

## 5 Conclusion

We conducted frequency analysis based on a systematic literature review on STP following the suggestions of Denyer and Tranfield (2009), as well as Macpherson and Jones (2010) that methodological rigor of literature reviews should be strengthened. SLRs have advantages over ad-hoc, traditional literature reviews as they augment: (1) the validity of a literature review by offering guiding rules that enable to reproduce the study (Denyer and Neely, 2004; Thorpe *et al.*, 2006); (2) the rigor of a review by featuring systematically produced evidence supporting the arguments (Pittaway *et al.* 2004); and (3) the generalisability of the results by permitting the accrued knowledge in the discipline to be systematically synthesised and analysed (Wang and Chugh, 2014). STPs are prevalent in the today's business world. Given the increasing competition, the high speed of technological change and discontinuity in most industries, companies enter numerous strategic partnerships to obtain new resources, and to gain access to new business markets, or to reduce risks. Looking into the future, managers are prone to unknown challenges and problems concerning STPs (Kale and Singh, 2009).

Due to the economic changes and the ways how firms compete in such an environment, firms have been increasingly put under pressure to align their resources and, thus, often seek valuable input from external sources. Thus, for firms entering into STPs may contribute to ensuring that companies are successful over the long run. We suggest that there are several benefits of the review process as an arrangement of phases merging narrative synthesis and more conventional methods, where the literature searched for is scant and varied. The iterative research process allowed for a redefinition of the review strategy and the used criteria. Moreover, the use of data extraction templates to examine full papers augmented transparency and consistency during the selection, analysis and synthesis stages. As a result, our first contribution is the execution of a transparent literature review technique. A systematic and replicable approach was undertaken to explore a large and fragmented body of literature crossing multiple fields. Moreover, we highlight the research gaps in the extant literature that arrange for meaningful opportunities for further investigation that are presented in the following.