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Review article

The administration of justice: a literature review of studies in Portuguese

La administración de justicia: una revisión de la literatura de estudios en portugués

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Abstract

The Administration of Justice has been inserted into the debate on the role of strategy in public services. However, studies and research on the subject in Portuguese are limited, particularly regarding the issue of strategy in relation to the Administration of Justice. Thus, this study seeks to help fill this gap by conducting a literature review on the theme of justice administration covering a six-year period, which yielded 70 results. The results suggest that the scientific literature on the subject in Portuguese remains limited, which may hinder the production of the knowledge needed to support improvements in the structures and functioning of the Administration of Justice.

Keywords: Justice Administration; Literature Review; Strategy; Public Administration.

Resumen

La Administración de Justicia se ha insertado en el debate sobre el papel de la estrategia en los servicios públicos. Sin embargo, existen limitaciones de estudios e investigaciones sobre el tema en portugués, particularmente en lo que respecta a la cuestión de la estrategia en relación con la Administración de Justicia. Así, este estudio busca contribuir a llenar este vacío mediante una revisión de literatura sobre el tema de la administración de justicia a lo largo de seis años, de la cual se obtuvieron 70 resultados. Los resultados sugieren que la literatura científica sobre el tema en portugués sigue siendo limitada, lo que puede dificultar la producción del conocimiento necesario para apoyar mejoras en las estructuras y el modo de funcionamiento de la Administración de Justicia.

Palabras clave: Administración de Justicia; Revisión de Literatura; Estrategia; Administración Pública.

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Introduction

The administration of justice is an area of growing relevance to a state's political and social life and is directly linked to the broader scope of public management. In this context, the sector faces multiple complex challenges that have contributed to the growing distrust and skepticism found in modern societies regarding the structure and performance of judicial systems (Sátiro et al., 2024). Efficient and effective management of the justice system fosters social cohesion and a nation's political and economic development. Consequently, in its day-to-day operations, it can promote social relations grounded in ethical values and principles, including respect for the laws and norms governing social or commercial interactions and the recognition of individual rights (Vargas & Restrepo, 2019; Viapiana & Fabri, 2019; Nacife et al., 2022). Furthermore, efficient public administration enables the judiciary to achieve better outcomes and deliver higher-quality services, factors directly linked to reduced corruption levels and increased public trust (Batalli & Pepaj, 2017).

On the other hand, a conservative sector consolidated in its values and designs may have more difficulty adopting new management practices that make it more agile, faster, more transparent and more flexible in serving its communities. The growing complexity of laws, the greater number of actors involved in processes, the multiplicity of sources of law and state spending on justice are issues that make it difficult to increase the quality of justice systems in contemporary societies (Pedroso, 2003; Coelho et al., 2020). It is therefore important to note that the set of reforms that have been or will be implemented in the sector depends on a logic and a framework specific to each context, which implies the existence of various options, priorities, and approaches that may vary according to the economic, political and social context. According to Correia and Pereira (2021), when analyzing reforms in justice, it is impossible to identify a single theoretical expression of a model; thus, a more generic analysis, of the kind sometimes used by governments, will result in an incorrect analysis of the public service and measures that are not appropriate for a given framework or context.

In this context, authors such as Guimarães et al. (2018) state that this area has not received enough attention from the scientific community. Furthermore, while the justice sector has attracted significant research interest, such studies tend to focus on evaluating the sector's performance rather than analyzing the strategies and decisions adopted to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency (Correia & Resende, 2023).

Given this scenario, the present study conducted a literature review on the administration of justice, with the aim of examining current research on the topic and addressing the importance of strategy within the Judiciary. This led to the following research question: what are the characteristics of the scientific literature in Portuguese on this subject? Thus, this work seeks to help fill research gaps in the area and to contribute to the existing scientific literature. Furthermore, the study offers

relevant insights to broaden readers' understanding of the importance of the topic in contemporary societies. This article also addresses the methodology, analysis of the results, and main conclusions of the study, including the limitations identified and future perspectives.

Administration of justice

Justice is a concept that is considered abstract and is studied in different areas of knowledge, including philosophy, law, economics and administration. In view of this, the definition of the concept of justice is complex. Kelsen (2000) states that "no other question has been the object of so much intensive thinking by the most illustrious thinkers from Plato to Kant; and yet, this question is today, as unanswered as it ever was" (p.1). The act of exercising justice thus implies making decisions about freedom and the condition of every human being. In this sense, at a broader social level, administering justice involves maintaining the social structure in harmonious functioning (Guimarães et al., 2018).

Rawls (1999) put forward the idea that justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as these institutions distribute fundamental rights and obligations. In addition, Rawls (1999) considers that there are certain principles that legitimate the legal system, belonging in some way to the basic structure of a society.

For a better understanding of the concept, it is relevant to address the concept of system to understand the functioning of justice organizations, how legal processes are developed and how justice services are provided. Thus, according to Viapiana and Fabri (2019), it is possible to characterize the concept of a system as a set of interdependent elements and subsystems. The resolution of disputes and social promotion of order in a society necessarily involve the joint operation of various organizations so that the decisions made by an organization influence others. This idea converges with the definition presented by the authors mentioned above, in the sense that the justice system is composed of several organizations that influence each other and that result in the provision of justice services within societies.

This type of system is also important in sectors other than justice; however, this concept is particularly relevant in justice because of the nature of interactions between organizations and the many procedures and resources that pass through the most varied instances of justice. For example, in Portugal and Brazil, the justice system comprises several organizations that work in different contexts and have their own roles and objectives. When most of these organizations are highly institutionalized and legitimate, they are considered by society to be correct in their existence and functioning (Viapiana & Fabri, 2019). For these same reasons, the main theorists of the theme converge on the idea that the evaluation and definition of these dynamics are very complex because they represent very specific and distinct conduct, procedures or decisions, depending on the case or the organization itself.

Regarding the concept of justice administration, it is relevant to mention that, according to Guimarães et al. (2018), it involves quite different levels of analysis. Each level of analysis addresses a specific type of issue, problem or challenge. It is thus extremely important to recognize these various levels because, in empirical terms, they guide the reader to draw observations, inferences and conclusions in a more correct way (Chaves et al., 2025).

Thus, four levels of analysis in the justice system stand out: social, interorganizational, organizational and operational. The social level corresponds to the broadest level and involves relations between the executive, legislative and judicial powers. At the interorganizational level, negotiations and exchanges fundamentally occur between justice organizations and between them and other public and private organizations. At the organizational level, the focus of interest is processes and organizational structures, which include the strategy of organizations, their behavior, and their internal and external actions, policies, practices and resources. Finally, at the operational level, the analysis focuses on the management of work, teams and individuals, as well as material and financial resources.

With regard to the above, the term administration of justice, according to Guimarães et al. (2018), refers to the management processes associated with the use and articulation of resources, knowledge and institutions; the different levels of the justice system; and its influence on the provision of justice in a given social context.

The concept of justice administration is intrinsically related to its ability to disseminate certain practices linked to social values stipulated for the purpose of expanding a legal culture (Cortizo, 2006). From this point of view, the author states that the administration of justice is presented as another space for the development of social relations, with its own characteristics, not being isolated from the organization of the State. In addition, Cortizo (2006) mentions a last function of the concept itself, which is fundamentally related to the application of law, becoming a "privileged social vehicle in understanding and restructuring the sense of law and rights" (p. 105).

Another view of the same concept is found in the study by Dallari (2005), who argues that the administration of justice should be understood as the totality of the instrumental activity necessary for judicial provision. That is, it covers all the acquisition, maintenance, monitoring and control of material goods and bureaucratic services, including the physical processing of papers, publications, certificates, subpoenas or proceedings (Dallari, 2005).

Finally, Cooper (2008) referred to the concept of justice administration as one of the facets of the sociopolitical panorama of a State, with the specific function of ensuring that all processes related to justice are conducted in accordance with the law, as well as within the ethics and culture that make up the national context. The author concludes the analysis of the concept by stating that an effective, efficient and impartial administration of justice is one of the most important pillars of a democracy, and without such an administration, the rule of law does not exist.

The content of investigations in the administration of justice includes several theoretical references from various areas of knowledge. These theoretical perspectives help to explain phenomena that occur at different levels of analysis, from institutional and legal procedures to the very operation of judicial processes. Regarding institutional theories, different domains are addressed, such as sociology, economics or politics. The multiplicity of these different domains allows us to understand how justice organizations and organizational behavior have developed over time (Guimarães et al., 2018; Abrahão & Gomes, 2026). In addition, they make it possible to understand how the process of institutionalizing justice can contribute to the stability and legitimacy of organizations and the system as a whole (Guimarães et al., 2018; Castelliano et al., 2024). This approach can be used to explain many of the innovations and institutional changes that occur in the justice system. In this context, institutional theory can help explain the causes of institutional isomorphism, which is a concept that maintains that organizations belonging to the same field tend to become more homogeneous over time (Guimarães et al., 2018; Torlig et al., 2023). The reason for this trend of homogenization lies in the fact that these organizations are subject to similar pressures because they are in the same organizational context.

Economic theories are also relevant to the study of justice administration, especially theories concerning resource dependence and, at the same time, resource utilization strategies. This approach is very useful for studies related to the governance and performance of courts and other justice systems (Guimarães et al., 2018; Sousa & Guimarães, 2014; Oliveira et al., 2026).

The most recent studies in this area have focused on four major themes: innovation, performance, governance and legitimacy. In terms of innovation, studies have been conducted regarding the adoption of improvement measures for management, more specifically in planning, monitoring and control techniques. Nevertheless, in this theme, a political-legal area arises that involves changes and trial procedures. There are also studies on technological innovation, that is, the use of new information and communication technologies (Sousa & Guimarães, 2017, 2018; Nacife et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2026). Studies on this subject have focused mainly on measuring and comparing the efficiency of courts, with the main purpose of identifying the best practices used by the courts. However, according to Guimarães et al. (2018), this specific approach restricts the analysis to the internal functioning of organizations and does not provide an explanation of why certain courts work better than others.

With regard to performance (Sátiro & Sousa, 2021), together with economic theories, studies related to planning and implementing monitoring strategies in the justice sector have received considerable attention. In addition, there is a need for new studies that relate the data of the justice system with data regarding health, education, security, demography, etc. (Guimarães et al., 2018). That is, this combination of areas can allow the development of explanatory and predictive research models that are consistent with the complexity of social reality.

The concept of governance is very broad and involves interdependence with other areas. According to the authors Akutsu and Guimarães (2015), governance applied to justice is related to purposes such as accountability, access to justice, independence, resources and structure, the institutional environment or performance. Thus, one of the major challenges related to judicial governance is determining how to expand access to justice services, decongest the courts and increase the speed of judicial processes while providing quality service.

The legitimacy of justice organizations is an indisputable and necessary topic of debate; therefore, studies on this subject are extremely relevant. The scope of the legal order and the influence of the moral and cultural structures of society make justice organizations normative and cognitive aspects of social reality (Guimarães et al., 2018; Torlig et al., 2023; Sátiro et al., 2026). Thus, these organizations are constantly subject to social judgments according to the beliefs, values and practices that are accepted in a given society. The legitimacy of justice organizations is inextricably related to their authority and sense of obedience and trust (Galbiati & Vertova, 2014). Various debates are therefore launched on the adequacy and appropriateness of practices, as well as on the decisions and representatives of the organizations themselves. The fields of research that were addressed are summarized in **Figure 1**, with the purpose of offering the reader a simplified and schematic reading of the different theories and fields that are studied within the Administration of Justice.



Figure 1. Justice Administration Research Fields

Source: Adapted from the fields of knowledge referred to in Guimarães et al. (2018)

Relevance and use of strategy in justice administration

The area of justice administration is considered one of the fundamental pillars in today's democracies. The increasing international complexity, the gradual change in production processes and the change in values and social ties have increased the importance of an updated justice system for a society that is increasingly demanding of public services. The existence of a justice system remains the guarantor of freedoms and rights, as it represents an essential factor of economic progress and

contractual guarantees (Tomlinson, 2020). To this extent, an efficient and effective administration of justice can contribute to various factors, such as the location and relocation of investments, increased employment or faster and more productive services adjusted to the needs of citizens.

On the other hand, countries such as Portugal and Brazil face increasing expectations from citizens regarding the public sector, while public trust remains low. These trends are very relevant in the sense that they can affect the justice system through greater demands for efficiency, speed and transparency. In addition, according to public opinion, the main principles and values, such as transparency, responsibility or equal treatment, have not been upheld in certain situations (Haghighi et al., 2016; Tomlinson, 2017). This, in addition to increasingly distancing the administration of justice from citizens, also represents an increasingly complex and difficult challenge for the political class. Societal demands require a different way of thinking and innovative practices that place citizen and business needs at the heart of political institutions and justice services (Tomlinson, 2017). Therefore, strategy plays a decisive role not only in the private sector, in which the main objective is profit, but also in the public sector, in which the main purpose is to serve citizens and optimize the provision of services.

In the area of justice administration, the planning of a strategy is linked to an attempt to solve several problems that are specific to the sector. Problems such as the discontinuity of administrations result in short-term planning, aiming for the continuity of these administrations in the following mandates. As mentioned in the introduction, the excess of conservatism in this area has caused a widespread fear of effective changes in the way organizations are managed and act. This can be applied mainly to the use of new information technologies, toward which there is considerable reluctance, mainly because the average age of people in the sector is older than that of people in most other sectors, which decreases receptiveness to their adoption. In addition, Kern (2011) highlights the lack of commitment to the objectives outlined, a consequence of a lack of leadership by the magistrates, as one of the major problems of the justice system. This author argues that judges should be managers of the judicial unit and leaders of the teams around them.

In this context of problems associated with the administration of justice, Pedroso (2003) states that four major strategies are studied and analyzed to mitigate or even solve these problems. The first strategy, which is defended, as a rule, by legal professionals, is based on the quantitative increase in resources. That is, the goal of the strategy would be to create more courts, more judges and more officials. The main obstacle and counterpart of this strategy is the clear financial inability of the State to considerably increase the budget for the justice sector, which makes this strategy quite difficult to implement.

The second means of addressing the various problems, defended mainly by social scientists, administrators and politicians, would involve a “technocratic and managerial” reform. This reform would have as its main purpose better management of

available resources, involving changes in the division of judicial labor, delegating routine work and a more efficient judicial process (Pedroso, 2003). These types of solutions are seen as more negative by magistrates and lawyers, who fear a possible loss of control over judicial activity, and resist passively through established routines and the interests that they end up representing and, in some way, reproducing (Pedroso, 2003).

The third strategy is based predominantly on innovation and technology in the design and management of the judicial system, providing it with technical innovations such as automatic data processing or the widespread use of video technology. This reform involves the introduction and creation of new professional profiles and new ways of conducting processes; however, its application may introduce profound changes in the organization of work and in the authority and hierarchy that occur in the area of justice (Pedroso, 2003).

The last type of reform is essentially based on creating alternatives to the formal and professionalized model of the administration of justice. These new emerging models consist of "the creation of decentralized, informal and deprofessionalized processes, instances and institutions, which allow the demand of the courts to be diverted to other public or private instances" (Kern, 2011, p. 14).

Through these reforms or strategies that can be adopted to address the problems mentioned above, it is essential to reflect on and weigh the three dimensions on which justice is based: the search for a fair and impartial decision, the cost and the time elapsed (Raadschelders & Chitiga, 2021). In addition to these factors, it is important not to forget that justice is a public service and therefore is subject to budgetary constraints, meaning that the quality of its services is directly related to and dependent on existing resources (Raadschelders & Chitiga, 2021). The choice of a strategy is dependent on the available financial resources, and a solution should be chosen based on the factors and dimensions presented, also considering the needs of the community and the market in its current context.

These strategies should also be analyzed in three different ways: first, they can create greater asymmetry in the judicial system and, consequently, greater asymmetry in legal domination policy; second, alternative dispute resolution through mediation, conciliation and arbitration will not become more repressive given that coercive power is not available to neutralize the differences in power between parties; and third, alternative dispute resolution, in its most varied forms, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, will be a mere way to remove some volume and overload from the courts or can be a means of developing and enhancing access to law and justice (Castelliano et al., 2022).

In this sense, a strategy that embarks on a reform of the Administration of Justice in its broadest sense involves the adoption of a different model from the current one, capitalizing on an articulation between the various types of reforms or proposals and, in particular, the creation of relatively decentralized and informal processes, bodies and institutions. Thus, one can create alternatives that replace

or complement, in certain areas, the traditional administration of justice, making it generally faster, cheaper and more accessible to society (Pedroso, 2003). The implementation of these reforms alone is rather delicate. Government objectives may conflict with each other, one reform may diminish the basic principles of another, and increased citizen participation may deviate from political control (Correia et al., 2018). Governments must therefore manage this balance in a rational, meticulous and sensitive way.

The planning, monitoring, and control of activities and the focus on results aim to change the dynamics of the Administration of Justice, creating models of quality management and management by objectives (Correia et al., 2018). Thus, the good use of justice instruments can provide rapprochement between citizens and justice parties, contributing to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system and eventually fostering a response to the most pressing needs of society (Correia et al., 2018).

In brief, the importance attached to the progress of the justice system becomes clear, with the increasing relevance of the speed and agility of its operation, the need for greater segmentation, the provision of alternative means for conflict resolution, the adoption of ICTs and the need for reorganization and leadership to overcome various difficulties and challenges.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive literature review, supported by bibliometric indicators, to map research on justice administration published in Portuguese. The analysis sought to characterize the selected literature according to its geographical distribution, year of publication, citation count, publication type, field of knowledge, and empirical or normative nature.

The search was conducted through Publish or Perish, using Google Scholar as the data source and the expression “Administração da Justiça” as the search term. An initial broad search generated more than 608,000 results. The search was subsequently restricted to documents containing the exact expression in their titles, and citation-only entries were excluded. This procedure reduced the number of records to 222.

The inclusion criteria were: (1) publication between 2017 and 2022; (2) publication in Portuguese; (3) inclusion of the exact expression “Administração da Justiça” in the title; and (4) direct engagement with the topic of justice administration. Records published outside the defined period and documents that did not directly address the research topic were excluded. Applying the temporal criterion reduced the dataset from 222 to 90 documents. Following the relevance assessment, 20 documents were excluded because, despite containing the search expression in their titles, they did not directly address justice administration. The final sample therefore included 70 eligible documents.

Based on the analytical framework adopted by Resende et al. (2022), a dataset containing the following information was created: document title, authors, publication year, citation count, country of origin, publication type, empirical or normative nature, and field of knowledge. The selection and coding of the documents were verified by two authors. The data were subsequently analyzed using descriptive frequencies and percentages.

Google Scholar was selected because of its broad coverage of different types of academic outputs, including journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, dissertations, and theses. Nevertheless, the use of a single search source may have resulted in the omission of relevant publications that were not indexed or retrieved through Google Scholar. The findings should therefore be interpreted as a descriptive mapping of the Portuguese-language literature retrieved according to the defined search criteria, rather than as an exhaustive representation of all research on justice administration.

Results and Discussion

The presentation of the results begins with the geographical distribution of the documents. As shown in Figure 2, most of the documents included in the sample originated from Brazil, followed by Portugal and Angola.

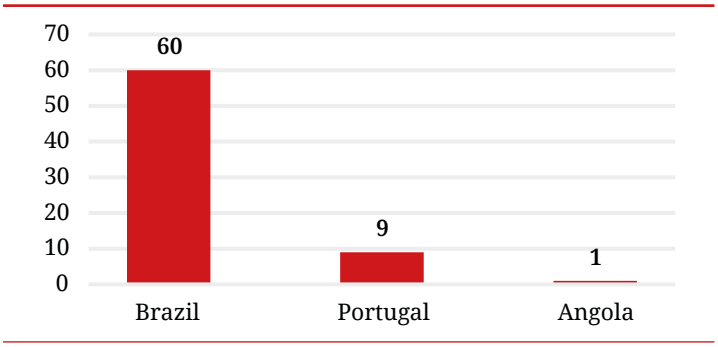


Figure 2. Number of documents published by country

Figure 2 shows a clear geographical concentration of the retrieved documents. Of the 70 documents included in the analysis, 60 originated from Brazil, nine from Portugal, and one from Angola. These findings describe the geographical distribution of the selected literature but do not allow the reasons underlying the differences between countries to be determined. Such differences would require further investigation using contextual and comparative data.

Once the geographical distribution of the publications has been analyzed, their temporal distribution is examined. As the defined interval covers the most recent years, **Figure 3** may reveal trends or an evolution for the near future regarding the theme.

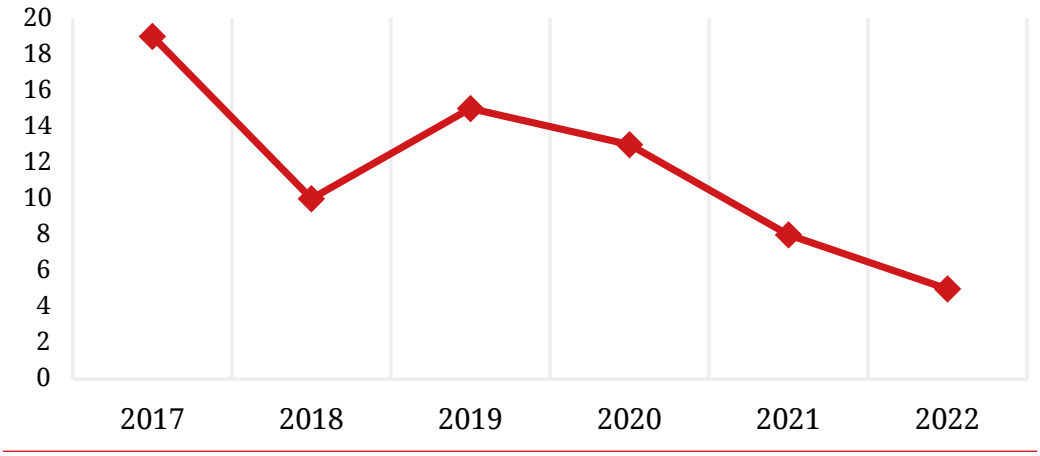


Figure 3. Number of publications per year

Figure 3 shows variation in the number of publications between 2017 and 2022. An increase was observed between 2018 and 2019, followed by a reduction in the subsequent years. However, given the limited time frame of the analysis, these results should not be interpreted as evidence of a long-term decline in research on justice administration.

Following the analysis of the temporal distribution, the citation counts of the selected documents were examined. In this study, citation counts are used exclusively as a descriptive indicator of the academic visibility of the documents at the time of data collection. They should not be interpreted as a direct measure of the quality, credibility, or relevance of individual publications.

Table 1 shows that 54 of the 70 documents, corresponding to approximately 77% of the sample, had no citations at the time of data collection. The remaining 16 documents have received at least one citation, with citation counts ranging from one to 27. These results describe the citation record of the selected literature at a specific point in time. The data does not allow the reasons for the differences in citation counts to be determined.

Table 1. Number of citations of publications

Number of documents	Number of citations
1	27
1	15
1	7
1	5
2	3
6	2
4	1
54	0

Next, the area to which each publication contributed is analyzed. The importance of this topic is fundamentally related to the transmission of a clearer representation of the area or theme in which each publication is inserted. Thus, the administration of justice, which belongs to the vast public administration, covers several areas of knowledge and different theories but is highly relevant and complementary to the general understanding of the topic. Figure 4, which follows, shows the results obtained, and it is relevant to mention that these publications may cover or impact more than one theme; thus, the number of results could be different if more than one area of knowledge were assigned to these publications. In addition, the assessment performed may be subjective in the sense that it depends on the reader's interpretation and sensitivity in defining the area or areas in which the study is inserted.

As would be expected, the predominant areas of knowledge in publications were Administration and Law. The area of Administration in this theme is closely linked to the way institutions work and relate to each other, while the area of Law is directly related to procedural issues and specific legal issues. Figure 4 shows that publications on the Administration of Justice are not limited to Law and Administration, indicating that the theme itself can be interconnected with other areas of knowledge. This approach is in line with the various fields of knowledge that were addressed earlier, representing a connection with different theories and themes. Thus, it is noteworthy, for example, that the area of education, although represented by a single article, demonstrates that the area of justice administration can be related to other dominant vectors of a society, such as education.

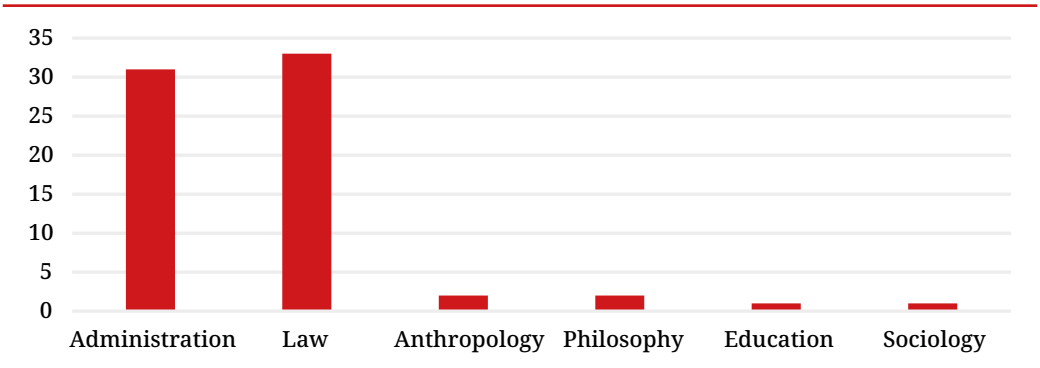


Figure 4. Contributions of publications in different areas of knowledge

The next aspect analyzed is the typology of publications, which provides a more detailed picture of the formats in which the studies of the theme were carried out in this specific time interval. Among the various types of publications on this topic, studies are divided into the most typical styles of publication, such as scientific articles, dissertations or theses, books, and book chapters. The data in **Figure 5** confirm that this same diversification occurs depending on the publication style.

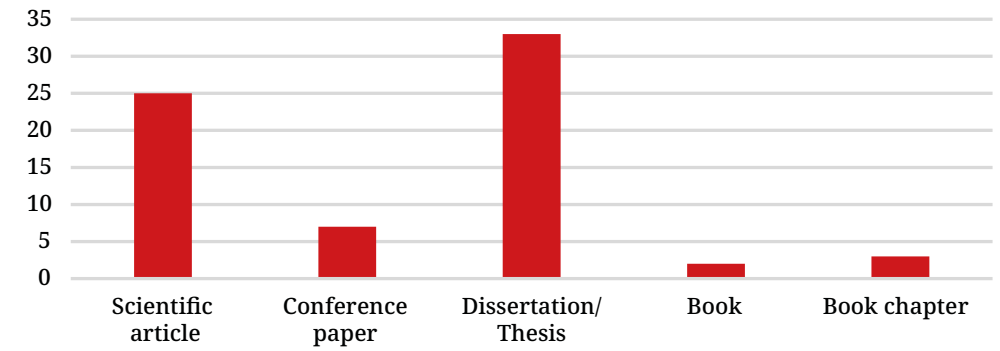


Figure 5. Typology of Publications

Figure 5 demonstrates the diversity of publication types included in the sample. Dissertations and theses were the most frequent category, with 33 documents, followed by scientific articles with 25 and conference papers with seven. Three book chapters and two books were also identified. These results show that research on justice administration has been disseminated through different academic formats, with a particular concentration in dissertations, theses, and scientific articles.

After analyzing publication typologies, the final aspect examined is the nature of the publications. The publications were divided based on the study of Resende et al. (2022) with two distinct parameters: empirical and normative. Empirical studies start from a historical analysis or literature review to analyze the theme and are supported by quantitative and/or qualitative methods. This type of study has the main objective of collecting data and drawing general conclusions on a certain theme. Normative studies explain how the action or procedure regarding the theme under study should be carried out; that is, they try to prescribe a solution to the identified problems (Correia & Pereira, 2017).

The results indicated that 66 documents were empirical and four were normative. The retrieved literature was therefore predominantly empirical. This classification describes the methodological nature of the selected documents but does not, by itself, indicate the specific research designs adopted within each category.

Conclusion

This study aimed to characterize the Portuguese-language literature on justice administration published between 2017 and 2022. The findings provide a direct answer to the research question: the documents retrieved according to the defined criteria are geographically concentrated in Brazil, are predominantly empirical, are situated mainly within the fields of Law and Administration, and are disseminated primarily through dissertations, theses, and scientific articles. Most of the documents also had no citations at the time of data collection.

Of the 70 documents included in the analysis, 60 originated from Brazil, nine from Portugal, and one from Angola. These results demonstrate a clear geographical concentration of the retrieved literature. However, given the descriptive nature of the study, the reasons underlying the differences observed between countries cannot be determined from the available data.

Regarding publication type, the sample comprised 33 dissertations or theses, 25 scientific articles, seven conference papers, three book chapters, and two books. The substantial presence of dissertations and theses demonstrates that justice administration has been addressed extensively within academic research. In terms of disciplinary distribution, Law and Administration were the predominant fields, although documents from Anthropology, Philosophy, Education, and Sociology were also identified. This distribution demonstrates that justice administration can be examined from different disciplinary perspectives.

The analysis also identified 66 empirical documents and four normative documents. These results show that the retrieved literature has primarily focused on examining existing realities, cases, and administrative practices, while comparatively fewer documents have adopted a prescriptive approach. Furthermore, 54 of the 70 documents had no citations at the time of data collection. The descriptive design of the study does not allow the reasons for this limited citation record to be determined.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by organizing and characterizing a selected body of Portuguese-language literature on justice administration. It provides a structured description of its geographical distribution, publication formats, disciplinary orientations, methodological nature, and citation record. This study therefore offers a basis for future research seeking to examine the administration, organization, and strategic development of justice institutions.

In practical terms, justice institutions, public managers, universities, and research funding bodies may use this mapping to identify less represented countries, disciplinary perspectives, and publication formats. The limited number of documents retrieved from Portugal and Angola suggests the value of encouraging research projects and institutional cooperation involving different Portuguese-speaking justice systems. Comparative research may contribute to a broader understanding of how justice administration is studied across distinct institutional contexts.

The substantial presence of dissertations and theses also highlights the importance of strengthening mechanisms for disseminating academic research among scientific journals, justice institutions, and public decision-makers. Universities and justice organizations may promote greater access to these studies and encourage dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Research agendas may also support interdisciplinary studies connecting Public Administration and Law with other relevant fields. These measures could facilitate the use of academic knowledge when defining research priorities and discussing administrative reforms and public policies in the justice sector.

This study has several limitations. First, the exclusive use of Portuguese-language documents excluded potentially relevant research published in other languages. Second, the search was conducted exclusively through Google Scholar using Publish or Perish, meaning that documents not indexed or retrieved through this source were not included. Third, the use of the exact expression "Administração da Justiça" in document titles may have excluded relevant studies employing different terminology. Finally, the analysis was restricted to publications from 2017 to 2022 and therefore represents the literature retrieved within a specific period and according to the defined search criteria.

Future research could extend the time frame, include additional databases and search terms, and incorporate documents published in other languages. Comparative studies involving different Portuguese-speaking justice systems could also examine whether the publication patterns identified here are found in other periods and institutional settings. Further studies could additionally investigate how research on justice administration is disseminated and used within public institutions and policy-making processes.

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