

Survey and Analysis of Chinese Academic Journals' Postprint Deposit Policies for Institutional Repositories

Authors: ZHANG Xiaodan, Qiao Xiaodong, Gu Liping, Yao Changqing, Chu Jingli

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Abstract

Purpose: To understand the attitudes of Chinese academic journals toward institutional repository deposit policies.

Method: 326 samples were selected from the *Chinese Science and Technology Journal Citation Reports* and contacted via telephone to ensure their participation in an online questionnaire survey.

Results: A total of 195 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective response rate of over 65%. Among them, 74.9% of journals supported depositing papers into institutional repositories, indicating positive attitudes and recommendations toward the storage and dissemination of scientific papers in institutional repositories.

Limitations: The overall survey scale was limited, focusing on journals with higher quality, prominent reputation, and existing digital infrastructure; the conclusions may not be applicable to all Chinese journals.

Conclusion: The majority of survey respondents supported depositing and disseminating papers in institutional repositories, but recommended providing rights consultation services for open access to journal articles in the future.

Full Text

A Survey on Chinese Academic Journals' Attitudes Toward Institutional Repository Deposit Policies

Zhang Xiaodan¹, Qiao Xiaodong¹, Ku Liping², Yao Changqing¹, Chu Jingli²

¹ Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China, Beijing 100038, China

² National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100190, China

Abstract

[Objective] To understand the attitudes of Chinese academic journals toward institutional repository (IR) deposit policies.

[Methods] We selected 326 samples from the *Report of Chinese S&T Journals Citations* and contacted them via telephone to ensure participation in an online questionnaire survey.

[Results] We collected 195 valid responses, yielding an effective recovery rate of over 65%. Among respondents, 74.9% of journals supported depositing papers in institutional repositories, indicating positive attitudes and recommendations regarding IR-based storage and dissemination of scholarly articles.

[Limitations] The survey scope was limited to higher-quality, well-known journals with existing digital infrastructure; the findings may not be generalizable to all Chinese journals.

[Conclusions] Most surveyed journals support IR deposit and dissemination policies but recommend that future consulting services be provided regarding rights and interests related to open access publishing.

Keywords: Institutional Repository; Chinese Academic Journals; Policy of Article Deposit and Communication; Open Access

1. Introduction

Open sharing of scientific and technological information facilitates collaborative resource development among China's scientific community, enterprises, publishing industry, and libraries, thereby stimulating societal innovation and progress. Since the formal release of the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities* in 2003 [1], the Open Access Movement has flourished both domestically and internationally as a philosophy of free academic information sharing and a new publishing mechanism. As a critical component of open access, institutional repositories drive forward the process of digital infrastructure development.

Open access and institutional repositories have reached a relatively mature stage in Europe and the United States, with many countries and institutions providing open access journals and institutional repositories at various levels for free access and utilization by researchers. This success depends on two complementary efforts: first, active construction of repositories and refinement of rights management policies by institutions, information centers, and libraries; and second, understanding and support from scholarly publishing groups, particularly journal publishers, for authors depositing their published papers in their

institutional repositories to implement open access.

In October 2012, fourteen renowned domestic research institutes and information centers, including the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Peking University Library, PLA Medical Library, and the Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China, jointly established the China Institutional Repository Promotion Working Group. This group is dedicated to promoting open access development in China, assisting other organizations in establishing and improving institutional repositories, and addressing various rights management issues in the process of open sharing of scientific and technological information resources.

To understand the attitudes, concerns, and recommendations of Chinese scientific journals regarding IR deposit and dissemination of academic papers, the Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China and the National Science Library of CAS organized China's first questionnaire survey on academic journals' attitudes toward open sharing of research articles.

2. Research Needs and Survey Organization

The rapid growth and increasing impact of open access papers, active involvement of international commercial publishers in open access publishing, and strong support from the scientific community, government, and research funding agencies are making open access scholarly resources a mainstream source of academic information [2]. The role of institutional repositories is to enable knowledge management and asset reuse for institutions in a dynamically changing knowledge environment [3]. The development of institutional repositories both domestically and internationally is influenced by platform construction, information preservation, evaluation, quality control, and copyright rights management [4]. Among these factors, rights management of papers is the decisive factor for the smooth development of IRs. Researchers, teaching staff, and students are both providers and users of resources, while scientific outputs have a clear affiliation with their institutions. Funding provided by research institutions and project sponsorship obtained through various channels are necessary prerequisites for research output. According to the 2002 *Provisions on the Management of Intellectual Property Rights for Research Results of National Scientific Research Plan Projects* by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance, and the 2003 *Provisions on Strengthening the Management of Intellectual Property Rights for National Scientific Research Plan Projects*, the copyright of general works for hire belongs to the author, while the institution has priority usage rights [5].

In response to challenges in IR promotion and implementation, this survey targeted influential and well-established journal publishers in China. The objectives were to understand: (1) academic journals' awareness of and attitudes toward IRs; (2) their concerns and acceptance limits; (3) their understanding of copyright issues involved in IR deposit; and (4) their future plans regarding IRs.

Through this survey, we aimed to determine whether IRs could gain publisher support, identify practical obstacles and issues, and uncover deep-seated reasons affecting publisher support, such as copyright concerns and funding responsibilities. Based on the collected questionnaires, we analyzed the impact of journal publishers on IRs and proposed mutually acceptable solutions to promote IR development and knowledge sharing in China.

In recent years, Chinese journal, library, and scientific communities have begun paying attention to open access developments for scientific journals. Wang Yingkuan et al. [6] and Cheng Weihong et al. [7] searched and statistically analyzed the status of open access publishing among Chinese scientific journals based on the 1,608 journals included in the 2005 edition of the *Chinese S&T Journal Citation Report*. Shen Bo et al. [8] investigated the open access status of 291 university journals included in the 2007 edition of the same report. The Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China also conducted a survey on the number and distribution of open access journals among the 1,994 core scientific and technical journals included in the 2009 edition of the report [9].

3. Survey Design

3.1 Survey Subjects This policy survey on article deposit focused on core academic journals in science and technology fields in mainland China. The sampling method drew from the *Chinese S&T Journal Citation Report* (2011 edition) published by the Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China. We selected the top three journals by composite evaluation score in each discipline (160 journals), the top three by impact factor in each discipline (126 journals), and the top three by total citation frequency in each discipline (130 journals). After removing overlaps, we identified 326 high-quality scientific journals as our survey sample.

3.2 Survey Methods The survey employed an online questionnaire distributed via email, with follow-up telephone calls to ensure receipt and encourage completion, thereby guaranteeing smooth survey administration and valid response collection. The survey period lasted approximately one month, from May 27 to June 30, 2013. A total of 326 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 205 responses, of which 195 were valid, for an effective recovery rate of over 65%.

3.3 Survey Content Designed to reconcile potential conflicts between IRs and academic journals in resource dissemination and to enhance publisher awareness and support, the questionnaire addressed current factors affecting IR development in China. It focused on four main areas: (1) publishers' awareness of and attitudes toward IRs; (2) policies offered by academic journals for IRs; (3) concerns of journal publishers in this process; and (4) willingness to support IRs in the future. Researchers designed 20 questions covering: journal sponsors, funding sources, open access status, support for institutional repositories,

support for other self-archiving types, concerns about non-support, permitted deposit versions, copyright agreements, clauses for institutional repositories or self-archiving, whether authors are allowed to retain copyright, and whether deposit is accepted based on works for hire or funded projects.

4. Survey Results

Analysis of the survey yielded the following findings:

(1) Survey subjects skewed toward journals in science, engineering, agriculture, and medicine.

The majority of surveyed journals were in medicine, engineering, and science, mostly based in Beijing, as shown in [Figure 1: see original paper] and [Figure 2: see original paper].

(2) Journal funding came from grants and self-raised revenue, with network publishing facilitated by journal publishing platforms.

Most journals currently operate on a combination of allocated funds and self-raised revenue (42.1%), with 70.8% utilizing database platforms such as CNKI and Wanfang Data for network publishing. Fewer journals use their institutional or society platforms for online distribution, as shown in [Figure 3: see original paper].

(3) Most respondents were aware of institutional repositories.

Among surveyed publishers, 51.8% had heard of IRs but were unclear about their meaning, while 26.7% had never heard of IRs previously. In contrast, 65.6% were familiar with open access, with only 9.2% having never heard of it, as shown in [Figure 4: see original paper].

(4) Most respondents supported authors depositing papers in IRs.

Among survey participants, 35.9% of journals had implemented or planned to implement immediate, fully open access publishing, while only 7.2% employed an author-pays open access model. A substantial 84.1% supported authors depositing papers in institutional repositories, as shown in [Figure 5: see original paper].

(5) Respondents believed paper deposit would yield significant dissemination benefits but limited circulation revenue.

Journal publishers generally recognized that “with the promotion of IRs, significant benefits can be generated, but relatively fewer benefits for publishers’ market circulation,” as shown in [Figure 6: see original paper].

(6) Journals generally endorsed IR policies allowing storage in PDF format.

Regarding IR policies and implementation, 74.9% of journals supported authors depositing published versions in their institutional repositories, and 77.9% supported deposit in PDF or other fixed, non-editable formats, as shown in [Figure 7: see original paper].

(7) Most respondents believed detailed metadata should be provided and open sharing implemented.

As shown in [Figure 8: see original paper], over 75% of journals supported the requirement that deposited papers include detailed information for discovery and recommendation.

(8) Most respondents favored CC-BY-NC-ND licensing.

Regarding dissemination rights for open sharing, 55.9% of surveyed journals supported sharing deposited papers under CC-BY-NC-ND licenses, indicating that most journals wish to retain author copyrights and are unwilling to transfer them for other uses, as shown in [Figure 10: see original paper].

(9) Most respondents agreed to modify copyright transfer agreements to align with institutional policies.

As shown in [Figure 11: see original paper], 50.8% of journals encouraged authors to deposit papers in IRs by setting corresponding clauses in copyright transfer agreements, 41.0% modified agreement terms to align with open sharing policies, and only 29.7% supported authors retaining relevant copyrights. This suggests that deposit policies are already being implemented in some journals but require stronger promotion.

Regarding content openness, [Figure 9: see original paper] shows that 37.4% of journals supported opening literature to everyone, while only 2.6% supported internal access only. In terms of timing, 52.8% supported immediate open access upon deposit, with only 3.6% opposing open access implementation, indicating that most journals support open sharing of literature.

5. Discussion

5.1 Research Finding 1: Majority Express Support but Promotion Needed Academic journal publishers have gained some understanding of institutional repositories and open access, with most holding supportive attitudes. The majority of publishers support depositing journals in their institutional repositories. However, broader awareness and acceptance among journal publishers require additional promotion to help more research institutions, individual researchers, and relevant organizations gain deeper understanding of relevant policies and benefits. Future efforts should include organizing workshops and thematic seminars, such as the 2014 China Open Access Promotion Week or other specialized events.

5.2 Research Finding 2: Recommendations for Open Publishing Policies The primary concern of journal publishers is the impact of IRs on their publishing market circulation revenue. Many respondents suggested that to achieve collaborative innovation and development, while academic institutions vigorously promote IRs and green open access, relevant policies should be introduced to facilitate the development of digital, networked, and open gold open access. This would provide greater benefits to Chinese researchers and advance

scientific and digital development. Future activities should include closer exchanges, where researchers collect concerns and needs from domestic publishers, combine them with relevant policy research, and propose solutions to be published online or distributed to Chinese journal publishers.

5.3 Research Limitations When generalizing the survey results, note that this study selected 326 domestic journals with existing network infrastructure, not covering all Chinese journal publication types. Although not a massive survey, the selected journals are relatively influential, thus representing, to some extent, the policy intentions of China's scientific journal community.

5.4 Future Research Directions This study represents the first empirical investigation of domestic academic journal publishers' attitudes toward IR deposit policies, providing valuable first-hand data. The findings can guide and inform future IR planning, construction, and management. Future work will focus on three areas: (1) Expanding the research scope to include publishers from other regions such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, where IR development is more advanced and can provide insights for mainland China; (2) Conducting in-depth interviews with representative journal publishers to understand their attitudes, recommendations, and reasoning regarding IR deposit policies, providing better guidance through representative case analyses and comparisons; and (3) Appropriately conducting surveys on open access publishing, building upon existing foreign policy research [10, 11] to develop training programs and policy needs assessments.

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Author Contributions:

Qiao Xiaodong, Zhang Xiaodan, and Ku Liping: Proposed research ideas and organized survey design;

Chu Jingli, Zhang Xiaodan, and Ku Liping: Designed and revised questionnaire;

Qiao Xiaodong, Zhang Xiaodan, and Yao Changqing: Implemented survey;

Zhang Xiaodan and Yao Changqing: Analyzed data and drafted manuscript;

Ku Liping and Zhang Xiaodan: Revised final version.

(Corresponding author: Qiao Xiaodong, E-mail: zhangxd@istic.ac.cn)

A Survey Analysis of the Intention of Chinese Academic Journals Toward the Institutional Repository Deposit Policies

Zhang Xiaodan¹, Qiao Xiaodong¹, Ku Liping², Yao Changqing¹, Chu Jingli²

¹(Institute of Scientific & Technical Information of China, Beijing 100038, China)

²(National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100190, China)

Abstract: [Objective] Understand the attitudes of Chinese academic journals toward Institutional Repositories deposit policies. [Methods] Select 326 samples from the list of "Report of Chinese S&T Journals Citations", telephone them to make sure that they answer this online survey. [Results] 195 valid surveys are returned and the effective rate is more than 65%. 74.9% journals agree that

the papers can be stored in the Institutional Repository, so their attitudes and recommendations about the article deposit and communication by Institutional Repositories are positive. [Limitations] The survey scale is limited on the high quality, well-known and digital journals, and the result is not applicable to the whole Chinese journals. [Conclusions] Most of investigated targets agree the policy of article deposit and communication of Institutional Repositories, but as the recommendation of this survey, they wish that the consulting service about the rights of journal article open access is provided in future.

Keywords: Institutional Repository; Chinese academic journals; Policy of articles deposit and communication; Open Access

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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