EXPLORING THE INVOLVEMENT OF LIBRARIANS IN SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS IN BUSINESS

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BACKGROUND

Systematic reviews and other forms of evidence synthesis are growing in popularity in disciplines beyond the health sciences. The participation of librarians in systematic reviews in the health disciplines is well established. Guidelines on information retrieval methods state that, “information retrieval is an essential component of the systematic review process, analogous to the data collection phase of a primary research study, and requires the expertise of a trial search coordinator, an information specialist or a librarian” (Kugley et al, 2017). This research sought to examine the prevalence of librarian involvement in systematic reviews on business topics, by analyzing 100 recently published (2019) systematic reviews.

METHODS

Web of Science

Endnote

Excel

SEARCH

(Systematic NEAR/2 Review) was searched in the title field. The results were limited to Business and management, and operations topics, publication years 2014 -2019, English language, and scholarly and review articles.

STUDY SELECTION

The first 100 articles that were screened and met the following criteria were included. Must be on a management topic. Additionally, articles should not have a health, psychology, or tourism focus.

DATA EXTRACTION

The following data was extracted from the 100 reviews: # of authors, # of databases searched, mention of librarian involvement. 20 reviews were randomly selected for further analysis: inclusion of a flow diagram, citing PRISMA standards, reporting the search keywords, or search fields.

ANALYSIS

Analysis focused on the level of involvement of librarians that was reported, as well as search methods and reporting standards which improve the transparency of a review.

RESULTS

97%

2%

1%

of reviews did not mention a librarian

of reviews mentioned consulting a librarian in the methods section

of reviews included a mention in the methods section and acknowledged the librarian for conducting the search

1) Extent of reported librarian involvement: Librarian involvement was reported in only 3 (of 100) systematic reviews. Is this a gap waiting to be filled or is it occurring but simply not being reported? A survey of business librarians may shed some light on this issue.

2) Reporting: Only 3 (of 20) studies cited the PRISMA standards (Moher et al, 2009). 11 studies did not have a flow diagram reporting the study selection process. Search strategies were not well-reported: 7 (of 20) reviews did not specify the search fields, though keywords were reported in 19 (95%) reviews. Searching and reporting aspects of the systematic review process that librarians can provide support and guidance on.

Reported search keywords

Reported search fields

Included a flow diagram

Cited PRISMA standards

CONCLUSION

Business librarians can play a role by offering a systematic review service, to provide support or guidance on methodological requirements, and best practices for conducting evidence synthesis reviews in their discipline, similar to what is currently offered by health sciences librarians.

REFERENCES
