

THE EXPANSION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY REFERENCE SERVICES: LIBRARIANS' PERSPECTIVE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KARNATAKA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into academic library services has revolutionized the way information access, management, and service delivery are conducted.. Although there are tremendous efforts being made to improve library services with the integration of AI, empirical research on the incorporation of AI in academic libraries across Karnataka, India is still limited. This study examines the awareness, adoption, and possible uses of AI tools in reference services within private university libraries across Karnataka. Using a qualitative exploratory research approach, this study attempted to shed more light on librarians' perceptions on the integration of AI tools into reference services within private university libraries. Data collection for this study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with professional librarians within private university libraries across India. Using descriptive thematic analysis, the researcher attempted to identify possible themes related to librarians' awareness, adoption, and possible uses of AI tools within reference services. The results revealed that librarians are aware of the possible uses of AI tools within reference services, and their attitudes toward the use of AI tools are positive. However, the adoption and implementation of AI tools within reference services are still limited. The major challenges facing librarians include inadequate training, inadequate institutional policies, inadequate technological infrastructure, and inadequate awareness of the possible uses and implications of AI tools. The results revealed that AI tools, such as intelligent discovery tools, virtual reference chatbots, and information retrieval tools, are highly effective tools for improving reference services. To improve reference services with the integration of AI tools, it is imperative to improve librarians' technological capabilities.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Academic Libraries, Reference Services, Information Literacy, Library Technology Adoption, Digital Transformation.

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