

## **Section 1: Contribution Details**

<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Detail</b>
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Title of Submission:	Emerging trends, patterns, and complexities surrounding AI integration in Southern African academic libraries: A bibliometric analysis
Sub-Theme(s) of Submission:	AI and libraries in the Southern Africa region;
Keywords of Submission:	Artificial Intelligence (AI), academic libraries, Southern Africa, librarians

## **Section 2: Abstract Text**

The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic libraries is increasingly shaping the information management landscape in Southern Africa. As academic libraries evolve to meet the needs of the digital age, AI technologies are transforming how services are delivered, enhancing efficiency and improving user experience. However, AI adoption, its impact, and the challenges faced by academic libraries such as inadequate funding and lack of skills and training in the region remain areas that require further exploration. The main objective of this study is to examine emerging trends, patterns, and complexities surrounding AI integration in Southern African academic libraries while also identifying gaps and inconsistencies in the existing literature. By analysing existing research, the study aims to uncover key trends and highlight the opportunities and barriers associated with AI implementation in the Southern Africa region.

A bibliometric analysis was conducted using Scopus and Web of Science databases to source literature on AI in academic libraries in Southern Africa. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of research trends, the frequency of AI-related studies in academic libraries, and the thematic focus areas within the existing body of knowledge.

The findings reveal that AI integration significantly transforms academic libraries in Southern Africa. AI-powered systems enable 24/7 access to resources, improve information retrieval, and enhance resource discovery through recommendation systems. Automation has streamlined tasks such as cataloguing and indexing, reducing the workload of librarians and allowing them to focus on complex information management roles. Additionally, AI-driven chatbots like ChatGPT and robotic assistants like "Libby" improve user engagement and service efficiency.

The study revealed challenges such as financial constraints, the need for robust ICT infrastructure, and the necessity for librarian training continue to hinder widespread AI integration. This implies that addressing these challenges is essential to fully harness AI's potential in academic libraries and ensure its sustainable benefits.