What is a Systematic Literature Review?

- Systematic reviews (SRs) identify, collate, and systematically summarize empirical evidence from two or more primary research studies
- SRs attempt to minimize bias/error in the review process – Use systematic, empirical process that values transparency
- Based on protocols that outline explicit ex/inclusion criteria – Document transparent search strategies
- Can synthesize findings qualitatively or quantitatively (via meta- analysis)

(Campbell Collaborate, 2014)

Key differences between a Systematic Literature Review and a Literature Review

Research can be either primary/empirical research or secondary/desk based research. Primary research usually involves gathering data directly from research subjects and requires ethical approval. Secondary research involves gathering data that already exists through desk review and as a result of not interacting directly with participants or generating new data does not require ethical approval. A systematic literature review examines data and findings of other authors relative to a specified research question or questions. A systematic literature review is just one research methodology that can be used to do this. The essential difference between a literature review and a systematic literature review is that a literature review provides evidence from a high level summary in the fields connected to a research question whereas a systematic literature review begins with an intentional and purposeful selection of data including types of information to be included in the review including policy documents, journal articles, book chapters, blogs and publications related to the research questions. The link below to a short video on Systematic Literature Reviews offers a helpful overview of the key differences.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUErib-fXV0

Systematic Literature Reviews Key Features

Stage	Key Features
Problem Formulation	Clarify your Research Questions- set explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria

Data Collection	Literature Search using selected databases
Data evaluation	Assessing study inclusion/exclusion- information gathering from the study- information coding
Data analysis and interpretation	Analysis and interpretation of data, integrating the effect results, interpreting analysis results
Final write-up stages	Exploration of bias (publication bias and related bias). Recommendations.