DEMYSTIFYING THE LITERATURE REVIEW AS BASIS FOR SCIENTIFIC WRITING: SSF METHOD

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Abstract: In order to demystify the literature review process, this research had two objectives, the first is to extoll the literature review as the foundation for scientific writing, the second, to present a method that points out a systematical way of make searches in the literature, which can aid in systematic and integrative reviews. To do so, this work was founded on exploratory literature searchers on methods of literature review, resulting in definitions of the literature revision types, as well as in the Systematic Search Flow (SSF) method proposition. This method has been shown to be useful for both systematic reviews and systematic searches. The conceptualization of review types was essential to demystify the process.

Keywords: Literature Review. SSF Method. Systematic Review. Integrative Review. Narrative Review.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is notorious that literature review is the basis for scientific writing. It is in the review that the researcher becomes familiar with the works, identifies the authors who have been writing about the problem researched. It is also essential when you do not have a research problem formulated yet. According to Echer (2001) the literature review serves to recognize the unity and the interpretative diversity existing in the thematic in which the problem under study is inserted, to broaden, to branch the interpretative analysis, as well as to compose the abstractions and syntheses that any research requires, collaborating for coherence in the researcher's arguments.

There are some different ways to perform a literature review, such as narrative (CORDEIRO et al., 2007), systematic(HIGGINS e SALLY, 2011) andintegrative (ERCOLE, MELO, ALCOFORDA, 2014). Each of these has its peculiarities, related to the objective, resources, form, among others. Numerous times, they go unnoticed by inattentive glances, causing researchers/authors to make misunderstandings and flaws.

Aiming to assist researchers to avoid these misunderstandings, this paper presents its first objective, in exposing and demystifying the concepts related to the types of literature review. In addition to the misconceptions regarding literature review concepts, it is noticed that there is a gap as to how to implement literature review.Some authors such as Levy and Ellis (2006), Biolchini et al. (2007) andConforto, Amaral and Silva (2011), proposed models to direct the way of the how-to implement. However, the models studied did not present clearly, if they can help the researcher do both: systematic literature review and integrative review. Therefore, the second objective is evidenced, in presenting a method to do systematic literature searches, which can aid in systematic and integrative reviews.

2 TYPES OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is the basis for the identification of current scientific knowledge. Based on it, it is possible to identify gaps to be explored, and also having a better comprehension of the study object/theme. However, there are several forms of revision: narrative, systematic and integrative.

Narrative revision is considered the traditional or exploratory revision, where there is no definition of explicit criteria, and the selection of articles is made arbitrarily, not following a systematic, where the author can include documents according to their bias, there is no concern to exhaust the sources of information (CORDEIRO et al., 2007). The way in which the documents are collected is commonly called exploratory search and can be used to complement systematic searches.

On the other hand, the systematic review is a method of scientific investigation with a rigorous and explicit process to identify, select, collect data, analyze and describe the relevant contributions to research. It is a review done with planning and gathering original studies, synthesizing the results of multiple primary investigations through strategies that limit bias and random errors (COOK, MULROW e HAYNES, 1997; CORDEIRO et al., 2007).

It should be noted that the systematic review starts from/take basses on systematic search(es), but the analysis of the documents returned has its peculiarities, being: there is a need for two or more researchers; all must read all the articles and discuss which articles they enter or not in the bibliographic portfolio, following, therefore, a research protocol (HIGGINS e SALLY, 2011). In conclusion, it is a rigorous synthesis of all research related to a specific question/question (ERCOLE, MELO, ALCOFORDA, 2014).

Finally, the integrative review is a method whose purpose is to gather and synthesize research results on a delimited topic or issue, in a systematic and orderly and comprehensive manner, contributing to the deepening of the knowledge of the subject under investigation (ROMAN e FRIEDLANDER, 1998; ERCOLE, MELO, ALCOFORDA, 2014).

It should be highlighted that for all three forms of review presented. There is in common the search activity. However, it is emphasized that it is carried out in a differentiated way and, mainly, that the systematic review is different from systematic search.

The systematic search is a method of scientific investigation which aims to eliminate biases using the planning and systematization of search (es) in a scientific database for original studies, synthesizing the results in a bibliographic portfolio. It can be performed both by the systematic review and the integrative review. Nevertheless, it is necessary to follow the rules and procedures of each type of review.Also, strategies are established, which defines criteria for inclusion and exclusion of data in a prior, transparent and objective way.When used for integrative review, it can be done by only one researcher, when there are more than one, the documents found can be divided between them, for reading and analysis, as long as it is clearly described in the strategy (FERENHOF E FERNANDES, 2014).

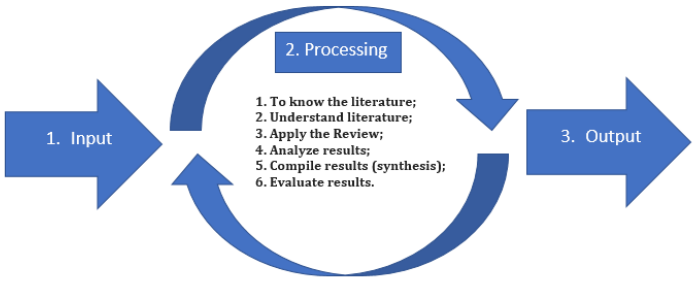
3 ANALYSIS OF MODELS FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

There are in the literature some models that present the form of how to carry out the process of a literature review. Some follow the bias of systematic review, others of an integrative review. In the sequence, three models will be presented, coming from a narrative review based on the study ofConforto, Amaral, and Silva (2011), which represent the process of literature review, as well as the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each model:

1) Levy and Ellis (2006) describe the systematic review as a process. The input is composed of the preliminary processing information. In the processing, there is a set of steps that describe how the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) will be conducted, that is, the SLR protocol. Which is a document that describes the

process, tools, and techniques that will be used. Finally, there are the "outputs," where the results report and synthesis are presented.

Figure 1 - Systematic Review Phases proposed by Levy and Ellis



Source: Levy and Ellis (2006)

This model has as advantages:

a) Processing is detailed in six steps;

b) As knowledge about the subject increases, cycles are performed more efficiently (CONFORTO, AMARAL and SILVA, 2011);

c) The cycle is repeated as many times as necessary until the bibliographic research objectives are reached (CONFORTO, AMARAL and SILVA, 2011);

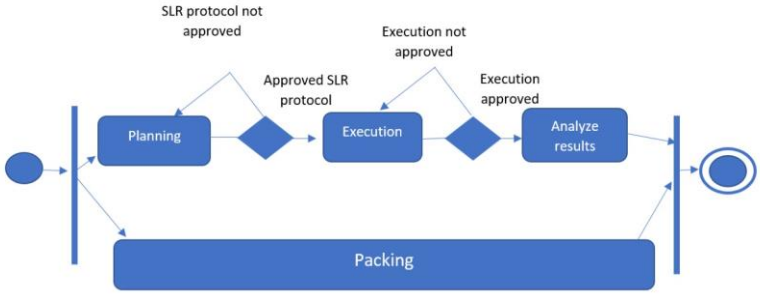
Disadvantages:

a) The detailed description of each step that composes the protocol is missing;

b) Does not mention its use in integrative review;

2) Biolchini et al. (2007),describe the process of conducting the systematic review composed of the following phases: planning, execution and results analysis. The authors do not emphasize the need to conduct the bibliographic review in iterative cycles (CONFORTO, AMARAL and SILVA, 2011). In the planning phase, a protocol is developed based on the review objectives. In it, there is a brief description of how the search should be performed, presenting the central question of search, objectives, keywords, search strings, and the method of execution. It is in the execution that the articles are identified, selected and evaluated according to the protocol. Finally, the results analysis is executed, where the extraction and compilation are made.

Figure 2 - Systematic process for bibliographic review



Source: Biolchiniet al. (2007)

These model advantages are:

a) Definition of a protocol, which specifies the central research question, objectives and keywords;

b) There is an evaluation point after the first and second phase. The results should be evaluated and, if disapproved, must return to the execution phase.

Disadvantages:

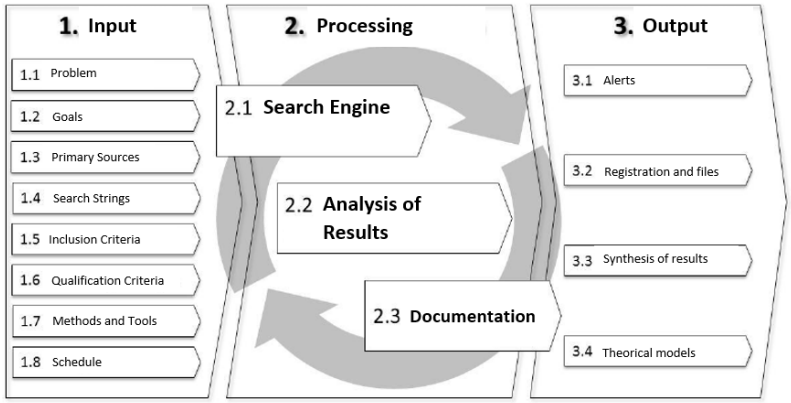
a) The model does not make explicit the need of performing iterative cycles of search, analysis, and comprehension. Neglecting the researcher's learning and not reusing the knowledge acquired during document searches, reading and text comprehension (CONFORTO, AMARAL E SILVA, 2011).

b) Does not mention its use in an integrative review.

3) Conforto, Amaral and Silva (2011) proposed a roadmap for conducting the systematic review. This roadmap presents a process overview, consisting of three phases and 15 stages.

In the first phase, the input is defined the research problem, which is the starting point, objectives, and the primary sources, which can be periodical articles or databases. The query strings are also defined (data extraction process), which is composed of the keywords and terms referring to the search. Next, the inclusion and qualification criteria are defined, followed by the methods and tools and finally by the definition of a schedule for the execution of the research. Figure 3 represents the Conforto, Amaral and Silva (2011) model.

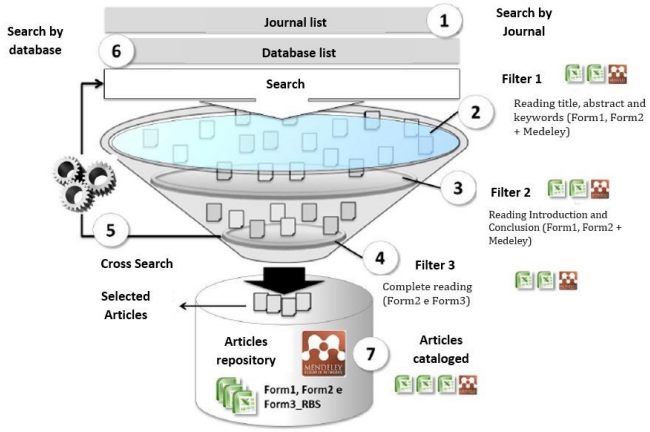
Figure 3 - General process for bibliographic review



Source: Conforto, Amaral and Silva (2011)

Regarding how to process it,Conforto, Amaral and Silva (2011) describe the execution in more detail, representing it by an iterative process, as can be observed in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Processing Phase Representation



Source: Conforto, Amaral and Silva (2011)

In the processing, it is emphasized that it is initiated by the search for the periodical in an individual way, which demands the need to define an initial list of journals, which are relevant to the researched topic. Filtering is performed up to the selected documents, which can be archived in management software, which is indicated by the author being Mendeley®.

Finally, in the exit phase occurs the alerts creation of the leading journals identified, the storage and sharing of references, the synthesis and results, and the reports are created. Ending with theoretical models and hypotheses definition which is the final review outcome.

Advantages:

a) There is a precise definition of how the processing steps are, also, presents forms for data analysis;

b) Filters Definition;

c) Alerts Definition;

Disadvantages:

a) Researcher bias regarding the periodicals chosen;

b) Definition of more than one question for the systematic review.It is a misconception about the systematic review procedure,according toErcole, Melo andAlcoforda (2014);

c) Does not detail the use of logical operators;

d) Definition of alerts limited to periodicals;

e) Does not mention its use in an integrative review;

According to the models' analysis presented here, it can be seen that the three models made a macro description of how-to proceed a systematic literature review. However, none of them mentions how-to deal with an integrative review, although it is understood that they are possible to apply, depending on the suitability.

The gaps observed refer to the lack of detail, mainly, regarding the flow of how to perform a search. This detailing couldassist in making the method agile and practical. These needs can be met by joining the advantages and mitigating/eliminating the disadvantages of each model.With this focus, this paper proposes a pragmatic model that presents in details "how" the search for systematic and integrative reviews should be carried out. The proposed model can be used: according to the type of revision chosen; by a single researcher, or by a research group. Besides, it is emphasized suggestions of tools, techniques, and ways of using scientific databases.

The following topic presents the Systematic Search Flow method, as a proposition which meets the characteristics mentioned above.

4 SYSTEMATICSEARCHFLOW (SSF) METHOD

It should be emphasized that this article authors not be deluded in saying that this is the only method to do a literature review, as well as analyze the results. The questions, inquiries, and requests for help from students, colleagues, researchers, and business partners have been taken as an inspiration to provide a way to guide them in a possible path to scientific research be more practical and agile.

The ***SSF Method*** – *SystematicSearchFlow* was developed based on the analysis of several courses, articles, methods, frameworks, systematics and best practices that deal with literature review and their result.However, the six principles of systematic review proposed byJesson, Matheson and Lacey (2011), served as the foundation for structuring the SSF method, being these: 1) Field mapping, through a scoping review; 2) Comprehensive research; 3) Quality assessment, which comprises the reading and selection of the papers; 4) Data Extraction, which refers to the collection and capture of relevant data in a pre-designed worksheet; 5) Synthesis, which comprises synthesizing extracted data to show what is known and provides the basis for establishing the unknown; 6) Write-up. The structuring can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 SSF Method Structuring

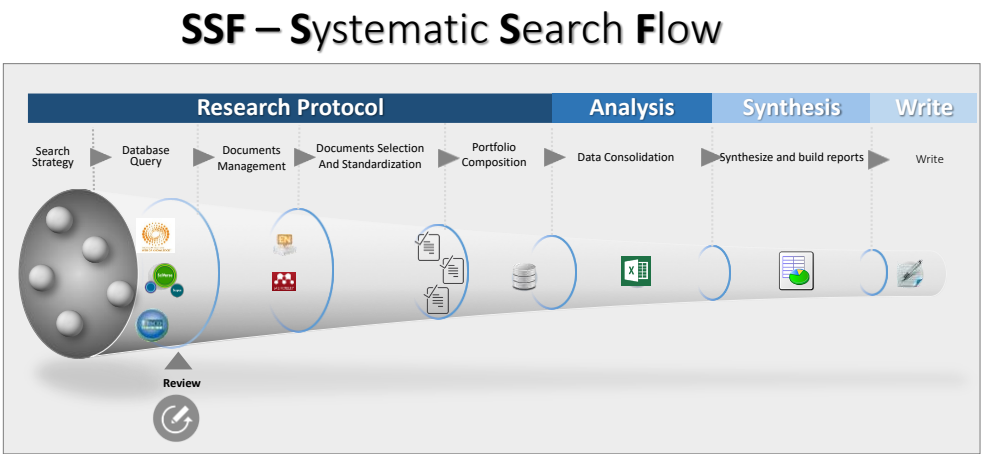
SSF Method Structure	Jesson; Matheson and Lacey (2011) Principles
Strategy	Mapping the Field through a Scope Review
Database searching/ Database query	Comprehensive search
Organize bibliographies, standardize the selection of the documents	Quality assessment, which includes the reading and selection of documents
Document portfolio composition, data consolidation	Data extraction, which refers to the collection and capture of relevant data in a pre-designed worksheet.
Synthesis and Reporting	Synthesis, which comprises synthesizing extracted data to show what is known and provides the basis for establishing the unknown
Write	Write-up

Source: Authors

At this point, it is worth to mention that the SSF method was developed aiming to systematize the search process into a scientific database to guarantee repeatability and avoid researcher bias. Thus, it serves for both, the systematic review and the integrative review. It depends only on the strategy definition used.

The**SSFMethod** comprises of 4 phases and 8 activities, as can be seen in figure 5.

Figure 5 - Systematic Search Flow Method Representation



Source: Authors.

For a better understanding, in the following, each phase and their activities, are detailed, as well the guidelines for implementation.

4.1 Research Protocol Definition - Phase 1

Phase 1 is devoted to the Research Protocol Definition, covering the elaboration of a set of rules and parameters to configure the research process, determining the characteristics according to research need.

This phase is composed of five activities: 1) Search strategy; 2) Database Query; 3) Documents Management; 4) Documents selection standardization; and 5) Portfolio Composition, described below.

Activity 1 consists of the search strategy, encompassing a set of procedures that define

the mechanisms to research and retrieval information from the databases. Another strategy important detail, which must be considered by the researcher, is the proper use of logical and relational operators. They search to return more or less assertive results.

The main logical operators are:

- *AND* – (Logical AND) - returns only documents that contain both searched terms. i.e.: (systematic) *AND* (bibliometrics).
- *OR* – (Logical OR) - returns documents which contain**one**of the two expressions. i.e.: (systematic) *OR* (bibliometrics).
- *NOT* – (Logical Negation) - Returns the expression counter value.i.e.: (systematic) *NOT* (bibliometrics) - It will return documents containing the term systematic, which do not have bibliometrics on it.

It is emphasized at this point that logical operators **should** be typed **capitalized** (uppercase). It was noted that in some scientific databases there is a difference between the number of documents returned when it was entered in lowercase, the result is lower.

Regarding the relational operators, the main are:

- <Less than;
- >Greater than;
- <= Less than or equal to;
- >= Greater than or equal to;
- = Equal to;
- <>Not equal to;
- (**!=)** Not equal to**;**
- ***BETWEEN*** – Used to specify a range of values;
- ***LIKE*** – Used in the comparison of a model and to specify records in a database. "*Like*" + expression % - means fetching all results with the same start of expression;
- ***IN*** - Used to check if the search value is within a list. I.e.: value IN (1,2,3,4).

It is worth mentioning that the use of quotes (“”) makes the database interpreter treat the term as being one, for instance, the search for “systematic review” is different from the search for **systematic AND review**, which will occur if you type **systematic review** without the quotation marks. The first will return documents that contain precisely the term **systematic review**. On the other hand, the second search will return documents containing both terms anywhere in the text, not necessarily the typical expression.

The use of special characters also can make the difference in the results and should be thought and included in the search strategy. For instance, the use of the characters * and ?.

The asterisk (*)is used when the researcher intends to retrieve any document that begins with a specific word and may have different endings.For example, the researcher has an interest in documents that measure something. Therefore, instead of putting word variations of measure using the logical operator OR (*measure* OR *measurement* OR *measuring*), the researcher can use the unique asterisk character: *measur**.

The question mark (?) Is used when is wanted to change only one character. For instance, the word organizations in English can be spelled with both "s" and "z", *organisation* British and *organization* American. In this case, the researcher needs to place the word

organi**?**ation in the search query, which will consider both spellings.

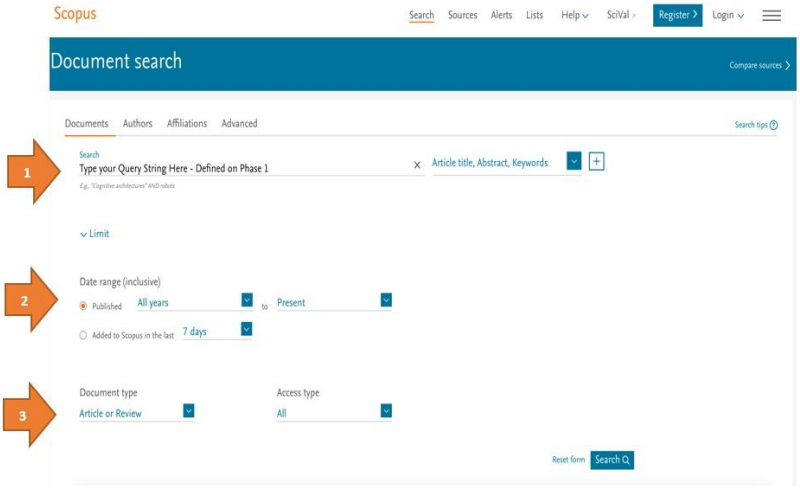
Another relevant factor in establishing the search strategy is the definition of some delimitations, associated to the search query, such as the delimitation of the type of document (article, revision article), document language (English, Portuguese, Spanish).If the researcher uses one of these filters, should be aware that the same filter must exist in all the databases that are searching in.

Inactivity 2 – Database query - The researcher, using a computational interface, following the strategy formulated, parameterizes the search query and executes it in the bases previously selected.

For this activity, it is recommended that the researcher, if he does not know the databases of the area to be searched, access CAPES portal (http://periodicos.capes.gov.br/), which describe many scientific databases, to be able to understand and choose the databases to be researched. It should be noted that each database has its peculiarity, concentration area, and focus. The researcher should read the bases description and choose the most relevant to their topic and research area.

Exemplifying activity 2, in the Scopus® database, enter the search query (1), time range (2) and type of document (3), as can be seen in figure 6,

Figure 6 - Parameterization of a search



Source: authors.

It is recommended that for each database searched, the researcher activates an alert for new publications referring to the search query used. This will make the search update easier. Another important recommendation is to record the date the research was done, as it should be mentioned in the manuscript. Different date, different results. More documents can enter in the database.

In turn, activity 3 is designed to organize the bibliographies, separating each searches result, through software that organizes bibliographies and references. It automates and streamlines the process of searching, filtering, counting, storing, entering text as a citation and as a bibliographic reference.May be used: EndNote®, Mendeley®, Zotero®, BookEnds®, among others. The bibliographic organizer choice is the researcher and/or his research institution responsibility.

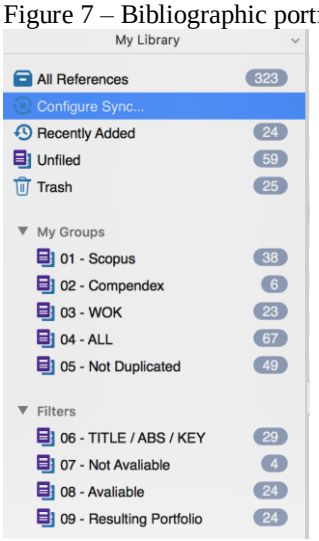
Activity 4 - Documents selection standardization - is the process applying the selected

filters. In this phase, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of each document are read, leading to the selection of those that are aligned with the search theme. Other filters, such as language and concentration area, can be applied as long as the pre-established strategy is aligned.

Finally, in activity 5 the article portfolio composition is carried out. This activity involves full reading all documents, allowing to comprehend the subject researched, collecting data storing into a spreadsheet. At this moment, another filter is executed, exclude documents that do not demonstrate adherence to the subject under investigation. It usually has some remaining documents that have the term in the keyword, or in the title, or in the abstract that refers to the searched topic but is not aligned.

Figure 7 represents the activities3, 4 e 5 execution.

Figure 7 – Bibliographic portfolio using EndNote®



Source: authors.

Once the bibliographic portfolio was composed, the analysis phase starts.

4.2 Analysis – Phase 2

Phase 2 intended to consolidate the data (activity 6). In this phase, the data is combined, such as articles, journals and most cited document, the year in which there were more publications on the subject of research, studied constructs definition, weak and strong points about the object of study, among others. It is recommended after the article portfolio is created, the use of some computational tool (spreadsheet) that allows the data collected combination and grouping.

It is at this stage that the researcher is enabled to interpret the data and has the possibility to raise existing knowledge gaps and suggest guidelines for future research on the subject of his interest (GANONG, 1987; MENDES; SILVEIRA; GALVÃO, 2008; BOTELHO; CUNHA; MACEDO, 2011), as well as to obtain the bibliometric data.It is indicated the use of an analysis and synthesis matrix, called knowledge matrix (FERENHOF and FERNANDES, 2014).

One of the analyzes considered pertinent by several authors is the bibliometric analysis, which refers to the general research data, such as the number of publications found

in each database, the number of publications available for download and the total number of publications that composed the portfolio of articles analyzed. Pilkington and Meredith (2009) state that using bibliometrics, the researchers, canexamine the growth in citations over the period, also the bibliography distribution in a specific field of knowledge. It can generate many different perspectives represented in tables, graphics, and figures.

It should be noted that the graphics and figures can be beautiful visually, but what is the value of these?In what they contribute to the manuscript purpose? What analysis was done on these graphs, figures and tables originated from bibliometrics? The focus should be on value. Bibliometrics by bibliometry, without purpose, should be avoided. However, when a purpose and an analysis are describing the numbers, graphs, figures, and tables can add value to the work. In this case yes, it should be used. In conclusion, the analyzes help to establish relationships and significance between the search terms, systematically identifying a set of factors relevant to the research.

4.3 Synthesis - Phase 3

In this penultimate phase, called Synthesis (activity 7), the lessons about the theme are constructed and then condensed into reports. The data synthesis allows the generation of new knowledge, based on the results presented by the previous researchers (MENDES; SILVEIRA; GALVÃO, 2008; BENEFIELD, 2003; POLIT; BECK, 2006).

It is used as a base,the Knowledge Matrix, a tool developed by Ferenhof e Fernandes (2014)which is intended to extract and organize the data coming from the documents analysis. The matrix contains information on aspects related to the research topic, assisting in the interpretation and construction of the essay and integrative review for researchers (KLOPPER; LUBBE; RUGBEER, 2007; BOTELHO; CUNHA; MACEDO, 2011).

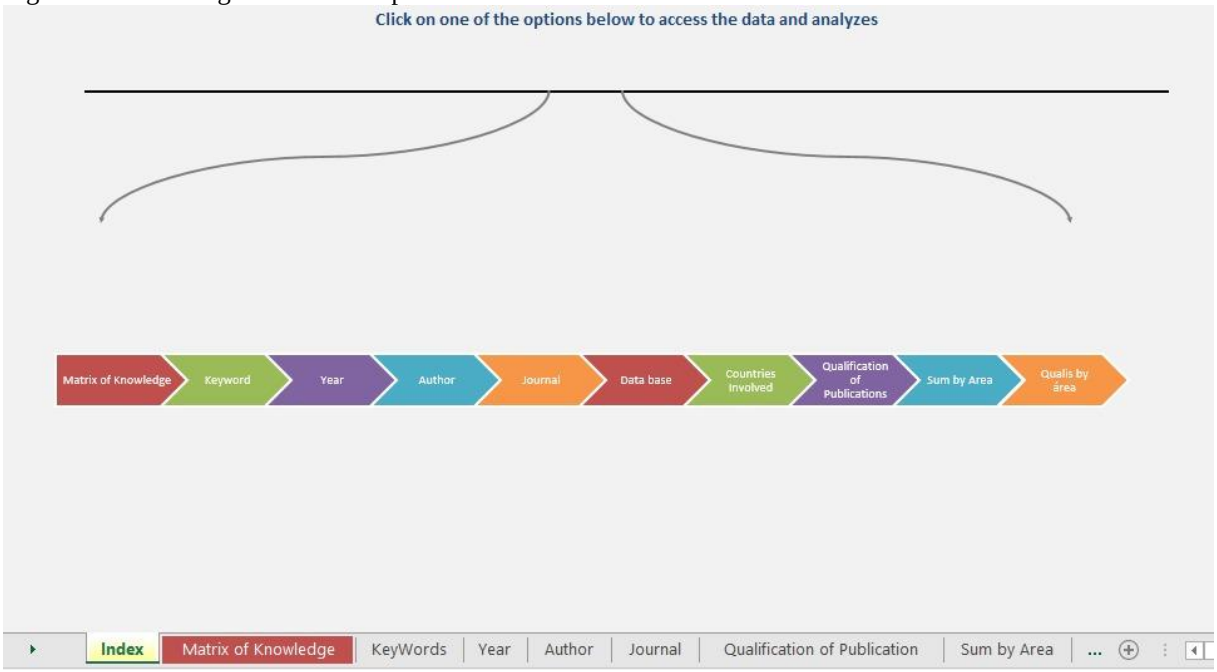
4.3.1 Knowledge Matrix

There is no standard model for developing a knowledge matrix, the combination of data and analysis way is left to the creativity and interpretation of each researcher.It should remember that the focus is the search problem/aim.

However, some points of observation are highlighted, being: Keywords; Year of publication; Author; Journal; Database; Type of article (empirical, theoretical, theoretical and empirical); References (articles to be read, referenced in this article); Construct Definition - Whatever they are; Gaps; Positive/negative points; Quotations.

Figure 8 shows an example of a synthetic matrix with the combination of some data.

Figure 8 – Knowledge Matrix Example



Source: authors.

4.3 Write - Phase 4

Phase 4 is intended to consolidate the results through scientific writing. To achieve this aim, the literature review objective, as well as the analysis and synthesis result, should be retrieved, through the matrix of knowledge and reports, to base the writing. The act of writing, activity 8, should take into consideration beyond the research objective, the recipient, meaning where the resulting work will be published. The researcher should investigate the journal or event to which it will submit; verify if it is aligned with the study objective; comply with the rules of submission; check the language style, passive or active voice; prepare all documents for submission according to standards; create the article presentation letter to the editor; remove any mention of authorship from the manuscript to ensure blind review. Finally, ensure that the resulting document is following the language in which the document was written grammar rules.

5 FINAL THOUGHTS

This work was originated to assist researchers to understand better the concepts related to the types of literature review and support their choice of which type to use according to the purpose of their research.

Also, is presented a method that contributes with a systematicalway for searching the literature, which can aid in systematic and integrative reviews.

The SSF method assists researchers, teachers, undergraduate and postgraduate students assist in the mapping of documents related to the researched topic, resulting in a bibliographic portfolio. Also, it provides the systematization of scientific knowledge, making

it possible to be replicated. Another factor that justifies the SSF method is based on its ability to enable the analysis and synthesis of existing knowledge in the scientific literature, allowing the obtainment of information that will enable the readers to evaluate the procedures used in the elaboration of scientific production.

DESMISTIFICANDO A REVISÃO DE LITERATURA COMO BASE PARA REDAÇÃO CIENTÍFICA: MÉTODO SSF

Resumo: Com intuito de desmistificar o processo de revisão de literatura, a pesquisa teve dois objetivos, o primeiro é apresentar a revisão de literatura como o alicerce para a redação científica, o segundo, apresentar um método que aponte uma forma de como fazer buscas de forma sistemática na literatura, que podem auxiliar em revisões sistemáticas e integrativas. Para tanto tomou-se como base buscas exploratórias sobre métodos de revisão de literatura, resultando na apresentação de definições dos tipos de revisão, bem como na proposição do método *SystematicSearchFlow (SSF).* Este método demonstrou-se ser efetivo tanto para revisões, quanto buscas sistemáticas. A conceituação dos tipos de revisão foiessencial para desmistificar o processo.

Palavras-chave: Revisão de Literatura. Método SSF. Revisão Sistemática. Revisão Integrativa. Revisão Narrativa.

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