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Exploring the Contrast: Narrative and Systematic Literature Reviews in Academic Research

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2024
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https://hdl.handle.net/10539/38307
Ndlovu, N. (2024). Exploring the Contrast: Narrative and Systematic Literature Reviews in Academic Research. [Presentation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/38307

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Exploring the Contrast: Narrative and Systematic Literature Reviews in Academic Research

Nokuthula Ndlovu

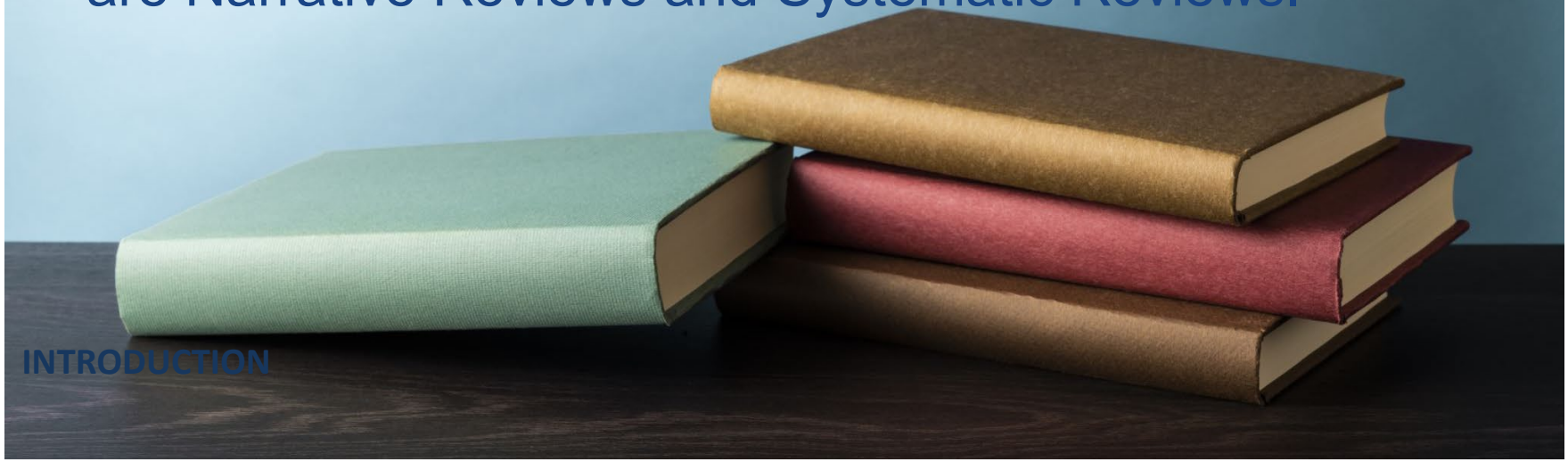
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Overview

- **Introduction**
- **Narrative Literature Review:** Definition, Example, Steps Involved
- **Systematic Literature Review:** Definition, Example, Steps Involved
- **Distinctions:** Narrative vs. Systematic Reviews
- **How is a Librarian involved in Systematic Reviews?**
- **Conclusion**

- **This presentation aims to explain the differences between Narrative and Systematic Reviews clarifying their definitions, methods, and providing examples.**
- Reviews play a crucial role in synthesizing existing knowledge and informing further research.
- Two prominent types of reviews in academic research are Narrative Reviews and Systematic Reviews.



INTRODUCTION

Narrative Literature Review

Definition

- A narrative literature review encompasses a wide scope, it involves the collection, critique, and summarisation of journal articles and textbooks pertaining to a specific subject. Typically, these reviews are conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic and potentially pinpoint areas where literature may be lacking.



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Narrative Literature Review

- **Example Topic:** The Impact of Technology on Childhood Development
- **Objective:** To provide an overview of existing literature on the effects of technology usage on childhood development and identify potential gaps in research

Steps involved

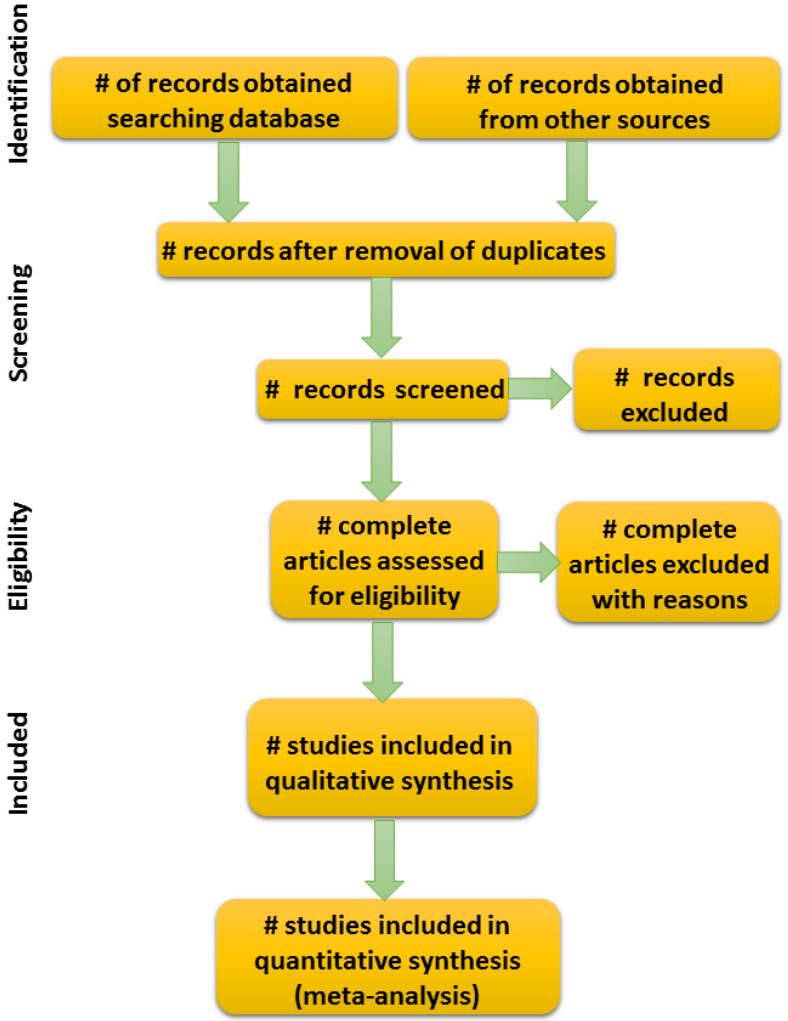
- **Literature Search:** utilising academic databases and Google Scholar: keywords such as "technology," "childhood development," "screen time," and "digital media."
- **Article Selection:** peer reviewed information sources published in the past decade
- **Data Synthesis:** examine the various aspects of technology's impact on childhood development
- **Critical Analysis:** Assess The strengths and limitations of individual studies

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Systematic Literature Reviews

Definition

- A Systematic Literature Review is a structured and comprehensive synthesis of existing literature on a specific research question.
- It follows a predefined protocol to minimise bias and ensure reproducibility.



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Systematic Literature Reviews

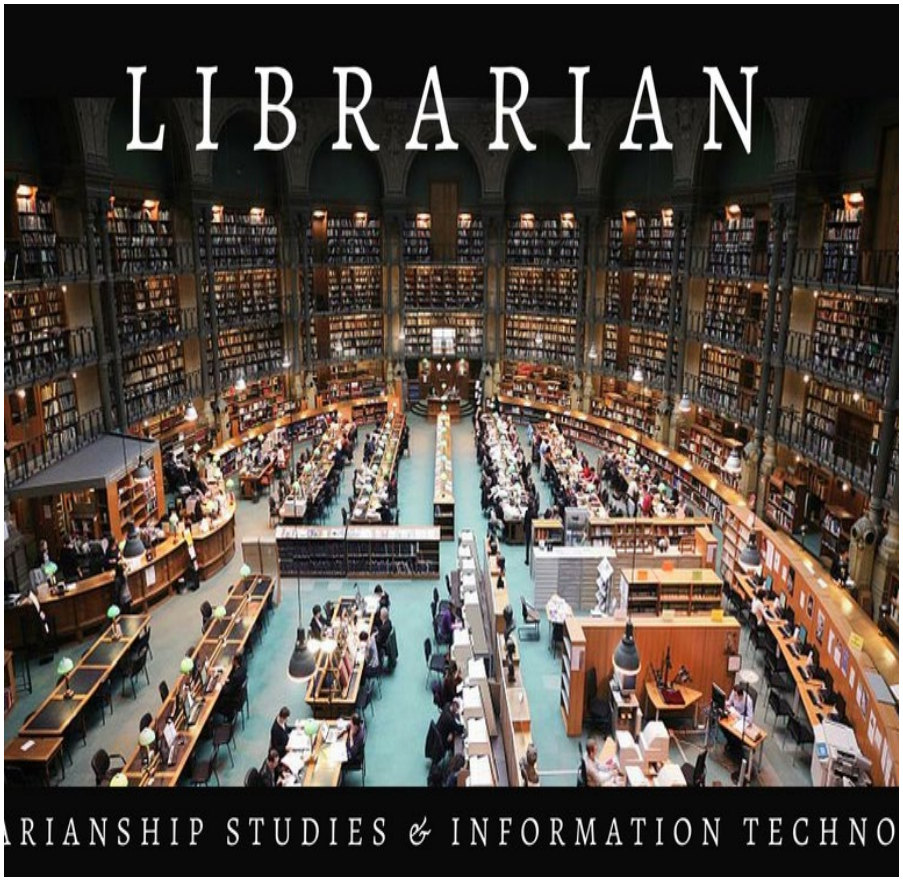
Steps Involved

- **Formulating Research Question**: Clearly define the research question and objectives.
- **Protocol Development:** Develop a detailed protocol outlining search strategy, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and data extraction methods.
- **Literature Search:** Conduct a systematic search across multiple databases using predefined search terms and filters.
- **Article Screening:** Screen retrieved articles based on predefined criteria, often involving multiple reviewers.
- **Data Extraction:** Extract relevant data from included studies using standardized forms.
- **Quality Assessment:** Assess the quality of included studies using predefined criteria, often involving tools like Cochrane's Risk of Bias tool.
- **Data Synthesis:** Analyse and synthesize data using appropriate statistical or qualitative methods.
- **Reporting:** Present findings following established reporting guidelines like PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses).

Distinctions: Narrative vs. Systematic Reviews

Features	Systematic reviews	Narrative reviews
Review question	Clearly defined research question	Broad overview of a general or specific topic
Sources	Comprehensive high-recall search for published and unpublished material Explicit search strategy	Non-predefined search and collation strategy
Selection criteria	Predefined protocol-based eligibility criteria as per hypothesis Limited selection bias	Non-explicitly stated Potential selection bias
Data evaluation and synthesis	Data is extracted and appraised in a structured way Meta-analyses give in a pooled estimate of intervention effectiveness	Overall description of study findings Qualitative summary of results
Provision of implications for practice	Provision of concrete recommendations and implications for practice	Very limited to none

How is a Librarian involved in Systematic Reviews?



- Librarians provide valuable and concrete contributions to systematic review search methods quality.
- Systematic review teams that involve librarians are more likely to report their search strategies, search relevant databases, and register their research protocol.
- Librarians outside the health and medical fields are offering systematic review services. Subject librarians in the social sciences, business, and management fields are seeing an increased interest from faculty and graduate students in performing and collaborating on systematic reviews.

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Librarians become contributors/coauthors

Conclusion

Narrative and Systematic Reviews serve distinct purposes in academic research.

While Narrative Reviews provide qualitative overviews, Systematic Reviews offer rigorous and reproducible syntheses of evidence.

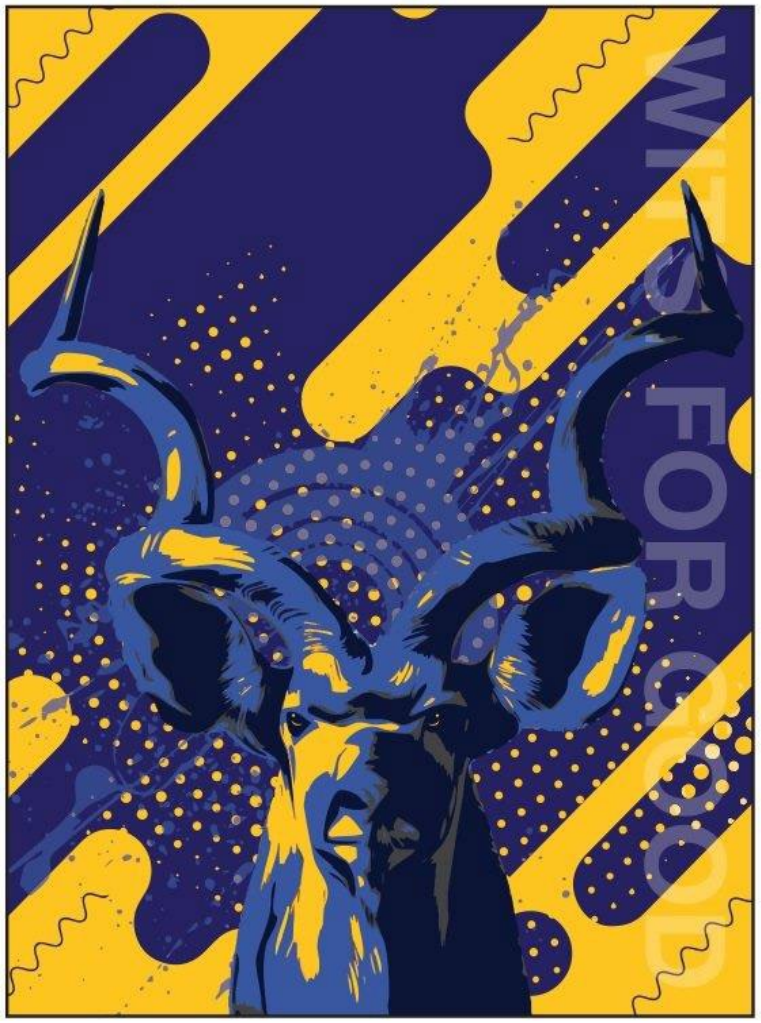
Understanding the disparities between these review types is crucial for researchers to choose the most appropriate approach for their research questions.

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