

Evaluating AI in Academic Libraries: A Systematic Literature Review on User Perceptions, Acceptance Factors and Service Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a systematic literature review examining the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic libraries, focusing on three main dimensions: user perception, factors influencing technology acceptance, and service effectiveness. Following the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews, a thorough search was conducted in four major academic databases: Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald Insight, and Science Direct, using the search string "Artificial Intelligence" AND "Academic Library" AND "Effectiveness" AND "User Perception" AND "Acceptance." The initial search yielded 1,435 articles, which were then filtered based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in a final analysis of 30 peer-reviewed studies published between 2024 and 2026. Quality assessment was carried out using criteria set for systematic literature reviews. The study's findings show that users' perceptions of AI in academic libraries are marked by excitement about increased efficiency in academic activities, along with concerns about accuracy, transparency, and reduced human interaction. Key factors influencing AI adoption include perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust in AI technology, algorithm literacy, and compatibility with existing library processes. Transformational leadership and institutional support emerge as critical organizational enablers for successful AI adoption. Service effectiveness analysis shows improvements in information retrieval, user support, and overall service functions, although challenges remain with complex queries and system integration. This review also identifies major barriers in terms of organizational, financial, and technical aspects in implementing AI, including inadequate infrastructure, high costs, insufficient training programs, and a lack of clear institutional policies. Ethical considerations, especially intellectual property rights, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and AI hallucinations, remain significant challenges. This review provides a comprehensive framework for understanding AI usage in academic libraries and offers actionable recommendations for library administrators, policymakers, and researchers.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, academic libraries, user perceptions, technology acceptance, service effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is changing so rapidly in today's era. Since ChatGPT launched in November 2022, students and researchers have begun using AI to find information, summarise content, write assignments, and generate ideas. For instance, ChatGPT, Grammarly, Bling, Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot, where they can answer all the questions instantly and use various types of language. This change creates a big threat towards the academic libraries, which have traditionally interacted with the stakeholders since time began.

Kavak (2025) reported that nearly 70% of 1,142 students in Türkiye had a positive view of AI services in libraries. Yeung and colleagues (2025) found that 83% of students in Hong Kong used AI for learning and research. However, despite this high acceptance, many students still have concerns towards the AI as they providing direct answers to the users. Kavak (2025) reported that 73.7% of students were concerned about the

privacy of personal data, and 44.3% were concerned that interactions with librarians would decrease. This can be seen in that the stakeholders are scared that their personal matters will be exposed as trusting on using the artificial intelligence.

Librarians themselves have mixed feelings about whether they should apply artificial intelligence to the institution. Kisilowska-Szurminska (2025) conducted a Delphi study in Poland and found out that the library directors viewed AI as a tool, not a colleague or an enemy. However, Oladokun and colleagues (2025) reported that librarians in Nigeria viewed AI as a threat to their job security, with a mean score of 3.6 out of 4. The gap between countries is also clear. Liu and Liu (2026) in their global study found that more than 55% of top universities in China already use chatbots, while in the United States only about 5% do. In Canada, the rate is only 7%.

Therefore, this study aims to gather all the evidence from 30 published studies to answer three main questions: (1) What are users' perceptions of AI in libraries? (2) What factors influence acceptance of AI? (3) How effective are AI services?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of AI in Academic Libraries

Artificial intelligence is not new to the library field. Moiseeva (2024) traces the evolution of libraries from Library 1.0 (basic electronic catalogs) to Library 4.0 (AI-driven smart libraries) and now towards Library 5.0, which combines emotional intelligence and blockchain. However, since the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, the use of AI in academic libraries has increased dramatically.

Liu and Liu (2026) conducted a global survey of 205 leading universities. They found that only 31 universities (15%) had a functioning library chatbot. The adoption rate varied by region can be seen that China recorded 55% in Double First Class universities on using the AI, while the United States only 5% and Canada 7%. This study shows that although AI is often discussed, implementation is still in its early stages in most places, such as libraries, archives, museums, etc.

Guo and colleagues (2025) analyzed 100 top university libraries in the United States, mostly using AI to find their information. They found that almost all libraries (99%) already use intelligent search systems in their daily lives, but only half (53%) use chatbot tools for reference. Interestingly, higher-ranked universities tend to use more types of AI technologies than lower-ranked universities to help them with their research and assignments.

User Perceptions of AI

Many researchers have studied user opinions about AI in libraries. Kavak (2025) found that 69.7% of students in Türkiye had a positive view. The most preferred features were virtual assistants (88.3%), natural language search engines (86.1%), and intelligent recommendation systems (85.6%). Yeung et al. (2025) reported that 83% of students in Hong Kong used AI for learning and research.

Nevertheless, these risks can be effectively mitigated by Fruehauf and colleagues (2026) where although 81.8% of users found the LINK chatbot easy to use, only 18.2% agreed that the answers from using the AI tools were accurate. Kavak (2025) found that 73.7% of students were worried about their data privacy, and 44.3% were concerned that interactions with librarians would be reduced, which is not accurate to ask for the information they need it..

Ali et al. (2026) made an interesting discovery towards their research. They used the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework to study 235 students in Pakistan and found out that somehow the students know AI is sometimes wrong in their answering, yet they still use it because of other factors such as learning value and perceived intelligence.

Factors Influencing Acceptance of AI

Lu and Li (2026) used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to study 239 students in China. They found that perceived competence was the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.550$), while perceived risk had a negative effect ($\beta=-0.262$). They also introduced the concept of algorithmic literacy - knowledge of how algorithms work which was found to reduce risk and increase competence.

Haris et al. (2025) used the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) model to study 383 library users in India. They found that 18.5% of users fell into the “innovator” category, significantly higher than the 2.5% in Rogers’ original model. This suggests that library users in India are adopting new technologies more rapidly than expected.

Shal et al.(2024) studied the role of leadership styles in AI acceptance among 50 librarians in four Arab countries. They found that transformational leadership – leaders who inspire and encourage innovation – significantly improved perceptions of AI usefulness ($\beta=1.952$) and ease of use ($\beta=1.716$). In contrast, transactional leadership had no significant effect.

Service Effectiveness of AI

The evidence on the effectiveness of AI is mixed. Adewojo and colleagues (2025) reported that 67% of librarians in Nigeria saw an increase in efficiency after using AI. Fruehauf and colleagues (2026) found that the LINK chatbot handled 44% of all chat-based reference queries in one semester.

Hu et al. (2024) conducted a study with 110 students in Taiwan. They compared it with three groups, which are the AI with the Mandala Chart method, AI only, and traditional learning teaching. They found that the effectiveness of AI depends on how it is combined with structured teaching methods, which showed increasing information literacy and self-efficacy.

However, AI still struggles with complex tasks in one time. Liu and Liu (2026) found that 6 out of 29 AI chatbots failed to correctly answer book search queries. Oladokun and colleagues (2026) reported an inverse relationship between AI use and library visits in four African countries ($\rho = -0.41$, $p=0.004$), suggesting that AI may replace libraries in some contexts.

Librarian Perspectives and Ethical Issues

Kisilowska-Szurminska (2025) conducted a Delphi study in Poland. Library directors agreed that AI is a tool, not a colleague or an enemy. More than 35 comments emphasized that humans are still not replaceable for tasks such as critical thinking and empathy.

Oladokun et al. (2025) found that librarians in Nigeria see AI as a threat to job security (mean 3.6/4) and believe that AI benefits technologically skilled librarians much more (mean 3.9/4). Unfortunately, institutional policies were found to be ineffective in reducing these fears ($p=0.554$).

Elsayed and Abusharhah (2025) surveyed 272 librarians in 17 Arab countries. They found that 81% said intellectual property and copyright were the top ethical concerns, but only 43% truly understood who owned AI-generated content. A full 96% requested training on AI ethics. Only 12.1% reported that their library was serious about AI ethics. Liu and Liu (2026) also found that only 13% of library chatbots had clear privacy policies.

Research Gaps

Based on this literature review, several gaps were identified. First, most studies are cross-sectional, longitudinal studies are almost non-existent. Second, the voices of users with disabilities are almost absent in the literature. Third, research on the impact of AI on librarians’ work is still very limited. Fourth, most studies use survey data, while an experimental study such as Hu et al. (2024) is the only one. Fifth, cross-cultural comparisons to explain the acceptance gap between China (55%) and the United States (5%) are still lacking.

METHODOLOGY

The systematic review procedure for selecting multiple acceptable papers for this study is divided into several major stages. The initial phase is keyword recognition and the search for related, comparable phrases based on past research. As a result, after determining all relevant terms, search strings for the Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald Insight, and Science Direct databases were constructed. The keywords utilised were "artificial intelligence", "academic library", and "effectiveness". In the first phase of the systematic review procedure, the current study effectively extracted 100, 10, 995, and 330 publications from all databases. However, the authors provide additional depth and complexity by include the phrases "user perception" and "acceptance".

Table 1 The Search String

Databases	Search String	Nr of Research Papers
Web of Science (WoS)	"Artificial Intelligence" AND "Academic Library" AND "Effectiveness" AND "User Perception" AND "Acceptance"	100
Scopus	"Artificial Intelligence" AND "Academic Library" AND "Effectiveness" AND "User Perception" AND "Acceptance"	10
Emerald Insight	"Artificial Intelligence" AND "Academic Library" AND "Effectiveness" AND "User Perception" AND "Acceptance"	995
Science Direct	"Artificial Intelligence" AND "Academic Library" AND "Effectiveness" AND "User Perception" AND "Acceptance"	330

During the screening process, research materials are analysed to ensure they fit with the established questions. This step requires selecting things that concentrate on artificial intelligence. During this step, duplicate items are deleted from the collection. Initially, just 30 publications were assessed and selected based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The key sources used were research articles, which give practical insights. We also included case studies, editorials, books, chapters, and conference proceedings from recent research. The review focused on works published in English from 2024 to 2026. There were no publications eliminated due to duplication criterion.

This review involved analysing data from chosen publications to assess their substance. The material is reviewed by reviewing the literature on artificial intelligence in academic library. Furthermore, it is believed that most papers would not provide easily comparable statistical data. Articles were decrypted and categorised as follows: Language, Timeline/Years, Subject Area, Source Type, and Publication Stage.

Table 2 The Selection Criterion is Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline/Years	2024-2026	Below than 2024
Subject Area	Library Management	Besides Library Management
Source Type	Journal	Besides Journal
Publication Stage	Final	In Press

Once all inclusion and exclusion criteria have been satisfied, the final review sample identified. A detailed list of the included research items is required since it serves as the foundation for the study's findings, which would otherwise be unknown to readers. This eligibility phase has a total of 1435 articles. During this step, all article names and substantive content are thoroughly scrutinised to verify they are consistent with the study's research objectives. In this study, an integrative analysis was used as a critical evaluation tool to examine and synthesise numerous research methodologies, with a particular emphasis on quantitative. During this step, the

writers meticulously examined a corpus of 30 scholarly publications, finding assertions and content that were directly relevant to the research topic of the present study methods.

RESULT AND FINDING

Theme 1: AI in Academic Library on User Perception

(Lu & Li, 2025; Miguel et al., n.d.) found that the user acceptance is strongly tied to AI and algorithm literacy to those who have more of it believe that operational risks are reduced and efficiency increased when using the tools, which they see not as authoritative but as "fallible drafting partners". While students find GenAI more convenient and accessible for simple tasks like summarising content or generating ideas, there is a growing 'substitution effect' where there is a measurable reduction in the use of traditional library tools and resources, like Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) and physical library collections. This shift raises the students to a difficult position where he or she often feels worried and uncertain about what constitutes academic honesty on using the AI between student creativity and student plagiarism. This shift raises a complex ethical situation where students often feel shame about the loss of their critical thinking skills for their new information. Despite this technological progress, students and information professionals still see librarians as key supporters in the role of mediator and "mixer" who are able to offer expert judgement and ethical supervision in the handling of difficult enquiries to find and select new knowledge and in ensuring the credibility which automated systems do not have in the AI system (Adewojo et al., 2025; Kisilowska-Szurmińska, 2025; Michalak et al., 2026). Last but not least, structural factors like weak infrastructure (especially in developing nations) (Mosha, 2025), high financial burden and lack of an unambiguous institutional policy (Elsayed & Mohammed Abusharhah, 2025) frequently hinder a successful integration of AI, thereby highlighting the need for institutional backing and formal reskilling programs, which significantly influence the perception of the users.

THEME 2 AI in Academic Library on Acceptance Factors

At the organisational level, transformational leadership is an important enabler, fostering an atmosphere for creativity and psychological safety, whereas transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles tend to be associated with opposition and poor adoption outcomes. Social impact and positive "word of mouth" endorsements by peers are also good predictors of intention to use, particularly in environments where there is little prior experience with the technology. But ethical issues and concerns continue to plague adoption, including issues of data privacy, bias built into the systems themselves, and the phenomenon of AI "hallucinations" (information fabricated by AI systems), which all directly undermine the user's trust and the library's trustworthiness (Kang, 2026 and Mosha, 2025). In addition, library professionals often report fear of job loss and technophobia as top psychological issues, and in many cases, these are worsened by structural issues like the lack of adequate technological infrastructure, high implementation costs and a measurable lack of clear institutional policies or specific training programs (Elsayed & Mohammed Abusharhah, 2025; Mosha, 2025; Oladokun et al., 2025). The effective uptake of acceptance is reliant on an environment of acceptance, robust institutional support and a whole-of-institution commitment to professional reskilling.

THEME 3 AI in Academic Library on Service Effectiveness

AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants like "LINK" or "Biblios" provide round-the-clock reference availability, even when staff are not on duty, and enable users to search digital collections with natural language input, rather than complex keyword queries that help the users to find the insights from the website. Jin, H. (2025) reveal that the more sophisticated models like IMB-Res-BiGRU can achieve accuracy scores as high as 97.8% for information retrieval tasks, and machine learning models have been able to classify thousands of virtual reference transcripts and thus understand and cater to evolving patron requirements (Luo & Brissett, 2025). Moreover, by providing personalized recommendation systems and "intelligent tutoring" to tailor academic support to individual learning paths based on learner profile, AI enhances the quality of the service so fast, thereby increasing research productivity and information literacy self-efficacy (Mosha, 2025). These technologies also play an important role in digital inclusion by providing assistive technology solutions like automatic screen readers, voice recognition and inclusive interfaces to individuals with disabilities.

Although these developments are promising, the true potential impact of AI has often been limited by issues such as machine learning models' that need to connect with existing systems, and the persistent threat of "hallucinations" to the inaccurate information or answers from AI systems which reminding us that human oversight remains crucial for ensuring professional service levels (Miguel et al., n.d.; Mosha, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The use of AI in academic libraries presents significant benefits and challenges. The general perceptions about AI services reveal the prevalence of the positive opinion regarding the use of virtual assistants and natural language-based search engines among students. However, there are concerns related to the privacy issues, inaccuracies of information retrieved by machines, and lack of opportunities for face-to-face interaction between users and librarians. Therefore, there is a need for continuous human oversight in order to guarantee the credibility of the information presented to users. Acceptance rates for AI applications may vary significantly depending on several factors, such as leadership styles, algorithmic literacy of employees and users, and institutional support. Transformational leadership practices will likely increase acceptance rate due to its innovative potential; however, the absence of adequate IT infrastructure and the fear of replacing librarians will reduce AI implementation. AI offers significant potential when it comes to information retrieval. For instance, the use of automated assistants will allow users to retrieve relevant information more easily and efficiently; however, most chatbot-based applications will likely face difficulties while handling complex queries and providing accurate information. There are several ethical considerations that may threaten user perception of services offered by libraries. Intellectual property concerns, the risk of biased recommendations due to embedded bias, and research gaps associated with long-term effects of AI-based technologies and accessibility for disabled users are among them. For addressing all the mentioned challenges effectively, it is necessary to provide sufficient institutional support, extensive training of employees, and clearly defined policies. In conclusion, although AI technology will certainly contribute positively to library practices, the role of humans cannot be underestimated.

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