Middle and High School Praise: A Systematic Review of the Literature

Macey Wienstroer, Jade Montgomery, & Ashlyn Wingate

Margaret T. Floress, PhD & Hao-Jan Luh, PhD (Faculty Sponsors)

INTRODUCTION

Effectively managing student behavior is critical to teaching; therefore, teachers need to have the skills and knowledge to implement evidence-based strategies that are simple and easy to use. Praise is a low-cost strategy that can be implemented with minimal preparation and has been extensively studied in schools dating back to the 1960s (Becker et al., 1967; Brophy, 1981; White, 1975). The literature provides extensive support for the use of teacher praise to prevent behavior problems and address on-going behavior challenges (Epstein et al., 2008; Simonsen et al., 2008). Furthermore, explicitly linking teacher approval to a specific student behavior (i.e., behavior-specific praise; BSP) is an important component in many positive behavioral interventions and supports (Royer et al., 2019). Even though teacher praise has been extensively studied and is considered an evidence-based practice (Epstein et al., 2008; Royer et al., 2019; Simonsen et al., 2008), there are gaps in the literature, particularly understanding the extent to which praise has been studied in the secondary school setting (i.e., middle and high school classrooms). School-based preventive behavioral interventions and supports, like School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions (SWPBIS), should be implemented with key components (i.e., praise) across all school settings (primary and secondary; Freeman et al., 2016). Therefore, systematically reviewing the praise literature among middle and high school settings is necessary to fill this gap in the literature.

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- A total of 1,074 articles were identified with 523 remaining after duplicates were removed (see Figure 1).

STEP TWO: ARTICLE SCREENING FOR INCLUSION

- The article screening process took place in two phases. First, 523 articles were reviewed and nonempirical articles were excluded. The article was considered nonempirical if it was not a peer-reviewed publication (e.g., dissertation, thesis), a non-experimental case study, a qualitative study, a systematic review, or descriptive article (e.g., how to use praise).
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- Cohen's Kappa was calculated across the dyad teams and **agreement among reviewers was substantial $\alpha = 0.687$.**

STEP THREE: FULL-TEXT ARTICLE REVIEW

- **60 articles were identified for full-text review.** In looking at the 60 articles, 7 types of praise studies were identified (see R2 for study categories). Of the 60 articles, 9 were reviewed (as this project is ongoing).

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R1: How many studies have examined praise in the secondary setting? Of the the the initial 1,074 articles, 60 articles were identified (see Figure 1).

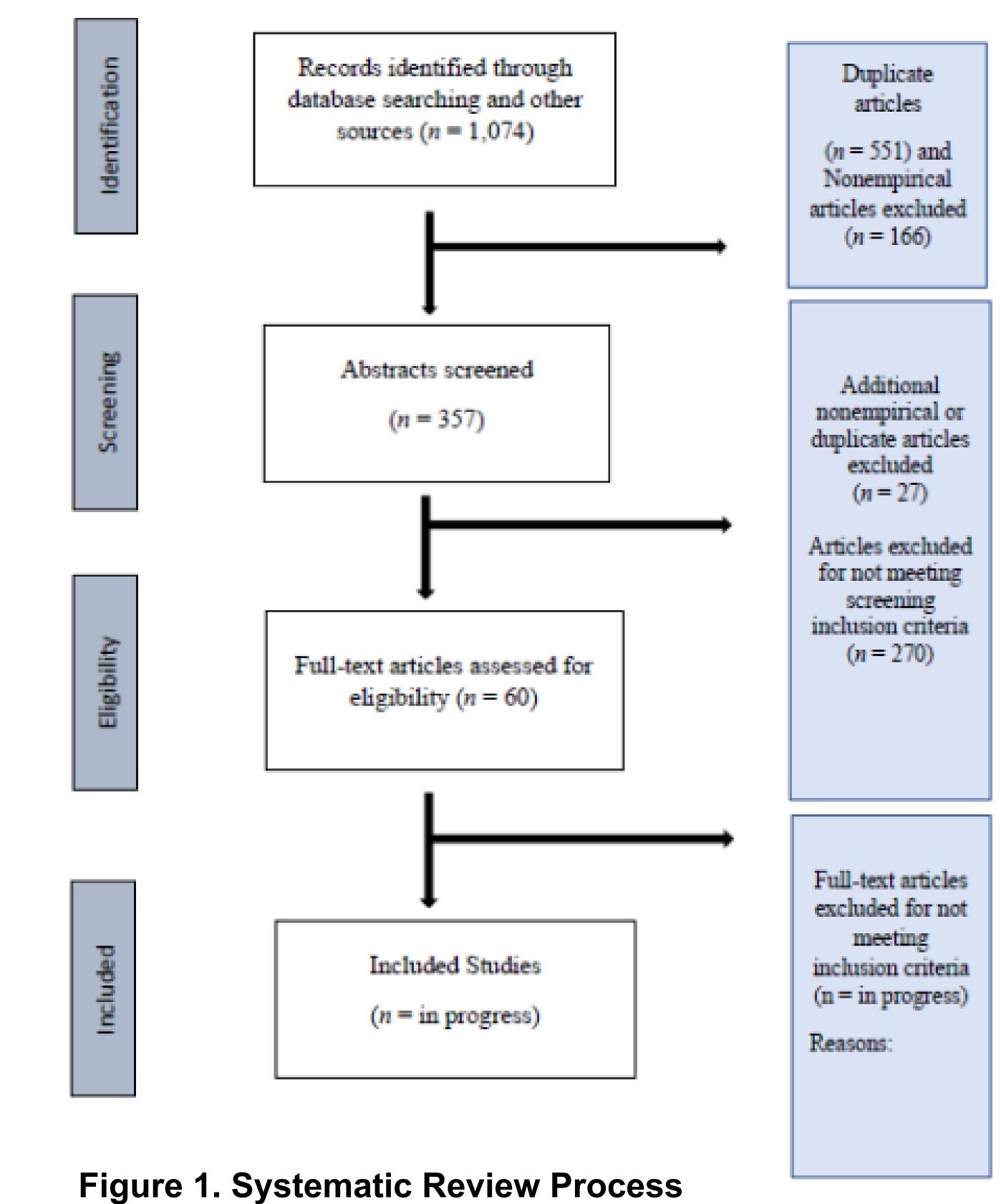**R2: What types of praise studies exist in the literature?**

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R3: How many studies have examined the impact of praise on student behavior? (i.e., How many Intervention Studies)

- Of the 60 studies, 22 (37%) were Intervention studies (20 Teacher implemented and 2 Student implemented).

Figure 1. Systematic Review Process

Results & Discussion

#	Article	Students	Setting	Study Design	Praise only or Combo	Results
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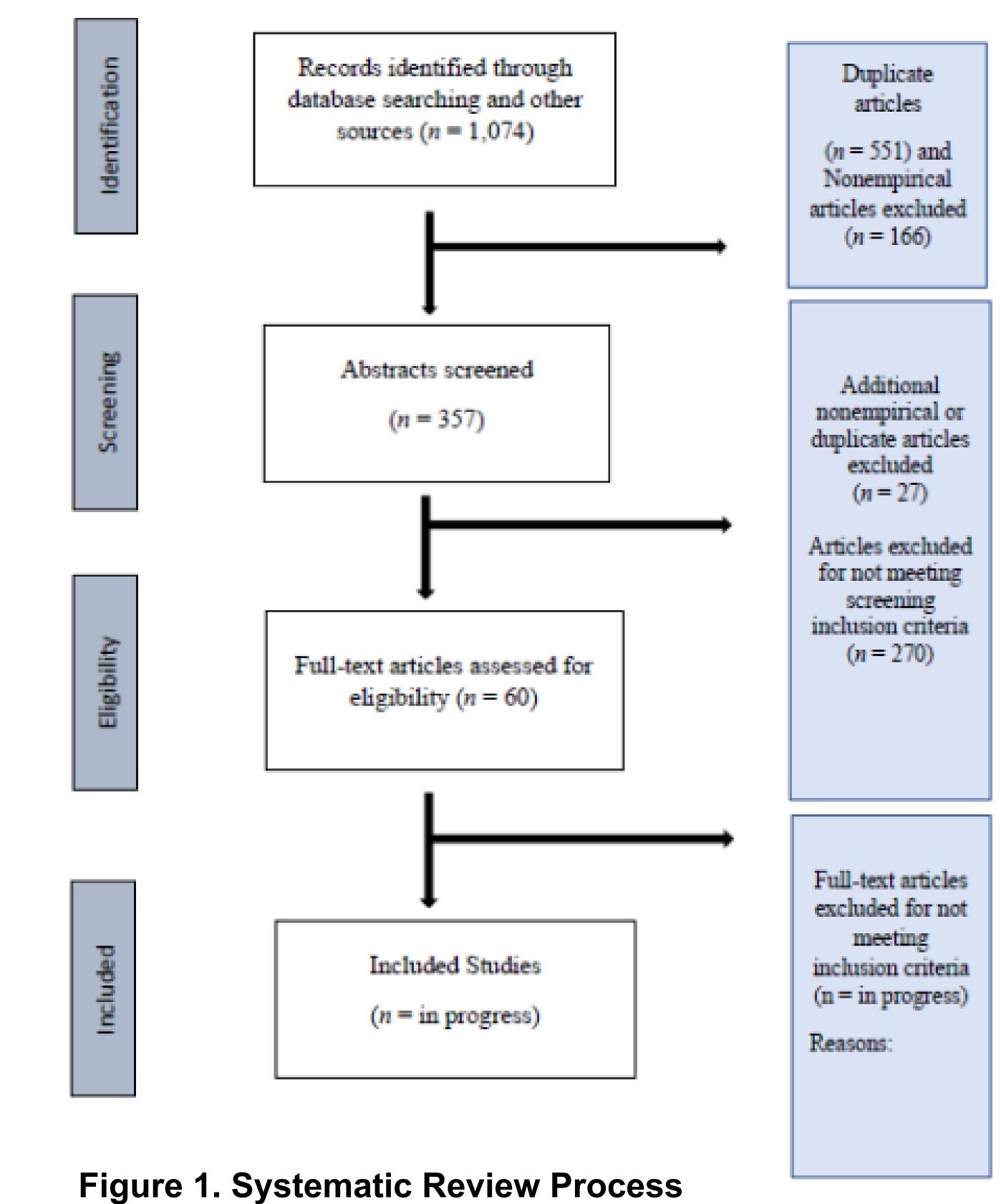
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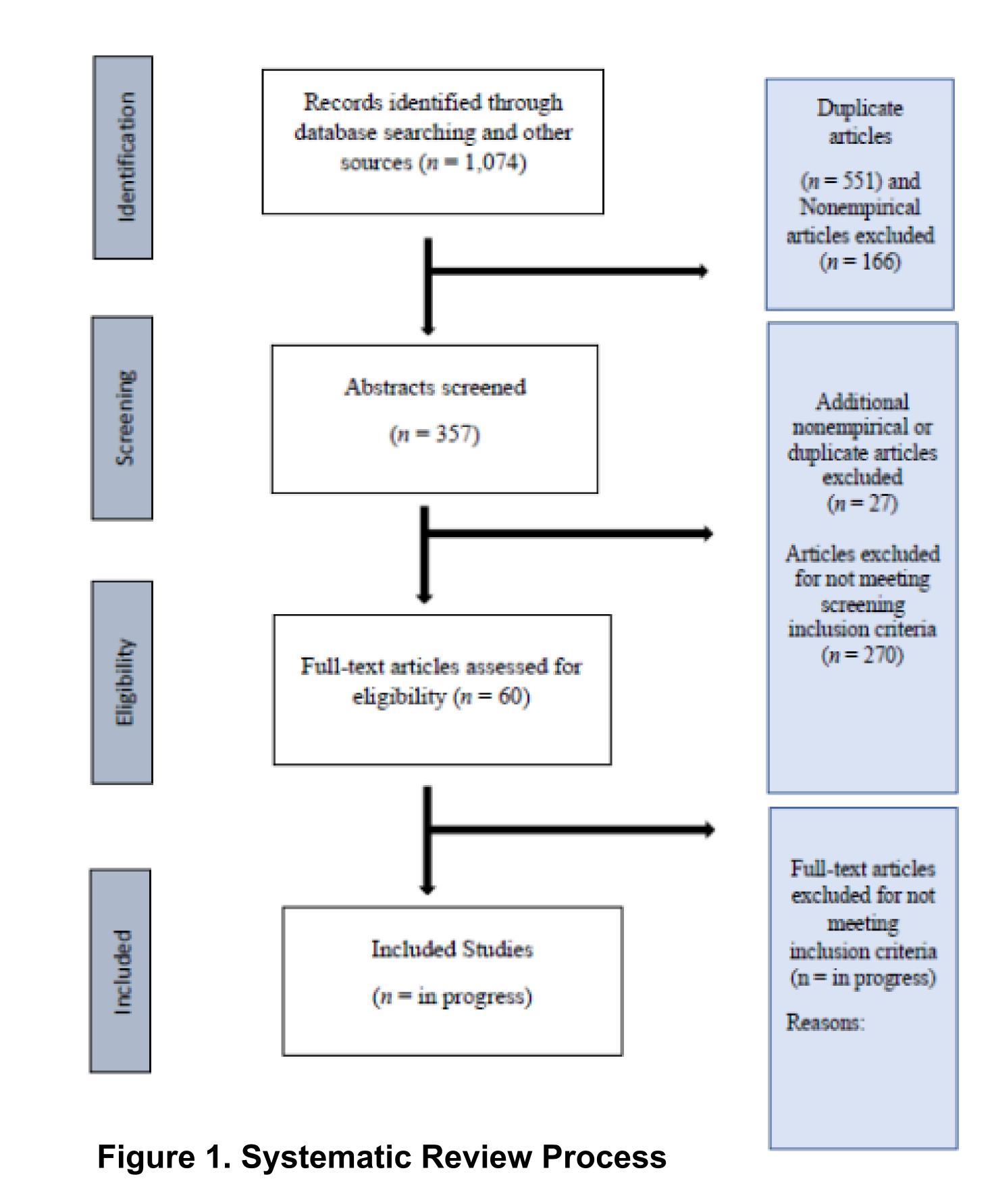
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