

AI-POWERED CHATBOTS AND THEIR RESEARCH THEMES USING BIBLIOMETRIC TECHNIQUE, FOLLOWED BY A DIALOGUE WITH CHATGPT ON BELT ROAD INITIATIVES

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INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Received: 28/07/2025</i> <i>Revised: 11/08/2025</i> <i>Accepted for publication: 18/8/2025</i> <i>Code: TCKH-S03T08-2025-B01</i> <i>ISSN: 2354 - 0788</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>AI chatbot, chatgpt, belt and road initiative, belt and road, one belt one road, bibliometric map.</i></p>	<p><i>Driven by the recent and rapidly increasing interest in generative AI-powered chatbots, this study first examines the bibliometric findings of the ScienceDirect repertoires on topics based on keywords “one belt one road initiative (OBOR) & ASEAN” and then exploits ChatGPT to provide responses for thematic analysis and model development. The separation by subjects of the bibliometric study clarifies the research themes and scopes of the AI chatbots and draws attention to the dominant theories being applied. From the OBOR perspective, this study identifies five research themes that can be integrated to exhibit a systems-oriented feedback model pattern. The five research themes are (1) input resources, (2) challenges and benefits, regulations and governance, (3) OBOR/Belt and Road Initiatives (BRIs), (4) the deliverables and (5) monitoring and strategy improvement. The study also offers theoretical and practical implications and illuminates further research on the limitations. The bibliometric map and its intellectual structure suggest that the policy makers of the BRIs can make use of resource-based view, resource-advantage theory, AI-enabled dynamic capability-based view and competence-based theory of strategic competition to guide improvements and strategic investments.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) empowered chatbots have shown a rapid rate of acceptance in healthcare, commercial, service and manufacturing sectors (Z.Liu et al., 2025), to the extent of being perceived as AI chatbots online customer assistance (Alalwan et al., 2025) and as efficient and effective co-workers (Alharbi et al., 2025). AI chatbots are one of the most common AI applications, being recognized as dialogue agents, capable of using dialogue for the co-creation of shared meaning and even to the extent of meeting

the communicators’ social, psychological and relational needs (Jiang et al., 2025). Organizations of different scales have benefited from the use of AI chatbots, such as SMEs, to improve their customer service and SME performance (Haq et al., 2025). AI chatbots gain accelerated acceptance because of intelligent task-technology fit (Haq et al., 2025) and human-like intelligence (Hughes-Noehrer et al., 2024) that have shown significant user self-congruence and self-AI integration (Alabed et al., 2022). Though there are bibliometric studies on AI,

such as generative AI (Aldreabi et al., 2025) and AI in higher education (Lachleb et al., 2025), a more systematic and broad-based bibliometric analysis on AI chatbot topics is yet to be found. Relying on only 100 cited articles on chatbot-related human behavior research, Wang et al. (2021) conclude that many of the studies using chatbots were biased toward computer science and information systems. Besides, there is a lack of application of AI chatbots in studies on Belt and Road initiatives. The current BRI publications cover a wide range of themes, topics and in general are economics-subject-driven, involving themes such as the green road to sustainability (Suhraab et al., 2025), complexities of innovation and foreign direct investment in BRIs (L.Liu et al., 2025), how BRIs impact innovation, knowledge transfer and information diffusion (Uctu & Şahbaz, 2024) and digital financial inclusion in BRIs (Chishti et al., 2025).

Without laying a foundation for the conceptual model as revealed in the BRI research, it would be challenging to make systematic progress in the disciplines and fields of study (Mylopoulos et al., 2025). As noted in Mylopoulos et al. (2025), conceptual models are “information artifacts built with the purpose of representing (relevant aspects of) conceptualizations, chiefly for the purpose of communication, context and problem

solving” (p. 3). Thus, a systematic bibliometric analysis approach, combining quantitative and qualitative elements of the published articles, can offer a literature review to shed light on the intellectual structure to benefit future research (Zaluchu et al., 2025). In view of the above context, this study aims to exploit the bibliometric analysis to offer an intellectual map of the current state of research publication relating to BRIs and supplements it with ChatGPT to suggest additional insights into the missing aspect of the bibliometric analysis.

2. Method

In the empirical data collection stage, this study uses ChatGPT and bibliometric analysis. ChatGPT (Chat generative pre-trained transformer) is an open-source artificial intelligence driven platform for dialogue with the inquirers, in which the system can interact in a human language style to obtain AI-driven intelligent features (Zhang et al., 2025). The conversational pragmatics of ChatGPT can enable more human-AI interactions, deepening the mutual exchanges through trustworthiness built on humans’ conversation familiarity and preference (Wagner et al., 2025), which can enable one to drill deeper into the novelistic and comprehensive context, of a knowledge field (Tao, 2025).

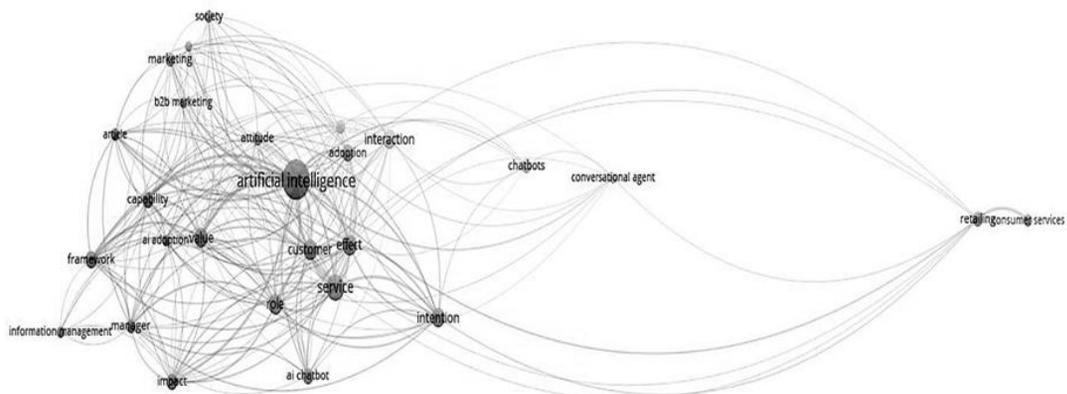


Figure 1. Subject field: Business, management and accounting in Sciecedirect.com

The published research on the uses of chatbots in the fields of business, management and accounting, as revealed in the bibliometric map in Fig. 1, finds that ChatGPT usage revolves around four inter-relating themes: (1) retailing consumer service; (2) service, customers and their intentions; (3) AI, AI adoption, value and capability and (4) marketing, B2B marketing, attitude and society. No research publication has so far used ChatGPT in studying BRIs, which this study fills the gap.

3. Results

To address research objectives, this study first performs the bibliometric analysis by extracting articles from ScienceDirect.com using keywords, “one belt one road & ASEAN”.

As shown in Fig. 1, there are 539 search results from the Sciencedirect.com on January 23, 2023. The database has research articles (402), followed by book chapters (39), review articles (32), encyclopedia (19), conference abstracts (12), editorials (6), conference information (5), short communications (5), book reviews (3), news (2), mini reviews (1) and other (12).

The Journal of Cleaner production has the most articles, umbering 26, followed by Energy policy (17), Orbis (16), Energy (16), Marine policy (14), Science of the Total environment (12), Resources policy (12), Fuel and Energy abstracts (10), Transport (Policy, 9), China Economic review (9), Journal of Eurasian studies (9), Renewable energy (8), Renewable and Sustainable Energy reviews (8), Procedia - Social and Behavioral sciences (8), The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics (8), Technological forecasting and Social change (7), Land Use Policy (7), Cities (7), Journal of Asian economics (7), Journal of Environmental management (7), Resources, Conservation and Recycling (6), Energy Economics (5) and World development (5). In terms of subject areas, the top three subjects are social sciences (190), environmental science (121) and energy (112), followed by economics, econometrics and finance (84), business, management and accounting (57), agricultural and biological sciences (40), engineering (40), earth and planetary sciences (24), arts and humanities (23) and decision sciences (17).

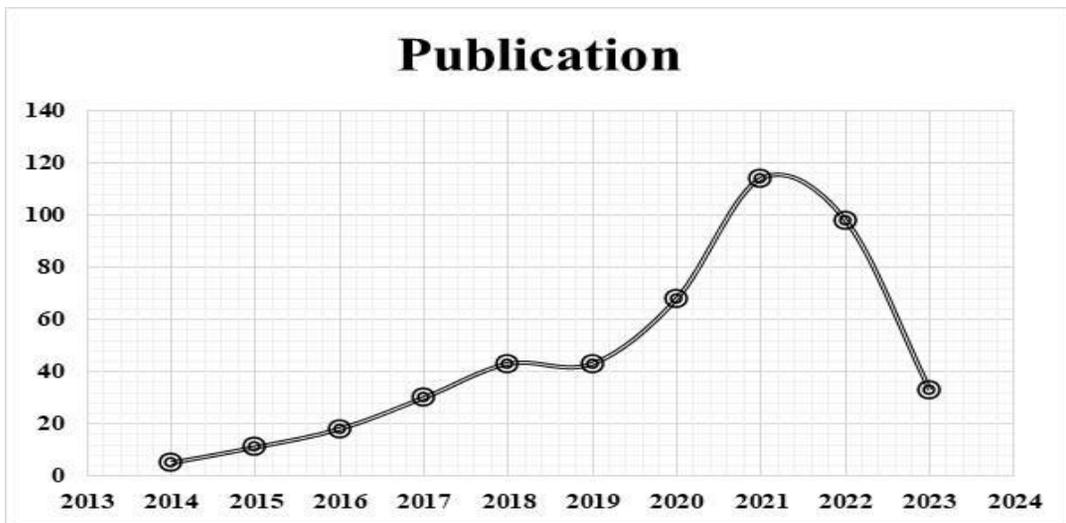


Figure 2. The trend of publications found on “one belt one road & ASEAN” in Sciencedirect.com

The intellectual map of Fig. 3 is presented in Fig. 4, which shows the interrelationships of the four common research themes: (1) Input resources consists of finance and debt (Panda bond financing,

Schlarek et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022), innovation, coal, economics, life, nature and innovation; (2) Challenges, e.g., risk spillover (Zhao et al., 2022), challenges in carrying out

Table 1. ChatGPT questions and responses

Questions raised	Themes and Sampled response scripts
<p>What challenges is China’s belt and Road initiative facing?</p>	<p>Financial risks - “Many of the countries involved in the BRI have high levels of debt and there are concerns that the initiative could lead to further financial instability. There are also concerns that some of the infrastructure projects may not be economically viable.” Political risks - “The BRI involves many countries with different political systems and there are concerns that the initiative could lead to increased political tensions. Additionally, some countries have raised concerns about the transparency and accountability of the initiative.” Environmental risks - “The BRI involves the construction of many large infrastructure projects and there are concerns that these projects could have negative environmental impacts, such as deforestation, loss of biodiversity and pollution.</p>
<p>What are the perceptions of Thais towards China’s belt and Road initiative?</p>	<p>Risks - “potential debt burden on the country, the environmental impact of large-scale infrastructure projects, the potential loss of sovereignty over strategic ports and other assets and potential impacts of the BRI on Thailand’s relations with other countries in the region, particularly in relation to the US and Japan, which have been major economic partners of Thailand and Thai citizens are worried about the loss of jobs for local labor and the risk of flooding due to the construction of dams and other infrastructure projects along rivers.”</p>
<p>What types of China’s belt and Road projects are being implemented in ASEAN and how successful are each project?</p>	<p>OBOR investments, for connectivity and competitiveness - infrastructure development (e.g., the Indonesia-China High-Speed Railway, the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High-Speed Rail and the Pan Borneo Highway in Malaysia), energy and resources (e.g., ASEAN Power Grid, which aims to connect the power systems of ASEAN countries and the development of the ASEAN Centre for Energy) and industry parks (e.g., the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park, the China-Indonesia Suzhou Industrial Park and the China-Thailand Eastern economic Corridor). Monitoring and Strategy improvement.</p>
<p>How successful is China’s belt and Road?</p>	<p>Themes - Deliverables, e.g., economic benefits, improved connectivity, trade and access to international capital, boost economic development and create jobs. “While some participating countries have seen significant economic benefits, others have expected challenges and negative impacts. On the one hand, the initiative has led to the development of infrastructure projects such as ports, highways and railways in many countries, which have improved connectivity and trade. It has also brought significant investment to participating countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, which have historically had limited access to international capital. This can help to boost economic development and create jobs in those regions.”</p>

Questions raised	Themes and Sampled response scripts
<p>What is the progress status of China’s digital Silk road initiative and which country is actively partnering with China in the digital Silk road initiative?</p>	<p>Digital Silk Road Initiative to enable competitiveness upgrade: “The progress status of the Silk Road initiative is difficult to quantify, as it is a complex and ongoing project that involves multiple countries and sectors. However, there have been a number of notable developments in recent years: China has invested in the development of digital infrastructure in participating countries such as building data centres and laying fibre-optic cables; Chinese companies have been actively involved in building and operating digital platforms and services in participating countries, such as e-commerce platforms and mobile payment systems; China has also promoted the use of its digital technologies and standards in participating countries, such as the use of 5G networks and the integration of China’s digital platforms into participating countries’ payment systems.” Countries: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Indonesia.</p>
<p>Based on available research findings, with references, what can we suggest to China to improve the world’s acceptance of the Belt and Road Initiative and also China’s industry competitiveness?</p>	<p>Regulation and Governance: “Based on available research findings, several suggestions can be made to China to improve the world’s acceptance of the one belt one road (OBOR) initiative and also China’s industry competitiveness: (1) Increase transparency and communication (...); (2) Address concerns over debt sustainability (...); (3) Align projects with local development strategies (...); (4) Promote sustainable development (...); (5) Improving the quality and competitiveness of Chinese companies.</p>

While ChatGPT’s responses closely match the bibliometric maps presented in Fig. 4, there is one additional strategic theme that can be included, which is “monitoring and strategic improvement” as shown in Fig. 5. The following lists samples of responses by ChatGPT: “Overall, the success of OBOR projects in ASEAN varies depending on the specific project and country. Some projects have faced delays and controversies, while others have been successful in boosting economic development and trade. It’s important to note that the success of the initiative in the long term will depend on many factors, including the ability of the participating

countries to effectively implement and benefit from the projects and the ability of China to address the concerns and criticisms”. (Question: What types of China’s belt and Road projects are being implemented in ASEAN and how successful are each project?). “Overall, it is too early to say whether the initiative will be a success in the long-term, as the initiative is still in progress and the outcome will depend on many factors, such as the ability of the participating countries to effectively implement and benefit from the projects and the ability of China to address the concerns and criticisms.” (Question: How Successful is China’s belt and Road?).



Figure 5. The modified system-oriented feedback model for OBOR

4. Discussion and conclusion

This study adopts an AI chatbot, known as ChatGPT, to obtain responses on the research themes for China’s belt and Road initiative and integrates these themes into a model to guide the BRI investment and implementation. Relating to the BRI situations, ChatGPT offers responses that fundamentally align with the bibliometric map of the published database of Elsevier, with an additional theme of “monitoring and strategy improvement.”

Without the monitoring and strategy improvement, the Belt and Road initiative would be subjected to continuous criticisms (Uctu & Şahbaz, 2024). Given the current geopolitical situations and multipolar model of the world system (Simonov, 2025), setting up a monitoring system to subject BRIs to continuous strategic improvements and innovation, becomes necessary, as this study suggested, which should touch upon the various parts of the BRI governance systems, such as the transnational environmental governance system (Geng & Lo, 2025).

ChatGPT also provides the perceptual details for each theme, such as “improving the quality and competitiveness of Chinese companies” as a part of regulation and

governance. The sampled response on this aspect is: “Research suggests that Chinese companies can improve their competitiveness by developing more advanced and innovative technologies, improving their management practices and building stronger relationships with local partners. China can also improve the competitiveness of its companies by providing more support for research and development and by creating more favorable policies for innovation and entrepreneurship”. “Maintaining the competitiveness of Chinese firms in participating countries” is also suggested by ChatGPT as an important factor in the acceptance of the OBOR initiative. By improving the competitiveness of its firms, China can increase the benefits of participating countries and reduce the potential negative impacts of the initiative”.

4.1. Theoretical and practical implications

The bibliometric analysis, supplemented using ChatGPT analysis, suggests a theoretical structure for BRIs that exploits numerous strategic management theories, which can guide the strategic development of BRIs.

Input resources show that the policy makers can make use of resource-based view, resource-advantage theory and AI-enabled ecological

modernization theory to give “resources” a strategic and sustainable push. By leveraging AI, BRIs can offer policymakers new perspectives and a more integrative and systems-oriented approach to improving the sustainable return of BRI investment (Zhao et al., 2025).

Moreover, by adapting the “monitoring and strategy improvement” theme, it also expands the theoretical repertoires for the policy makers of the BRIs, towards a resource-advantage enabled dynamic capability-based view (Abdurrahman, 2025; Tao, 2025). Furthermore, the suggested intellectual structure for the BRIs also implies that BRIs need to stress the competence-based theory of strategic advantage, which requires the strategic alignment of resources and capabilities, including challenges, benefits, regulations and governance issues (Tan, 2024).

4.2. Conclusion

This study aims to utilize bibliometric analysis to delineate the intellectual landscape of research on the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRIs) and to enhance this quantitative mapping with qualitative insights derived via ChatGPT. The bibliometric study reveals four common topic clusters in Elsevier’s research publications: input resources; obstacles, advantages, regulation and governance; the OBOR initiative and deliverables. ChatGPT’s thematic synthesis predominantly corresponds with these clusters; however, it supplements with a fifth theme: monitoring and

strategy improvement. This addendum emphasizes the necessity for adaptive governance structures that can consistently assess and improve BRI initiatives, thereby augmenting their legitimacy and long-term efficacy.

The use of ChatGPT facilitates the extraction of perceptual and strategic subtleties-such as the focus on augmenting the competitiveness of Chinese enterprises, aligning initiatives with local development objectives and boosting transparency-which are not always apparent in bibliometric frameworks alone. The resultant systems-oriented feedback model offers theoretical profundity, anchored in resource-based, resource-advantage, dynamic capability and competence-based perspectives, alongside practical significance for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to enhance BRI execution.

4.3. Limitations and further research

This study uses the bibliometric technique and its generated map as the base for examining the quality of ChatGPT and improves the model based on the thematic analysis of ChatGPT’s responses. Nevertheless, it has exempted analyzing questions such as those relating to China’s maritime silk road, China’s food silk road and types of corridors. Further research can more systematically widen the questions being raised to ChatGPT and also conduct survey-based research as an extension of the bibliometric outcome.

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