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Systematic literature reviews (SLR) Learning from the SLR recently developed by organization and management researchers.

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Resumo

This research effort aims to examine the SLR in organization and management studies. How have researchers exercised SLR? Searching answers to this question, we summarize and update the content of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003's pioneer paper and scrutinize the SLR published in the top one hundred business, management, and accounting journals, graded by SCImago Journal Rank (SJR). A brief bibliometric descriptive information showing the increasing number of publicized documents is presented, and a critical assessment of the methodology employed in doing and reporting systematic reviews is provided. The study presents robust findings to help senior and junior scholars to improve their efforts when reviewing the current knowledge. They are a valuable resource for graduate students, journal reviewers, editors when evaluating submissions, and managers interested in scientific studies.

Systematic literature reviews (SLR): Learning from the SLR recently developed by organization and management researchers.

Abstract:

This research effort aims to examine the SLR in organization and management studies. How have researchers exercised SLR? Searching answers to this question, we summarize and update the content of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003's pioneer paper and scrutinize the SLR published in the top one hundred business, management, and accounting journals, graded by SCImago Journal Rank (SJR). A brief bibliometric descriptive information showing the increasing number of publicized documents is presented, and a critical assessment of the methodology employed in doing and reporting systematic reviews is provided. The study presents robust findings to help senior and junior scholars to improve their efforts when reviewing the current knowledge. They are a valuable resource for graduate students, journal reviewers, editors when evaluating submissions, and managers interested in scientific studies.

Keywords:

Systematic Literature Reviews, SLR, management studies, methodology, research

Introduction:

Literature reviews are increasingly important in social scientists' definition of knowledge (Cooper, 1988). As a research methodology, it contributes significantly to the conceptual, methodological, and thematic development of different domains (Hulland, 2020; Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland, 2018). In turn, Systematic Literature Reviews (SLR) encapsulates the process of assembling, arranging, and assessing existing literature in a review domain (Paul et al., 2021), which provides a transparent, objective, and holistic overview of existing knowledge related to a research question (Tsafnat et al., 2014). "

SLR provides several critical discussions on a specific research theme by integrating extant literature, synthesizing prior studies, identifying knowledge gaps, and developing new theoretical frameworks (Marabelli and Newell, 2014). Researchers often seem unfamiliar with the process, structure, and presentation of SLR and produce merely

descriptive, annotated bibliographies of loosely connected research, making it unnecessarily complex and challenging for the readers to follow the literature review (Block, 2018).

Knowledge development can occur using SLR, demonstrating current limits and new development opportunities. To push the knowledge frontier, we must know where the frontier is (Xiao and Watson, 2019). In some cases, meta-analysis can be a practical approach to be developed if relevant and comparable quantitative data are available from several similar studies. In fields of research where there are variations in design, the nature of evidence, and study context, meta-analysis is awkward (Hammersley, 2001). Everything rests on the research question because a common challenge in meta-analyses is the need to compute effect sizes from limited information, further obscured by research designs and statistical analyses.

Systematic reviews have a relatively long tradition in the medical sciences (Moher et al., 2009; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003) but have only been adopted frequently in management research since the turn of the millennium (Hiebl, 2023). Historically, procedures for evidence-based decision-making grounded on review were developed in medicine by the Cochrane Collaboration (http://cochrane.org/) and received much attention from other fields in the early 1990s (Adams, Smart, and Huff, 2017). A decade later, these ideas were adopted in organization and management studies (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009; Rousseau, 2006; 2012).

Organization and management research grows in volume and scope, and topic fragmentation and interconnection increase with other fields (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). Although SLRs are growing in popularity, management journals have published relatively little about conducting an SLR (Paul et al., 2020; Block, 2018; Briner and Denyer, 2012). Surprisingly, there is still considerable variance in

understanding what a literature review is and, consequently, in the quality of the systematic ones (Block, 2018).

This paper examines the SLR methodologies employed in the management field of studies using "Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review" (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003) as a departing point. It summarizes this paper's content and scrutinizes the SLR methodologies that were recently published in the top business, management, and accounting journals, ranked by SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) (scimagojr.com).

Before considering some intriguing and appealing methodological issues while analysing recently published SLRs, a brief bibliometric descriptive information is provided. We do not comprehensively discuss each of them; instead, we purposefully highlight some of their absorbing aspects. The contributions of this research effort on SLR are threefold. They first appeal to the organization and management researchers' community to carefully prepare research protocols. Second, remember that form and content are inseparable issues of any scientific endeavour. Moreover, finally, it implicitly calls on the researcher's community in the organization and management to follow the guidelines of journals, associations, or senior-respected scholars to develop SLR or any other scientific report.

SLR methodology for management: synthesis and updates of the pioneering article

A systematic literature review aims to map and assess the existing intellectual field of studies (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). As mentioned by Rowe (2014: 246), coting Kitchenham et al. (2008), "A systematic literature review is defined as 'a form of secondary study that uses a well-defined methodology to identify, analyze and interpret all available evidence related to a specific research question in a way that is unbiased and (to a degree) repeatable'." It is recommended to support any investigation in a

particular field of study and as stand-alone research. For Machi and McEvoy (2016), literature reviews are written documents that critically consider the relevant literature on a research topic, presenting what is currently known about the subject.

In the organizations and management field of studies, the pioneering article of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), following the model of the *Cochrane Reviewers' Handbook* (Clarke and Oxman, 2001), establishes the correspondence of the methodology from the medical sciences to management studies. They describe three stages: planning, conducting, and reporting a review. Each stage is described in 10 phases considering the recommended SLR development procedures. The stages and phases are reproduced in Table 1 with a brief updated description based on other studies recommending developing systematic literature reviews.

Table 1 Stages and phases of conducting an SLR.

Stage I–Planning the review - design.	Stage II–Conducting a review - execution, analysis, synthesis,	Stage III–Reporting and dissemination - contribution and utilization
Phase 0 - Identification of the need for a review	Phase 3 - Identification of research	Phase 8 - The report and recommendations
Phase 1 - Preparation of a proposal for a review	Phase 4 - Selection of studies	Phase 9 - Getting evidence into practice
Phase 2 - Development of a review protocol	Phase 5 - Study quality assessment	
	Phase 6 - Data extraction and monitoring progress	
	Phase 7 - Data synthesis	

Source**:** Reproduced from Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) with the allocation of the six suggested aspects of rigor and impact of Kunisch et al. (2023).

Kunisch et al. (2023) mention Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) and Denyer and Tranfield (2009) to ensure rigor in writing systematic reviews. To this end, the starting point seems to be designing a research protocol showing all the "stages", "phases," or "steps" of the review. Including, according to Kunisch et al. (2023:19), the "review questions; search processes (described in sufficient detail to be repeatable); article

screening and study eligibility criteria (the rationale proposed to include/exclude articles so that decisions are transparent); study validity assessment (approach proposed to appraise and assess the validity of included studies critically); data extraction (how relevant information and associated meta-data from eligible studies are collected and recorded); data synthesis and presentation (the methods used to undertake synthesis and justification for the methodological choice)."

In other mature scientific fields, like Medicine or Social Sciences, in some cases, as the reviews commissioned by Cochrane and Campbell collaborations, reviewing protocols became a standard practice. Resembling Cochrane, the Campbell Collaboration has as a vision statement "better evidence for a better world" and as a mission, "The Campbell Collaboration promotes positive social and economic change through the production and use of systematic reviews and other evidence syntheses for evidence-based policy and practice" (Campbell Collaboration, 2023). Its fundamental principles include collaboration, enthusiasm, avoiding duplication, minimizing bias, keeping up to date, striving for relevance, promoting access, ensuring quality and continuity, and enabling broad participation. These principles guide the development of all three stages of SLR – planning, conducting, and reporting.

Stage I – Planning the review.

The initial stage of systematic reviews may be an iterative process of definition, clarification, and refinement of the procedures related to systematic reviews (Clarke and Oxman, 2001). A distinguishing feature of an SLR is that the review process should be transparent and reproducible (Fisch and Block, 2018). Like any other scientific investigation, a good SLR requires an inquiry or a straightforward, well-formulated question (Sampaio and Mancini, 2007). The use of multiple reviewers should ensure transparency, strength the search for inclusiveness, and assist in synthesizing and

reporting results. They must satisfy the three Denyer and Tranfield's (2009) quality criteria for SLR in management: transparency, inclusiveness, and explanatory power.

The scoping study may also include a brief overview of the theoretical, practical, and methodological history debates surrounding the field and sub-fields of study (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). Setting a review question and a review objective is critical to SLR as other phases of the process flow from it. An effective SLR plan is vital to producing a robust and unbiased knowledge foundation that helps researchers avoid factors compromising reliability and limiting contribution (Piper, 2013).

Designing a review and thinking through what must be done can give insights into its underlying principles and logic (Briner and Denyer, 2012). Following Thomé, Scavarda, and Scavarda (2016), White, Cooper, and Moher et al. (2015), and Hedges (2009), protocols are frameworks used in the SLR process that should be developed before the start of the literature search. They describe specific steps, including the research topic and questions, the search strategy with criteria to include/exclude studies, methods used to retrieve studies, reasons for determining findings, details about coding, statistical procedures, and treatment of qualitative research.

As the SLR's objective affects all the protocols, determining and refining the purpose and related research questions is critical (Durach, Kembro, and Wieland, 2017; Briner and Denyer, 2012). Okoli and Schabram (2010) and Brereton et al. (2007) recommend validating the review protocol and carefully discussing it with peers before execution. Any verification, inspection, demonstration, pilot test, and analysis to increase the scientific rigor of the proposed research activity should be developed before spending fiduciary and human capital on conducting SLRs.

Stage II: Conducting reviews.

Mulrow (1994) argues for rational systematic reviews providing an efficient and high-quality method for identifying and evaluating extensive literature. As decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion remain relatively subjective, a team of examiners might conduct this stage of the systematic reviews, following Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003). Understanding the relationships between systematicity and processes of generativity is vital to advancing review methodology in this area (Fan et al., 2022).

Searching in electronic databases is a typical first activity in the literature prospection. Electronic databases constitute the predominant source of published literature collections. According to Wanden-Berghe, and Sanz-Valero (2012), there are a few things to consider when selecting the correct keywords. First, researchers should balance the degree of exhaustiveness and precision. Some authors choose to find the literature published within a specific publication time window (justified or not), which can be helpful when reviewing 'recent' advances in a particular field (Piper, 2013). The strict criteria used in the systematic review are linked to the desire to base them on the best-quality evidence (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003).

Several authors have presented a range of principles that might be used to appraise and evaluate qualitative studies (Mays and Pope, 2000; Greenhalgh and Taylor, 1997; Blaxter, 1996). Systematic reviews expose studies to rigorous methodological scrutiny. Within the organization and management field of studies, Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) recommend conducting a quality assessment of the research reports by evaluating the fit between the research methodology and questions.

Popay, Rogers, and Williams (1998) suggest that a quality assessment would explore if the study sample selected is shaped by theory and attention given to the diverse contexts and meanings the study aims to explore. If the subjective senses that people give to experiences and interventions are considered and if the research has been designed in

such a way as to enable it to be sensitive/flexible to changes occurring during the study. They also call attention to the need for theoretical adequacy (do researchers make explicit the process by which they move from data to interpretation?); data quality (are different sources of knowledge/understanding about the issues being explored or compared? Furthermore, generalizability (if claims are made to generalize following logically and theoretically from the data?).

Researchers, when doing SLR, need to clearly outline their search strategy for identifying relevant literature systematically to establish as much transparency as possible (Fisch and Block, 2018). After screening for inclusion, they should obtain full texts of studies for the quality assessment stage (Xiao and Watson, 2019). Quality standards differ across various types of reviews (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005). In this phase, focusing on concepts and relationships is crucial to developing a holistic view rather than individual studies (Fisch and Block, 2018). If the inclusion criteria are inappropriate, the SLR may incur selection bias or include studies that may not address the focal questions (Durach, Kembro, and Wieland, 2017). All included articles must address the aim of the SLR, and inclusion criteria must reflect the SLR's purpose (Briner and Denyer, 2012).

Review articles covering 20, 25, or 30 years of research are relatively common (Furrer, Thomas, and Goussevskaia, 2008). It is essential to cover a minimum of 10 years for a systematic literature review (Rialp, Rialp, and Knight, 2005). Undoubtedly, reviews structured scientifically and logically, especially showing proper outcomes for readers, are likely to be rigorous, relevant, and impactful (Paul and Criado, 2020). Nevertheless, not all literature can be included in this type of review - studies must be similar enough to be synthesized and not lose the integrity of the individual study (Mays, Pope, and Popay 2005).

Aligning the purpose with methods is crucial to any review research as scientific inquiry (Kunisch et al., 2023). Narrative synthesis, meta-analyses, or integrative reviews are flourishing in the management field of investigation. Nevertheless, aspects of rigor and impact in reviewing methods are an open debate. Some scholars promote the benefits of a traditional narrative approach (Hammersley, 2001) - a less formalized method for summarizing large quantities of information. Arksey, and O'Malley (2005), build methodological frameworks for scoping studies. While others, such as Denyer, Tranfield, and van Aken (2008), criticize them because of their potential bias and lack of transparency and reproducibility.

An SLR uses well-defined and rigorous criteria to identify, appraise and synthesize the literature, including a list of studies published in the peer-reviewed and grey literature (Thome, Scavarda, and Scavarda, 2016). Grey literature comprises knowledge artifacts, not the product of peer-review processes (Lawrence et al. 2014). The rationale for the non-inclusion of grey literature despite the risk of publication bias it incurs is based on the trade-off between selecting high-quality SLR only and the risk of broadening the information basis with studies of doubtful reliability (Thomé, Scavarda, and Scavarda, 2016).

One crucial step is to engage in critical debates and reflections on the purposes of research and how innovative and influential theories can be produced (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013). Reviews of all kinds, not just systematic ones, look to the past and have difficulties grasping innovations, new trends, or any novelties delivered by inventors, companies, or ecosystems. Other methods and methodologies are more suited to clutch the future and can be helpful if the reviews' assumptions and findings are well scrutinized before reporting or disseminating them.

Stage III: reporting and dissemination

A systematic literature review makes it easier for the practitioner to understand the study by synthesizing extensive primary research papers from which it was derived (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003). The linking findings and the theorizing process, according to Furnari et al. (2021:20), "involves elaborate on how and why the attributes specified in the scoping stage connect to each other." A review study has long been one for practitioners to use the evidence provided by research to inform their decisions (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003).

Strategies must be developed to encourage the uptake and utilization of proofs that move beyond the simple construction and dissemination of the research base to achieve evidence-informed practice (Nutley and Davies, 2000). The primary purpose of a review article is to critically analyse the extant literature in each research area, theme, or discipline, identifying relevant theories, key constructs, empirical methods, contexts, and remaining research gaps in order to set a future research agenda based on those gaps (Paul, and Criado, 2020). The literature review should derive meaningful conclusions and needs to answer the question: What do we learn from this summary? (Block, 2018).

Various syntheses may be employed to present the learned results of the analysis. Interpretative synthesis comparing and translating data from articles may be categorized and presented under specific themes (Noblit, Hare, and Hare, 1988). A deeper explanatory approach attempting to make causal inferences explicitly (Pawson, 2006) may also be developed to show the results of the research effort. Showing peculiarities of the same phenomenon (study subject), contextualizing it, or simply telling the story (Popay et al., 2006) can be an encompassing narrative synthesis of the study's findings.

Publishing systematic review studies and others that synthesize research results is a step for evidence-based practice (Sampaio and Mancini, 2007). Additionally, stand-alone literature reviews can serve as valuable overviews of a topic for practitioners looking

for evidence to guide their decisions, and therefore their quality can have very real-world implications (Templier and Paré 2015). Systematic literature reviews can enhance reviews' quality, replicability, reliability, and validity (Xiao and Watson, 2019).

Methodological procedures of this study

Williams et al. (2021) developed a study demonstrating the growth of SLR in organizations and management research, quantifying the number of documents published at 3-year intervals from 2005 to 2019. They found 963 documents. We updated their findings using "systematic review" as the keyword searched on articles` titles, abstracts, and keywords in the Scopus platform. The exploration was limited to the "business, management, and accounting" subject area. The period was defined from 2020 to October 23, 2022. This quest found 944 additional documents. The consolidated results of Williams's et al. (2021) findings and the update made for this study are shown in Figure 1.

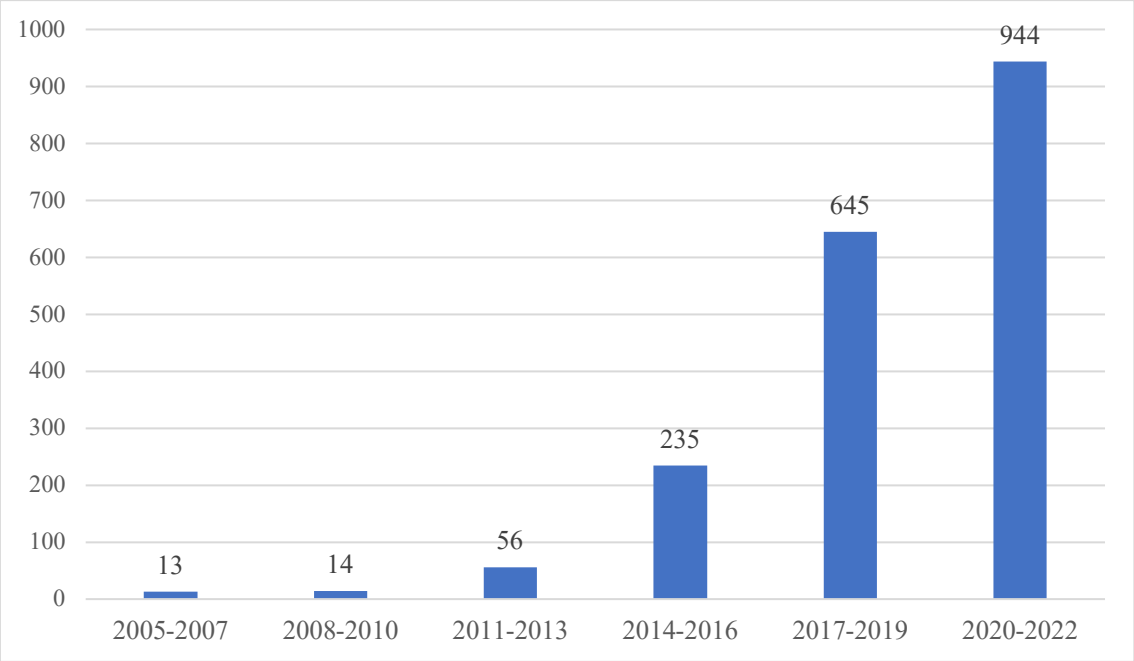

Figure 1 Management SLRs documents published from 2005 to 2022.
Source: Updated from Williams et al. (2021)

Briner and Denyer (2012) explained that relative to other fields, management was a late adopter of SLRs, and researchers in this scientific field of activities were not yet applying systematic reviews to a large extent. The evolution of the numbers demonstrates an increment in the last six years. SLRs are becoming a crucial research tool in the management field even though, as noted a decade ago by Brinner and Denyer (2012), management scholars are not usually trained in how to perform them and, therefore, have little technical knowledge about how to search the literature and find relevant publications.

The increasing number of SLR documents published (944) between 2020 and 2022 could mean that the field is becoming worried about its professional development, and systematic reviews are gaining momentum in the organizations and management scientific field of studies. To describe this momentum, we extracted from the SCImago Journal Rank database, in December 2022, the one hundred best-ranked "business, management, and accounting" journals. The extraction considered all subject categories, regions/countries, and types, including all years since 1999. Other rankings of journals like the AJG – Academic Journal Guide of the Chartered Association of Business Schools and the Financial Times' Top 50 Journals List were consulted, but not many differences were found.

Instead of relying on the search algorithm engine (the black box) of the scientific platforms, we decided to screen each of the hundred journals using their search engines (other black boxes) with the words "Systematic Literature Review" and "SLR" in the title, abstract and keywords searching category. On December 24-30, 2022, the search resulted in 1059 documents being issued. However, among the sample of journals, six published just two; 16, one, and 31 did not put out any SLR document. Furthermore,

manipulating data we found that just 23 documents where the searched words appear in the three categories, 261 in at least one, and 775 we supposed appear in the manuscript.

Perusing the records, we build up a database with the following information: Journal ranking, name, how many systematic reviews documents published, publisher, authors, title, volume, issue, number of pages, publication date, URLs, DOI, abstract, and keywords (this supporting information is available in the electronic version of this study). Following Donthu et al. (2021), we built up a short bibliometric descriptive statistic that may be further improved and scrutinized. Figure 2 shows the number of SLR documents published each year since the pioneering article of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) delivered by the British Journal of Management.

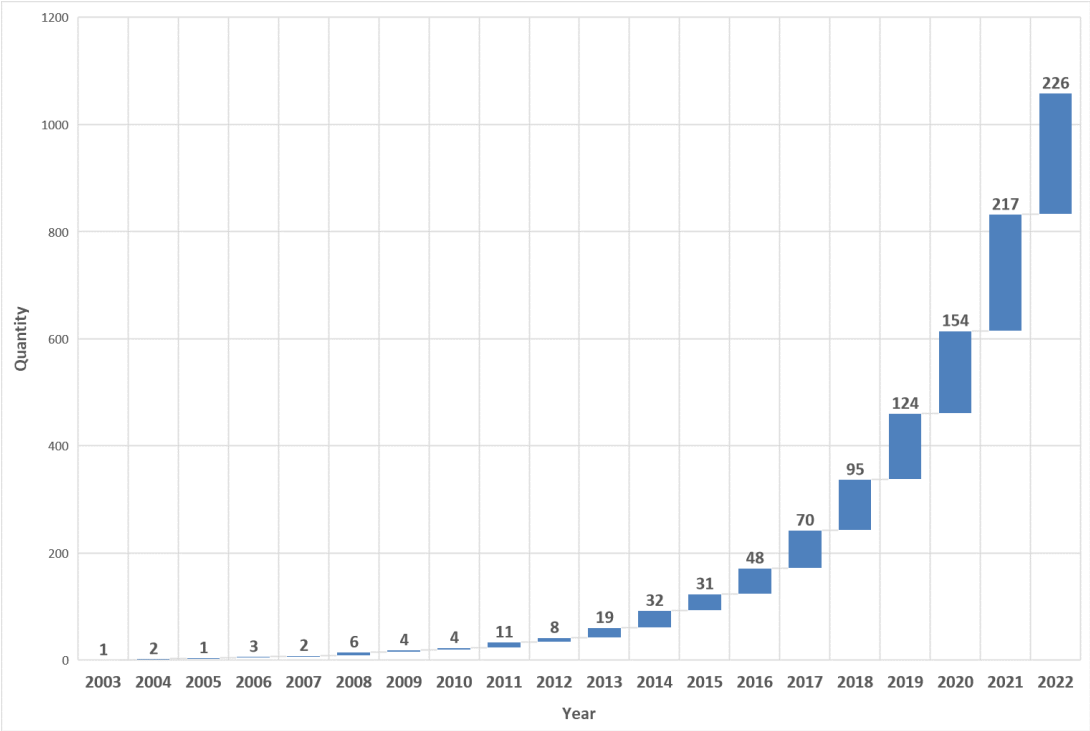

Figure 2 – Number of SLR documents published by top management journals from 2003 to 2022.

The publication of Cochrane's book *Effectiveness and Efficiency* in 1972 can be considered the beginning of an increasing trend of doing SLRs in health services. A similar phenomenon happened in management with the Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart

article published in 2003, *Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review*. In this case, the publication of SLR documents gained momentum during the Covid-19 pandemic years' of 2021 and 2022, when 217 and 226 documents were issued by the top hundred business, management, and accounting journals.

Without speculating why, a particular topic gains attention during a specific period, we may see in Table 3 the 20 top journals that have disproportionally issued SLR documents. Some areas have been producing and publishing a considerable number of records. Technological Forecasting and Social Change and the International Journal of Production Economics, for example, have issued more than a hundred each, 145, and 112. There is no relationship between the position of the Journal in the SJR ranking and the number of documents published.

Table 3 Journals that have been active in publishing documents related to SLRs.

Name of the Journal	Ranking by SJR	SLR documents issued
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	96	145
International Journal of Production Economics	87	112
International Journal of Information Management	68	95
International Journal of Management Reviews	35	89
Journal of Service Management	76	62
International Journal of Project Management	70	44
Journal of Business Ethics	98	42
International Journal of Hospitality Management	89	36
Human Resource Management Review	82	33
Public Administration Review	72	32
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	42	28
Technovation	93	28
Small Business Economics	99	23
Tourism Management	54	20
Research Policy	48	18
Journal of World Business	50	14

Journal of Product Innovation Management	77	13
Leadership Quarterly	30	11
Long Range Planning	45	11
Journal of Management	12	10

Among the sample of hundred journals, thirty-one have not yet been issued any document related to SLR, like the 67 ones turned out by a single, 265 by two, 339 by three and 368 by more than three authors, as can be seen in Figure 3. We did not analyze any single or double SLR authorship because, following Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), a good team of examiners may reduce bias in the manipulated data. We know that a team could have developed some SLR documents, and the results published with a single author that led the study. Nonetheless, this information is not frequently available.

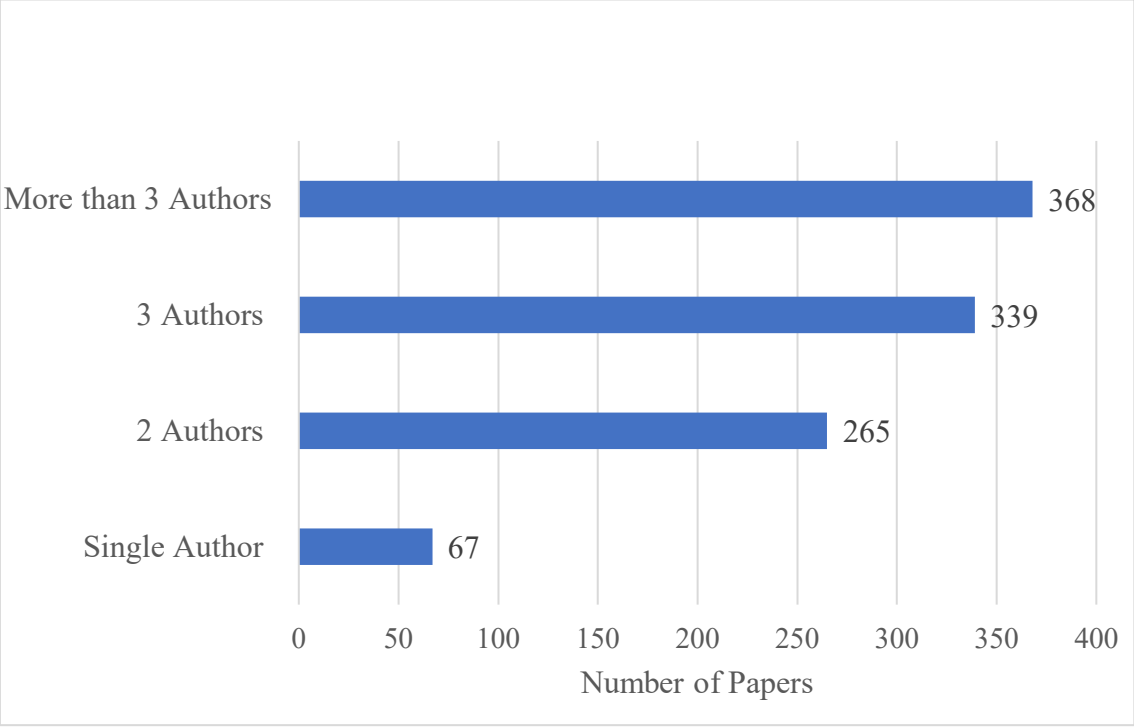

Figure 3 – Number of SLR documents published by single, two, three and more than three authors from 2003 to 2022.

In some cases, journals published many SLR documents on the same issue. It was the situation of the Journal of Business Venturing, with two publications on January 9, 2022; Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, with five on January 5; Leadership Quarterly, with two on January 2; Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, with two on January 7; Journal of Organizational Behavior with five on January 2; Tourism Management with two on January 8; Journal of Service Management with 19 on January 1; Human Resource Management Review with four on January 9; the International Journal of Production Economics with two on January 9; and Small Business Economics with two on January 8. All of them were in the first month of 2022.

Amid the 1059 documents studied, there are 3349 records with 2807 authors. In the most common case, 2446 names appear only in 1 record. Glock G. H. has appeared ten times, 8 in authorship with Grosse E. H. This similitude is found between Krauss S., which also has developed eight documents, 2 in authorship with Kumar S., which appear in 7 records. Figure 4 demonstrates the number of documents each author has appeared multiple times in the sample.

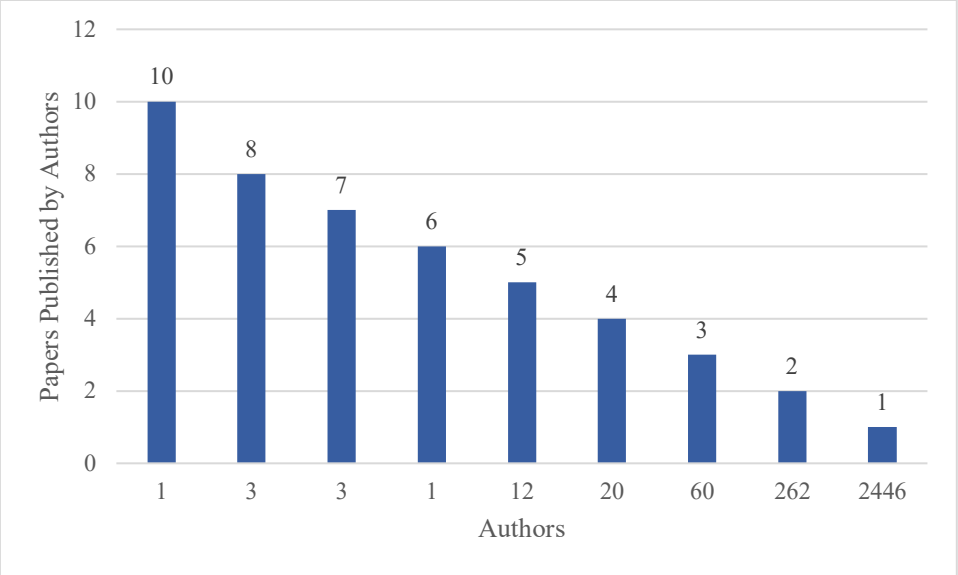

Figure 4 Repeated authorships in our sample

Figure 5 lists the eight most "productive" authors appearing in the 51 records published by 13 journals. 11 were issued in the Technological Forecasting and Social Change, followed by the International Journal of Production Economics, with 17 documents. These two journals are by far the larger SLR documents releasers. Among the researchers, Krauss S. has published eight documents in five journals. Glock C. H. and Grosse E. H. have appeared two times in two journals.

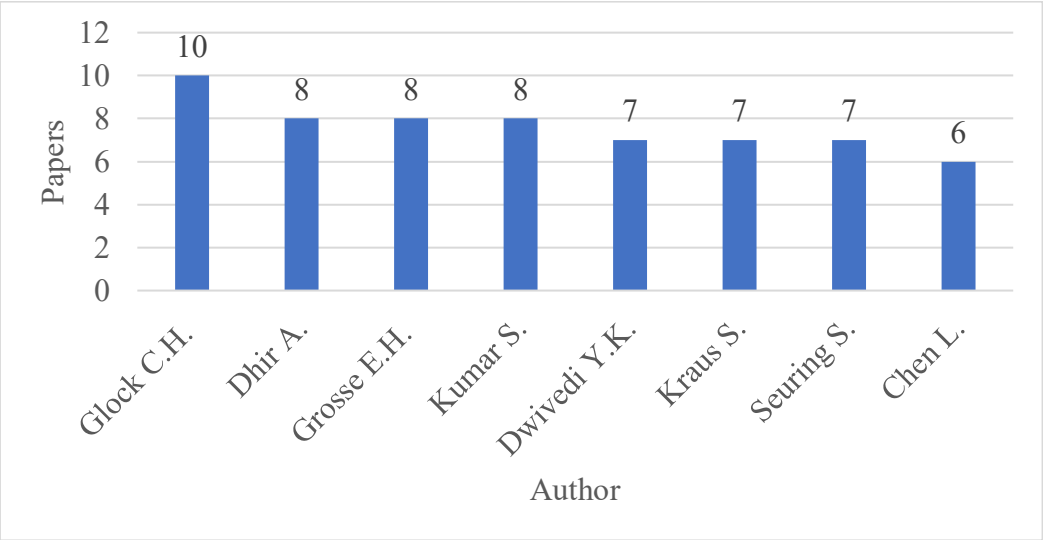

Figure 5. The most “productive” authors.

Searching direct inside the target journals seems less dependent, but not totally, on the unknown algorithmic "black box" of the search engines. To illustrate, Sheng et al. (2021) published an appealing article in the British Management Journal on "COVID-19 Pandemic in the New Era of Big Data Analytics: Methodological Innovations and Future Research Directions" that is a scoping review, not an SLR. The article mentions just once the words "systematic literature review" and 24 times the word "review". Manually checking the documents retrieved by search engines is a crucial phase of building an SLR.

Like the scoping review of Sheng et al. (2021), many other documents retrieved were essays, narrative reviews, bibliometric studies, statistical analyses, or even case studies, but not SLR. Due to the number of 1059 documents to be manually analyzed would take several years of research effort, we decided to reduce the sample objectively. We took a "strategic decision," giving preference to the first document appearing in each issue. After reading all the reduced sample of documents presented in Table 4, and back-and-forth classificatory discussions, we finally reached 17 SLRs to be examined. In many cases, we used the document's classification. Nevertheless, in others, the deepest analytic, interpretative, and critical literacy provided by a team of researchers made us classify some as "Essay+".

Table 4 Final sample of review documents considered in this study.

Journals	Authors	Titles	Issued	Type of Research
Academy of Management Journal	Um et al.	The Downside of CFO Function-Based Language Incongruity	10/09 /2021	Content analysis
Academy of Mgmt. Learning and Education	González-López, Pérez-López, Rodríguez-Ariza	Clearing the Hurdles in the Entrepreneurial Race: The Role of Resilience in Entrepreneurship Education	01/09 /2019	Experimental analysis
Academy of Management Review	Leavitt et al.	Ghost in the Machine: On Organizational Theory in the Age of Machine Learning	01/10 /2021	Essay+
British Journal of Management	Sheng et al.	COVID-19 Pandemic in the New Era of Big Data Analytics: Methodological Innovations and Future Research Directions	01/10 /2021	Literature review
Contemporary Accounting Research	Baker et al.	Contemporary Accounting Research: A Retrospective between 1984 and 2021 using Bibliometric analysis*	05/04 /2022	Bibliometric analysis
Family Business Review	Brigham et al.	Accumulating Knowledge Over Time: Introduction to the Fourth FBR Review Issue	01/03 /2022	SLR
Human Relations	Van der Kamp et al.	On alliance teams: Conceptualization, review, and future research agenda	17/06 /2022	SLR
Human Resource Management Review	Biswas, Mäkelä, Andresen	Work and non-work-related antecedents of expatriates' well-being: A meta-analysis	01/09 /2022	Meta-analysis
ILR Review	Neumark et al.	Work Continuation while Treated for Breast Cancer: The Role of Workplace Accommodations	01/08 /2015	Experimental analysis

Information and Organization	Davidson, Østerlund, Flaherty	Drift and shift in the organizing vision career for personal health records: An investigation of innovation discourse dynamics	01/10 /2015	Discourse analysis
Information Systems Research	Lin et al.	Information Control for Creator Brand Management in Subscription-Based Crowdfunding	29/12 /2021	Statistical analysis
International Journal of Management Reviews	Garavan et al.	Putting the individual and context back into national human resource development research: A systematic review and research agenda	14/07 /2022	SLR
International Journal of Production Economics	Dieste, Sauer, Orzes	Organizational tensions in industry 4.0 implementation: A paradox theory approach	01/09 /2022	SLR
International Journal of Research in Marketing	Henkens, Verleye, Larivière.	The smarter, the better?! Customer well-being, engagement, and perceptions in smart service systems	01/06 /2021	Scenario-based experiment
Journal of Business and Psychology	Ghumman et al.	Religious Discrimination in the Workplace: A Review and Examination of Current and Future Trends	01/12 /2013	SLR
Journal of Business Venturing	Bacq, Hertel, Lumpkin	Communities at the nexus of entrepreneurship and societal impact: A cross-disciplinary literature review	01/09 /2022	SLR
Journal of Consumer Psychology	Milberg et al.	Parent brand susceptibility to negative feedback effects from brand extensions: A meta-analysis of experimental consumer findings	30/12 /2021	Meta-analysis
Journal of Human Resources	Duncan, Mansour, Rees.	It's Just a Game: The Super Bowl and Low Birth Weight	02/10 /2017	Statistical analysis
Journal of Management Information Systems	Wessel, Gleasure, Kauffman	Sustainability of Rewards-Based Crowdfunding: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis of Funding Targets and Backer Satisfaction	03/07 /2021	Experimental analysis
Journal of Management Inquiry	Zyglidopoulos et al.	Expanding Research on Corporate Corruption, Management, and Organizations	01/07 /2017	Issue introduction
Journal of Management Studies	Gatrell, Ladge, Powell	A Review of Fatherhood and Employment: Introducing New Perspectives for Management Research	01/07 /2022	Meta-narrative
Journal of Organizational Behavior	Howard et al.	Work and suicide: An interdisciplinary systematic literature review	01/02 /2022	SLR
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Gomes, Osborne, Lisboa.	The Myth of Mayoral Leadership in Local Government Resource Allocation: A Multilevel Analysis with Brazilian Municipalities	01/07 /2022	Multilevel analysis
Journal of Retailing	Bonfrer et al.	Retail store formats, competition and shopper behavior: A Systematic review	01/03 /2022	SLR
Journal of Service Management	Ahuvia, Izberk-Bilgin , Lee	Towards a theory of brand love in services: the power of identity and social relationships	01/01 /2022	Literature review
Journal of Service Research	Stead et al.	Toward Multisensory Customer Experiences: A Cross-Disciplinary Bibliometric Review and Future Research Directions	01/08 /2022	Bibliometric review

Journal of Supply Chain Management	Acero B, Saenz MJ, Luzzini D.	Introducing synchromodality: One missing link between transportation and supply chain management	01/01 /2022	Multiple methods
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Bolander et al.	Operationalizing salesperson performance with secondary data: aligning practice, scholarship, and theory	01/05 /2021	SLR
Journal of Travel Research	Eletxigerra, Barrutia, Echebarria	Expanding the Task-Dominant Value Cocreation Narrative: The Role of Consumer Expertise and Social and Mental Processes	01/05 /2022	Survey
Journal of Vocational Behavior	Chan et al.	A systematic review of at-work recovery and a framework for future research	01/09 /2022	SLR
Leadership Quarterly	Rudolph et al.	A systematic and critical review of research on respect in leadership	01/02 /2021	SLR
Long Range Planning	Schaedler, Graf-Vlachy, König	Strategic leadership in organizational crises: A review and research agenda	01/04 /2022	SLR
Omega	Sundarakani et al.	Big data driven supply chain design and applications for blockchain: An action research using case study approach	01/07 /2021	Case study
Organization Studies	Denyer, Tranfield, van Aken	Developing Design Propositions through Research Synthesis	01/03 /2008	Essay+
Organizational Psychology Review	Beitler, Scherer, Zapf	Interpersonal conflict at work: Age and emotional competence differences in conflict management	01/11 /2018	SLR
Organizational Research Methods	Kunisch et al.	Review Research as Scientific Inquiry	26/12 /2022	Essay+
Personnel Psychology	Gonzalez, Portocarrero , Ekema	Disposition activation during organizational change: A meta-analysis	05/04 /2022	Meta-analysis
Production and Operations Management	Kumar et al.	Putting analytics into action in care coordination research: Emerging issues and potential solutions	01/06 /2022	SLR
Research Policy	Peerally et al.	Towards a firm-level technological capability framework to endorse and actualize the Fourth Industrial Revolution in developing countries	01/12 /2022	SLR
Small Business Economics	Cefis et al.	Understanding firm exit: a systematic literature review	01/08 /2022	SLR
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Škare et al.	Scientometric analysis on entrepreneurial skills - creativity, communication, leadership: How strong is the association?	01/09 /2022	Scientometric analysis
Technovation	Ghasemzadeh, Bortoluzzi, Yordanova	Collaborating with users to innovate: A systematic literature review	01/08 /2022	SLR
Tourism Management	Fan, Jiang, Deng	Immersive technology: A meta-analysis of augmented/virtual reality applications and their impact on tourism experience	01/08 /2022	Meta-analysis

This *res extensa* list is not duplicated in the references, except for Denyer, Tranfield, and van Aken (2008), which was extensively used in this work, but all SLRs were the focus of analysis. In the references, we present the literature that supports us in understanding what SLR is and observing advice regarding developing reviews in the organization and management field of studies. Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, many of the retrieved documents were not written by a team of researchers and were not included in our final sample.

All the SLRs analyzed in this study rely on subjective criteria to include or exclude documents in their selection processes of literature that fit their purposes. An experienced lawyer, but junior management researcher and a middle-level French business professor, trained and working in the US for more than a decade, having in mind the ten phases of the planning, conducting, and reporting stages of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, (2003) start the analyses of the content of the articles. A senior researcher with 40 years of professional activities in both corporate and academic contexts coordinated all the investigation and was responsible for clarifying, making decisions when there was no consensus, leading the interpretation of the findings, and writing this report.

SLR in the organizations and management field – intriguing findings

The main steps for all SLR descriptions are always the same: planning the review, conducting it, and reporting the findings. Some authors focus on the creation process, while others emphasize reporting the results (Krauss et al., 2020). During the SLR analyses, we did not explicitly cite phase by phase even though we had in mind the 10 phases recommended by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003:214). However, we classify some appealing and intriguing findings of the planning, conducting, and

reporting stages for "developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review."

Most of the papers analyzed, except Schaedler et al. 2022, with several repeated "strategic leaders" words, do not mention management crises or mismanagement cases. In the interdisciplinary systematic literature review of work and suicide, Howard et al. (2021) mention in the abstract that they want to "encourage the study of work and suicide with the intent of ultimately reducing mortality." Their findings, as well as other SLR results, are presented based on a theoretical framework built up from selected past "seminal" theories without much explanation about their robustness and criticism. All management activities have strengths and weaknesses. However, it seems that the management field of study has difficulties dealing with adversities and unsuccessful situations that are common in the day-to-day activities of organizations.

While studying the subject and analyzing the papers, some intriguing formatting issues were demotivating and deserved to be mentioned. The Kunisch et al. (2023) paper is the largest mentioned in this study (22 thousand words). It has 12 keywords and a repeated phrase from pages 25 to 26 highlighted in italics in the citation "The product of synthesis might be frameworks, typologies or models, *but synthesis also pertains to the strength of a line of argument, quality of reasoning, application of logic, critical thinking, interpretation, and theorizing underpinning claimed contributions.* " Hanelt et al. (2021) may have the most extensive paragraphs of all papers, reaching 45 lines (565 words) in one case.

It is not very pleasant reading too many repeated words in an abstract (behavior – 10 in 201 words) or manuscript (239 behavior; 104 behaviors and 80 behavioral) of Hemshorn de Sanchez, Gerpott, and Lehmann-Willenbrock, (2021). The same for reading "care coordination" and "team" or "alliance teams" in the abstract and

introduction of the Kumar et al. (2022) and Van der Kamp et al. (2022) papers, to mention two of several in our sample. Reading countless times "communities" in the executive summary of Bacq et al. (2021), which has a citation of Hindle (2010), "The community is the garden of entrepreneurship. No entrepreneurial venture can flower in isolation" as its epigraph, demotivates following reading all the manuscript content.

Several repeated words (12 "recovery" in 173 words of the Chan et al. 2022 abstract) in any part of the paper and epigraphs in scientific studies distract the reader. Short "conclusions" like Howard et al. (2021), which wrote just one paragraph with 86 words, or long ones like those of Peerally et al. (2022) (10 paragraphs, totaling 1.380 words) do not efficiently accomplish the Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) third stage of reporting and disseminating the findings of the research. We do not know if this is a trend in management reports, but balanced paragraphs without too many repeated words help the readers focus on the manuscript's content. Several scholars conclude their studies with just one paragraph of short remarks synthesizing and sometimes reproducing previous statements of the introduction or other manuscript sections.

The readers' engagement would be higher by analyzing the research protocol. However, none of the 17 SLRs recently published in the management journals considered in our final sample present a complete research protocol. They describe procedures in the article's methods section but do not fully explain the research design or the planning first stage of the review, which is the most important for us. Cefis et al. (2022:424), for example, mention the word protocol in the selection of "relevant" articles saying that "we followed the protocol illustrated in Fig.1". Their figure shows three "steps" of selecting articles. Mehmood et al. (2022:5|) also refer to the protocol as a figure mentioning that "the selection protocol for this systematic review is detailed in Figure 1".

Garavan et al. (2022) mention the word "protocol" twice, developing the "step 2 – review protocol" of their three "steps" (Step 1: Topic formulation and Step 3: Data collection). Dieste, Sauer, and Orzes (2022) refer to protocol twice but not related to SLR as Ghasemzadeh et al. (2022) and Peerally et al. (2022) mention it five and four times, respectively, but concerning protocols developed by information technology companies or as a general word in the communications and data sharing issues. In the article of Howard et al. (2021), the word appears four times, two of them in the reference list. In the study of Bolander et al. (2022), it appears just one time, and in all other SLRs considered in our study, the word "protocol" is not even mentioned.

The Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science received the article of Bolander et al. (2022) on March 25, 2019, and accepted it on October 12, 2020. Still, it seems that the authors had the opportunity to update three references "accessed" in July, August, and October 1, 2020. A time gap and sometimes differences between the online and the printed version of research reports strongly affect the investigation efforts. The article of Kunisch et al. (2023), for instance, was found ahead of print in our search of December 2022. The precision of including or excluding articles in the SLR samples depends on the research question, and "details" are not always observed.

The research questions of the systematic reviews of our sample, in general, seem to be wishes and unknown aspects of a subject by the research team rather than a problematization that deserves to be investigated. As pointed out by Rodolph et al. (2021), using "b" to infer "a" is a confusing matter that deserves critical evaluation. Too many questions to be answered by just one research effort seems difficult to follow and have a clear idea about the findings of the endeavor. Well-defining the purpose(s) of the study and not mixing them with those of the investigators' wishes is an important first

phase of planning the review, indicated by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) – identification for the need for a review.

Some researchers have many "goals in mind" expressed with "What" (Ghumann et al. 2013), or other questions may lead to descriptive findings and distract the attention of potential readers. Bonfrer, Chintagunta, and Dhar (2022) guide their systematic review by formulating six questions: two how's and four what's. What; When; Where; Who; Whose; Which; Why, and How are common questions that any research struggles to answer. Answering these questions with goodwill and transparency is the first step of any scientific endeavor. Otherwise, skeptical readers may not trust the "scientific" findings.

SLR in the organization and management field – appealing findings

Even though organization and management researchers are not elaborating and publishing anywhere structured and standard research protocols, many (Bonfrer, Chintagunta, and Dhar, 2022; Van der Kamp et al., 2022, Mehmood et al., 2022) are given details of their procedures, making available supplementary materials associate with the study, in the online report. Nevertheless, in several cases, not indicating the link in the printed version to access them causes retrieving the appendices difficult. Storing data and information for others interested in accessing them to study the same subject further is a necessary procedure. But, if the proposal of doing systematic reviews is to synthesize the knowledge remitting the reader to other sources, sometimes, is troublesome.

Tables to summarize content are welcome, and many seem to be using them. Nonetheless, one of the primary purposes of systematic reviews is synthesizing knowledge. The content and the size of the reports deserve careful attention. Six of eighteen pages of the Siangchokyoo et al. (2020) report is consumed to present Table 3.

Table 2 of Bietler et al. (2018) is exhibited in 6 pages, and Table 3 in 4. Even an editorial by Brighan et al. (2022) about "Accumulating Knowledge Over Time", four of their eight pages of an introduction to a review issue were employed to portray Table 1.

Likewise, footnotes and endnotes are welcome for clarity and to help the reader follow the author's intentions. Though, as in the case of the supplemented material made available in the electronic version of the papers, making them short and informative improve the attractiveness of the reading. Some are too large (Hemshorn de Sanchez, Gerpott, and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2021), and others, when there are not many (Mehmood et al. (2022), with just one or Ghasemzadeh et al. (2022) two (one a reference link) may deserve to be incorporated in the manuscript. Executive summaries (Journal of Business Venturing), structured abstracts (Journal of Service Management and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, two of our samples), and carefully selected and published keywords seem to improve the readership of the SLR.

Articles without keywords published by several journals, among them all the American and the British Management Associations journals, Long Range Planning (Elsevier) and Family Business Review (Sage), was a debatable issue among us to be considered or not as an inclusion or exclusion criterion of our final sample. As they were found by the search engines of top management journals, we decided to keep them in. Nevertheless, Grames et al. (2019), among many other researchers favoring automated approaches, strongly recommend methodically identifying search terms for systematic reviews. Publishing then seems a reasonable step to increase the visibility of the articles.

These details are essential to make the third stage of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) credible. Reporting and disseminating the contribution of the SLR-given evidence into practice is the final goal of many years of hard effort. Fewer modal verbs

(can, may, might, shall, must, have to, could, ought to, should, among others) that are exhaustively used to express possibilities, prohibitions, permissions, certainties, and uncertainties are recommended. Based on the findings, these verbs are better employed to make suggestions and advice.

The researcher's attention to stages I and III, recommended by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), seems to contrast with stage II. Conducting a review seems to be the core attention of the authors of the SLRs of our sample. Nevertheless, in some cases, scholars identified too many research questions to be answered by just one SLR. On many occasions, the study quality assessment is not convincing even though, in some cases, employing modern software's ability to manipulate an incredible amount of data (Sheng et al. 2021). Quality assessment of others' efforts is a subjective matter not easily captured by the binary constructed software. Sometimes, not even captured by junior researcher evaluations with insufficient knowledge or wisdom, generally attributed to the elders.

Only a few studies mention the reasons for the time frame search selection. Dieste, Sauer, and Orzes (2022) were one of the two studies of our final sample that let us know the exact date of their search (January 7, 2022), identifying "over 22,000 hits". Ghasemzadeh et al. (2022) mention that their final studies selection was concluded in April 2020. Using surveys to identify the need for an SLR and in the data extraction, all automated means of search engines available are welcome (Sheng et al. 2021).

To further improve the selection process of essential documents, the backward and forward manual scrutiny of papers (Peerally et al., 2022; Schaedler, Graf-Vlachy and Konig, 2022; Hanelt et al., 2021) reduces the chances of letting without analysis contributions of "seminal" or "foundational" studies. Not all scholars are disseminating their research findings through modern electronic means, and sometimes, they do not

make them accessible and available to the public. Access to sources is strenuous if the investigation concerns issues in classified and copyrighted documents or corporations' strategic issues.

Regarding these processes and after analysing the selected documents, the data synthesis, as noted by Mays, Pope, and Popay (2005), respects the integrity of individual studies. A systematic and critical review of research, as done by Rodolph et al. (2022:13), demanding "a more critical (sic!) perspective on respect in leadership is needed, and we should not accept its assumed matter-of-fact influence at face" are appealing, as many other published by the management top journals. Even so, besides respecting others' efforts, incentivizing the transparency in effectively employing the management knowledge reviewed in many SLRs seems an issue not well emphasized in the reviews of our sample.

Synthesizing diverse knowledge in organizations and management, or any other, is not a simple task after a century of "scientific" studies introduced by Taylor in 1909 and published in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). Respecting his and other "principles", following protocols, guidelines, or even insightful advice became the main challenge of any old "high-priced man" or modern professionals developing their activities and duties. It seems, as pointed out by Denyer, Tranfield, and van Aken (2008:393), that the field of organization and management studies keeps being "often criticized as fragmented and of limited relevance for practice".

Final Remarks

Form and content are two of the most attractive issues for trained and not yet trained academic professionals. In our study, we tried to analyze and contrast findings critically. Calling attention to some issues of the recently published systematic reviews, we present exciting aspects rarely observed by organizations and management researchers

to improve the quality of SLR. To our knowledge, the discussion is up to date, considering relevant research recently published in top management journals. Different than most of the articles reviewed that search for integrative knowledge and prescribe research agendas, our article shows the strengths and weaknesses of prior SLR that, in most cases, are not following the primary "stages", "phases," or "steps" recommended by their peers and even guidelines of journals or academic associations.

We also criticize using software to manipulate quantitative data because the two most respected Cochrane and Campbell collaborations have encouraged incorporating qualitative data into systematic reviews. Binary logic cannot grasp the always-changing contexts' emotions, intentions, and dynamism. Algorithmic approaches embedded in the computational literature reviews (Antons et al. 2023) or other scientific studies (to describe the past in the predictive data mining, machine learning, and data visualization studies or the prescriptive evolutionary computation, Bayesian optimizations or biological evolutionary models) basing the analysis on binary manipulations of "true or false" or "black and white" seems unfruitful.

These studies are not capable of incorporating the challenging principles of the quantum mechanics logic (Birkhoff and Von Newman, 1936), overcoming the cognitive limitations, imperfect information, and time constraints of the "bounded rationality" and other issues related to "models of discovery" (Simon, 1947, 1977), handling the restrictions of the classical and quantum computation (Kitaev et al. 2002) or those of the fuzzy logic (Kosko and Toms, 1993) related to data imprecision and uncertainties of inferring relationships.

We are not presenting an original blockbuster contribution or developing "rigorous, innovative and impactful methodological advances and discussion" (Fan et al. 2022:171). Nevertheless, we hope to help readers and potential new authors enrich their

knowledge by improving their skills in writhe SLRs. The field is improving, but it does need to include criticism to deal with the appealing and intriguing findings of the studies.

The challenges for future investigations are enormous. Because most of the published SLRs are single or double-authored, building multidisciplinary research teams engaged in the time-consuming job is the first tough phase. Establishing challenging research questions, well justified, deserves effort by the ones that want to inform and promote the advancement of management science. Scientific knowledge is more demanding than the everyday subjectivities of common sense based on individual reasonings. SLRs are a collective synthesis of others' research labor and findings.

All phases of the first stage of designing or planning SLRs, the second of conducting, and the third of reporting, longtime recommended by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), deserve attention from organization and management researchers. After their article's publication, as Kunisch et al. (2023) summarized, many others have been essential guidelines to develop appealing and less intriguing reviews. Following the guidelines of journals, associations, or those recommended by senior-respected scholars seems to be the right first step to reviewing the past. If we are confident about the past, we may employ other methodologies to guess about the future - the insurmountable challenge of any research.

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