

Documentary Fraud: A vision from Portugal

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Introduction: The present time has been marked by various types of crime and, although little media coverage, fraud has grown in statistical data, much to related with the social situation that Portugal is experiencing. Thus, courts are filled up with cases involving forgery and counterfeiting of documents, which is an issue that only an expert in document analysis may be able to solve. At an European level, Portugal remains at the top of the list in relation to fraudulent documents, followed by Italy and Spain.

Objectives: This study intended to provide a panoramic vision about socio-demographic characteristics of offenders and of the judicial process in Portugal

Methodology: In order to achieve the objectives, an exploratory study was done and fifty (n = 50) judicial sentences were studied in an Oporto Court to become familiar with this phenomenon. In this research unobstrutive measures were used, consisting in data collection techniques that allowed the researcher to obtain information about a particular phenomenon without interfere with or modify (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2010, *cit in* Coutinho, 2013)¹.

Conclusions: The Judicial Process is characterized by a long period of expertise which leads to a long period until the judicial sentence. Prison penalty is less used comparing to fine penalty. About offenders, international studies distinguish two types of forger: the opportunist and the predatory. Taking into account the large number of individuals without a criminal recidivism in this research, the most appropriate type of offender is the opportunistic characterized as someone middle-aged, male and married, traits that coincide with some characteristics with the profile described above (KPMG, 2011)².

Results:

Sociodemographics characteristics of offenders

Variables	Characteristics
Gender	Male
Age	20-40 years old
Marital Status	Single
Height	170-180 cm
Education	High school
Job	Unemployed; Security services; Shop-assistant
Nacionality	Portuguese

Judicial Process

Judicial Process	Characteristics
Documents	Bank Check, Identity Card, Driving Licence
Recidivism	32,2%
Previous Crimes	Forgery, Counterfeiting, robbery
Penalty	49,2% fine and only 5,1% prison
Period time of the expertise	33,3% between 0-5 or 10-15 months
Period time of the sentence	65,7 between 5 and 10 years old