration (Berlin, 2003) used chiefly the definition of the Bethesda Statement. It has a great international effect and supported with broad participation by the researchers in both humanities and sciences at the international level. Another important result of the Berlin Declaration was that open access was accepted by the principal institutions providing funds in the countries such as Germany, England and the USA in the European Continent and the North American Continent. The aforesaid institutions stated that the publication is an essential part of the research process and so should be financed as a part of the grant (Mittler, 2007, p. 9). Thus the open access was considered as a standard method in access to the publications, produced from the researches supported by the public funding. The policy principles proposed in the Bethesda Statement on long-term storage of the scientific literature in institutional repositories were also supported with broad participation at the international level. The institutional repositories (IRs) can be defined as an electronic system in which the scientific studies produced digitally by a university community are collected, stored and also through which the access is provided (Foster and Gibbons, 2005; Chan, 2004, p. 277; Crow, 2002, p. 16). The articles published in peer-reviewed and non-refereed journals, published and unpublished works, student thesis and dissertations, data sets, teaching materials etc. can be considered in these scientific studies (Foster and Gibbons, 2005). The success of an IR is directly proportionate to the quality of the scientific studies contained in it. The content for the IRs, generally formed and provided its continuance by the university libraries, are compiled cumulatively and archived continuously (Crow, 2002, pp. 6, 18, 20). The IRs increases the prestige and visibility of the universities (Crow, 2002, pp. 6) and also strengthens the position of the university libraries in scholarly communication system (Burns, Lana and Budd, 2013).

The international developments concerning the open access and institutional repositories got the universities, research institutions, publishers and libraries in Turkey under its influence in 2000s. Open access and institutional repositories became one of the agenda items in many workshops, congresses, symposiums and seminars organized in the field of information retrieval, information management and information and communication technologies. These studies were supported by Anatolian Universities Libraries Consortium and a working group, named as Open Access and Institutional Repositories Working Group, was founded within its body in order to form a basis, support, make suggestions for the initiatives at various levels for the periods forming IRs in Turkey and share the experiences obtained within the scope of the sample applications and trainings. This Group maintains its studies within the scope of its foundation mission by increasing day by day (ANKOS, 2015). Another working group, founded in order to provide the necessary support about the open access and institutional repositories to the university libraries, is the Council of Higher Education Institutional Repositories and Open

Access Working Group. This Group started its studies in January, 2014 (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2015a). There are IRs belonging to 56 universities still registered from Turkey at Open DOAR (Directory of Open Access Repositories) being an index which lists the institutional open access sites (Open DOAR, 2015). However, the number of universities has reached to 193 in Turkey today. This number amounts to 203 together with the other higher education institutions (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2015b). As can be understood from this information, even half of the newly established universities could not form the IR. Besides this, it is seen that few of the scientific studies, produced at national and international levels in Turkey are reflected on the existing IRs.

### 1.1. Research Purpose

Although the open access is widely accepted among the academic staff in view, many universities have various problems in forming IR today and most of these problems arise from the academic staff not show enough interest in the matter. When the national literature is examined, any studies, reflecting the perspective of the academic staff to the IRs, have not been found. Providing the support and revealing the perspective of the academic staff who makes/will make contribution to the IRs by their scholarly studies are regarded as significant for the success of the institutional repository policies, which are formed, in practice. The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes, thoughts and reservations of the academic staff who are one of the most important stakeholders of the IRs in universities with their scholarly studies towards the aforesaid repositories and increase the cooperation level for the workings of forming institutional repository. The research questions have been determined in parallel with this purpose as follows:

Are the academic staff aware of the open access and institutional repository workings conducted in the affiliated institution?

What do the academic staff think about the advantages and disadvantages of the institutional repositories?

What is the satisfaction level of the academic staff in the institutional repository applications in the affiliated institution?

What do the academic staff think about the strategies for developing of the institutional repositories?

### 1.2. Method

The *research* data has been collected by using the documentary scanning, questionnaire, and observation and also interview techniques within the scope of the research conducted by using the descriptive method. The target population of the study has been limited to the teaching faculty members (such as teaching staff members, instructors and research assistants) at two universities, one has completed the IR formation process and other still continues its workings. The number of academic personnel has been taken into consideration in determining the target population. According to the information obtained from the academic personnel units of the universities, the number of academic personnel is about 500 persons at the university having the IR as of 2014-2015 academic years. The number of academic personnel is 600 persons in the process of forming IR. The  $[n = \frac{N \cdot t^2 \cdot pq}{(d^2(N-1) + t^2 \cdot pq)]$  formula has been used for detecting the sample size for the questionnaire study. The sample size is about fifty five (55) persons for  $p = 0,8$  ve  $q = 0,2$  values together with the sampling error accepted as  $\pm 10$  per cent according to the frequency of the incident. The participants have been selected by the simple random sampling method for the questionnaire conducted by meeting face to face between April and May 2015. Totally a hundred persons, being fifty each, has been participated in the questionnaire from both universities. The response rate of the questionnaire is 91 per cent. Excel program and SPSS Statistics software have been used in evaluating the findings.

## 2. Finding and Discussion

In order to identify the attitudes of the academic personnel who do/will participate in the IRs of the universities with their works towards the open access and institutional repositories, and reveal the thoughts of these attitudes, a questionnaire, consisting of fourteen closed ended questions has been prepared. The relevant literature (Kim, 2010; Allen, 2005) has been used in preparing the questionnaire. The seventh, thirteenth and fourteenth questions of the questionnaire have been prepared according to the five point Likert scale. The eighth, ninth, tenth, and twelfth questions of the questionnaire are the multiple-answer question types (choose all that apply), that is, they allow participants to choose more than one option. In the rest of the questions can be chosen only one option.

The university, which is still in the process of forming IR, is called as "University A" and the other, which was formed its IR in 2007, as "University B" during the evaluation of the questionnaire results.

## 2.1. University A

The first four questions of the questionnaire are for determining the demographical characteristics of the participants. The age groups of the academic personnel, responded the questionnaire in the University A, and their percentage are as follows; 24% of them, 18-30, 42% of them, 31-40, 32% of them, 41-50 and 2% of them, 51 and older. 36% of them are research assistants; 4% of them instructors, 60% of them teaching staff members (such as professors, associate professors and assistant professor). When the responses have been evaluated as the year of work experience; 6% of them work less than 1 year, 44% between 1 and 5 years, 24% between 6 and 10 years, 26% for 11 years and more. Considering the distribution by gender; 26% of them is women and 74% is men. These results show that the participation rate in the questionnaire of teaching staff members (such as professors, associate professors and assistant professor) is higher than the other academic staff. The fifth question of the questionnaire is to determine whether the academic personnel have sufficient knowledge about the IR forming workings conducted in the affiliated institution. 2% of the participants responded the question "Does your University have institutional repository?" as yes, 44% of them as no, 36% of them responded as "I don't know". This result shows that the academic personnel of the University A are not sufficiently aware of the IR forming workings. In order to provide the academic personnel's support to these workings, University A and its relevant department, Library and Documentation Department should put more effort.

The sixth, seventh and eighth questions of the questionnaire are the questionnaires concerning the satisfaction level of the IR applications, prepared just for the academic personnel of the University B. The ninth and tenth questions are for the thoughts of the academic personnel of both universities about the advantages and disadvantages of the IRs. 74% of those responding the ninth question, in which the institutional repositories' possible advantages are listed, stated that "The IRs will develop and strengthen the scholarly communication", 72% of them "Increase the access to the scientific studies" and 64% of them "Increase the citation number". The rate of those who said "It is economic for the university and university library" and those who said "My study is continuously archived, indexed and also becomes accessible" is 62%. 26% of those responding the tenth question, in which the institutional repositories' possible disadvantages are listed, stated that "Archiving the scientific studies will be time-consuming and difficult and require technical knowledge", 44% of them stated that "They could not then have their study published in a peer-reviewed journal and the quality of the archived content can be interrogated because of the lack of peer-review or quality control period", 40% of them "Their study can be stolen or misused". Compared to the percentages of the responses given about the possible advantages and disadvantages of the IRs, it can be shown that the academic personnel of the University A found advantageous archiving their scientific studies in the IRs. It is aimed through the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth questions of the questionnaire to obtain appropriate data for forming more participatory policy and strategies for developing of the IRs. Where the academic personnel of the University A want to archive their scientific studies is asked in the eleventh question. 14% of those responding the question stated that they want to archive them in IR, 8% on personal web page, 22% in subject-based open access archives and 24% in online databases. Since 32% of the participants selected more than one option, their responses are regarded as invalid. It can be resulted from these percentages that the IRs are not attractive to the academic personnel of the University A.

The twelfth question has been prepared in order to learn whether the academic personnel wants to have more knowledge about the IRs and if so, learn their opinions about through which way they want to obtain this information. 64% of the participants have selected the option "This issue should be explained by organizing introductory meetings, conferences and seminars.", 50% of them "The opinion of the academic personnel should be taken by conducting questionnaires." and 62% of them "The guides concerning the issue should be prepared and distributed in electronic and printed medium.". The least preferred option in this question is the option related to conducting questionnaires. It is understood from the high level of the responses of this question that the academic personnel of the University A want to obtain more information on IRs. The thirteenth and fourteenth questions of the questionnaire have been prepared according to the five point Likert scale. The proposal given in the thirteenth question "Every university should have an institutional repository" has been responded by selecting the following options "strongly disagree", "agree", and "undecided", respectively 42%, 44% and 14%. Nobody has responded this question by expressing negative opinion as "disagree" or "strongly disagree".

The proposal given in the fourteenth question "The universities should be subject to the compulsory archiving the academic personnel' scholarly studies in institutional repositories" has been responded by selecting the following options "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", and "strongly disagree", respectively 10%, 16% and

24%, 32% and 18%. It is understood from these rates that the academic personnel of the University A don't want that the scholarly studies are subject to the compulsory archiving.

## **2.2. University B**

It has been identified from the first four questions of the questionnaire, prepared for determining the demographical characteristics of the participants, that the age groups of the academic personnel, responded the questionnaire in the University B, and their percentages are as follows; 30% of them, 18-30, 24% of them, 31-40, 40% of them, 41-50 and 6% of them, 51 and older. 20% of them are research assistants; 28% of them instructors, 52% of them teaching staff members (such as professors, associate professors and assistant professor). When the responses have been evaluated as the year of work experience; 6% of them work less than 1 year, 50% of them between 1 and 5 years, 28% of them between 6 and 10 years, 16% of them for 11 years and more. Considering the distribution by gender; 60% of them is women and 40% is men. These results show similarity with the University A. The fifth question of the questionnaire is to determine whether the academic personnel have sufficient knowledge about the IR formed in the affiliated institution. 98% of the participants responded the question "Does your University have institutional repository?" as yes, 2% of them as "I don't know". This result shows that the academic personnel of the University B are sufficiently aware of the IR in their institution. The following question has been asked to the academic personnel of the University B in the sixth question; "Have you archived any of your studies in the institutional repository of your university?" 48% of those responding this question has selected "yes", and 50% of them "no". However, some of those selecting no, has stated that some of their articles were archived without their knowledge. The seventh question of the questionnaire has been prepared in order to measure the level of satisfaction of the academic personnel of the University B from the institutional repository applications. The participants responded the question prepared according to the five point Likert scale as "extremely satisfied", "very satisfied", and "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", respectively 22%, 12% and 12%. 54% of them have not responded this question.

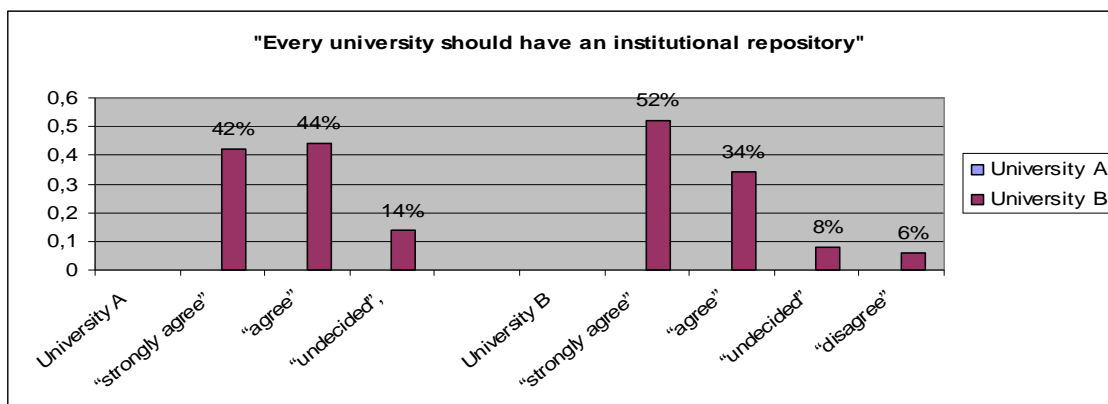
The eighth question of the questionnaire is for determining that the participants archive which of their studies in the IR. 14% of the participants have responded this question as "article published in a peer-reviewed journal", 20% as "article published in a non-referred journal", 6% as "thesis", 4% as "data sets" and 8% as "others (e.g.; photos, audio visual materials etc.)". 86% of those responding the ninth question, in which the institutional repositories' possible advantages are listed, selected the option "The access to my study will increase", 38% of them "I protect the copyright of my study", 42% of them "It is economic for the university and university library" and 56% of them "My study is continuously archived, indexed and also becomes accessible". 46% of them selected the following option "It develops and strengthens the scholarly communication". 20% of those responding the tenth question, in which the institutional repositories' possible disadvantages are listed, stated that "Archiving the scientific studies will be time-consuming and difficult and require technical knowledge", 22% of them stated that "The publishers will not allow them to archive their studies", 28% of them stated that "They could not then have their study published in a peer-reviewed journal", 46% of them stated that "The quality of the archived content can be interrogated because of the lack of peer-review or quality control period", 32% of them "Their study can be stolen or misused" and also 16% of them stated that "If he/she makes his/her study accessible in IR, he has made the copyright infringement". Compared to the percentages of the responses given about the possible advantages and disadvantages of the IRs, it can be shown that the academic personnel of the University B found advantageous archiving their scientific works in the IRs.

It is aimed through the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth questions of the questionnaire to obtain appropriate data for forming more participatory policy and strategies for developing of the IRs. Where the academic personnel of the University B want to archive their scientific studies is asked in the eleventh question. 22% of those responding the question stated that they want to archive them in IR, 18% on personal web page, 14% in subject-based open access archives and 26% in online databases. Since 20% of the participants selected more than one option, their responses are regarded as invalid. It can be resulted from these percentages that the IRs is not attractive to the academic personnel of the University B. The twelfth question has been prepared in order to learn whether the academic personnel wants to have more knowledge about the IRs and if so, learn their opinions about through which way they want to obtain this information. 62% of the participants have selected the option "This issue should be explained by organizing introductory meetings, conferences and seminars." and 36% of them "The opinion of the academic personnel should be taken by conducting questionnaires." and also 64% of them "The guides concerning the issue should be prepared and distributed in electronic and printed medium."

The least preferred option in this question is the option related to conducting questionnaires. The thirteenth and fourteenth questions of the questionnaire have been prepared according to the five point Likert scale. The proposal given in the thirteenth question “Every university should have an institutional repository” has been responded by selecting the following options “strongly agree”, “agree”, and “undecided”, “disagree” respectively 52%, 34% and 8%, 6%. Nobody has responded this question by expressing negative opinion as “strongly disagree”. The proposal given in the fourteenth question “The universities should be subject to the compulsory archiving the academic personnel’ scholarly studies in institutional repositories” has been responded by selecting the following options “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”, respectively 8%, 2% and 22%, 42% and 26%. It is understood from these rates that the academic personnel of the University B certainly don’t want that the scholarly studies are compulsory archived.

**2.3. Comparison of the results of the Universities A and B**

Compared to the frequency and percentages of the responses given for the first four questions prepared for determining the demographical characteristics by the Universities A and B, it has been detected that similar results are obtained. The two sample groups have demographically the similar characteristics. It has been asked the academic personnel of both universities in the fifth question of the questionnaire whether the IR is available in their institution or not. Compared to the frequency and percentages of the responses, it has been understood that the University A doesn’t have sufficient knowledge in this respect. The sixth, seventh and eighth questions of the questionnaire are the questionnaires concerning the satisfaction level of the institutional repository applications, prepared just for the academic personnel of the University B. It has been understood from the responses given for these questions that the academic personnel of the University B are not sufficiently satisfied from the institutional repository applications. The ninth and tenth questions are prepared for determining what could be the positive and negative reflections of archiving scientific literature in the IR towards the academic personnel. When the responses are compared, the academic personnel of both universities think that there are more positive sides of archiving their scholarly studies in the IRs. Where the academic personnel of both Universities want to archive their scientific studies is asked in the eleventh question. Compared to the frequency and percentages of the responses, it has been specified that academic personnel of both universities prefer the online databases and the institutional repository is not very attractive to them. The twelfth question has been prepared in order to learn whether the academic personnel of both universities want to have more knowledge about the IRs and if so, learn their opinions about through which way they want to obtain this information. Compared to the frequency and percentages of the responses, it has been concluded that the academic personnel of the University A want to obtain more information about the IRs. It has been specified that the academic personnel of both universities participated in the proposal given in the thirteenth question “Every university should have an institutional repository” at a high level.



**Figure 1**

The fourteenth and last question of the questionnaire has been prepared in order to determine the attitudes of the participants about the compulsory archiving the academic personnel’ scholarly studies in institutional repositories. In consequence of the comparison of the frequency and percentages of the responses, it has been detected that the University B opposites to the compulsory archiving much more than the University A.

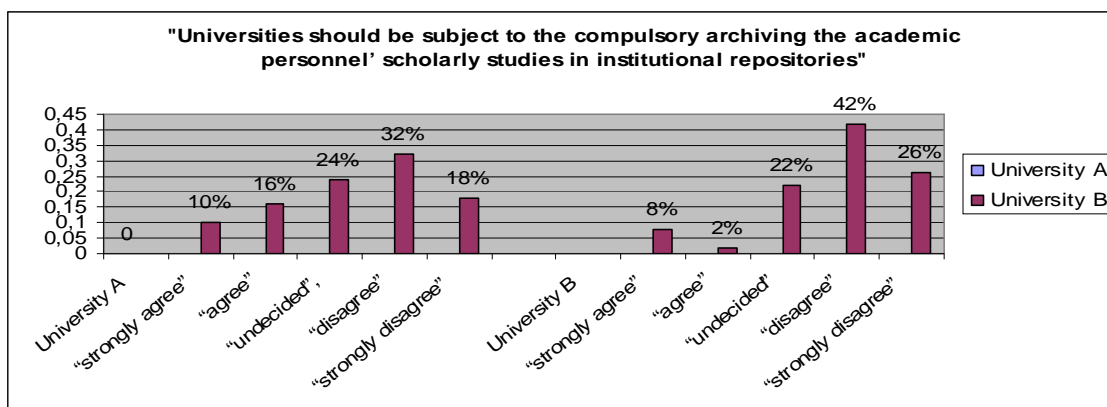


Figure 2

### 3. Conclusion and Suggestions

The efforts to spread the institutional repositories at the universities in Turkey have increasingly continued from the beginning of 2000s. Although it is an overemphasized issue, it is a difficult process for which sufficient development could not still been provided. There are many factors preventing the healthy development of this process and also discussions related to these factors. Working in cooperation and communication of all stakeholders of the institutional repositories is considered as the primary condition related to the success of this process. The subject has been address in this research with the perspective of the academic personnel, being one of the stakeholders of the institutional repositories.

The questionnaire results show that the academic personnel of the university, which doesn't have institutional repository yet, don't have sufficient knowledge about the institutional repositories. The success of the establishment workings depends on the accurate explanation of the added value which will be created for the academic personnel by the aforesaid IR.

Establishing the institutional repository successfully doesn't mean that it will be successful in future. Unless the necessity of the description of service, rendered in the institutional repository is not explained well, the inability to provide sufficient content may be faced. It should not be forgotten that the institutional repositories have to compete with the environments, rendering open access service on internet. The questionnaire results are such as to support this situation. It has been determined from the responses given by the academic personnel of both universities, participated in the questionnaire, that they prefer the online databases and the institutional repositories are not very attractive to them.

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