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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the importance of public policies in mitigating mental illness in public servants, focusing on the implementation phase of the Public Policy Cycle. The research uses a systematic and quantitative approach, analyzing five articles that address different aspects of the topic. The analysis reveals a substantial understanding of the public policy cycle (76%), however, it highlights the need for further identification and detailing of implementation challenges (48%). Regarding the effectiveness of strategies (60%) and resource allocation (60%), a modest assessment was observed, suggesting the importance of a more detailed analysis. The active involvement of employees in the implementation presents an average of 60%, indicating moderate consideration. These results highlight the complexity and importance of effective public policies for the mental health of employees. The discussion between the authors highlights the need to improve the analysis of specific challenges and identify more effective public public servants.

Keywords: Work environment, Mental health, Public policies, Public servants.

INTRODUCTION

Mental illness refers to psychic conditions that affect an individual's emotional, cognitive, and social well-being, and can result in disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress. In the context of public servants, factors such as professional pressure, high workload, and challenging work environments can significantly contribute to the increase in these conditions (Baasch *et al.*, 2017). Concern about mental health in the workplace dates back to the late 19th century, when the Industrial Revolution was in full force. During this period, working conditions in factories were extremely inhumane, characterized by long hours, unhealthy environments, and the absence of labor regulations. The excessive exploitation of workers has resulted in a range of health problems, including mental disorders arising from stress and poor conditions (Mattei *et al.*, 2018).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the growth of trade union movements and the consolidation of labor rights, the importance of considering not only the physical but also the psychological aspects of work began to be realized. The emergence of Industrial Psychology in the 1920s

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represented a significant milestone, as it introduced the idea that the psychological well-being of workers was critical to efficiency and productivity (Attridge, 2019). During the mid-twentieth century, particularly from the 1950s and 1960s, attention to mental health at work intensified with the growing recognition of disorders related to stress and work pressure. Studies, such as the one by Elton Mayo at the School of Human Relations, have highlighted the influence of social relationships in the workplace on workers' mental health. In the 1980s, in response to the increasing challenges of globalization and technology, there was a significant expansion of discussions about quality of life at work and mental health (Blustein, 2008). The World Health Organization (WHO) has formally recognized the impact of the workplace on mental health and has initiated campaigns to promote healthier work environments. The advent of the twenty-first century has brought with it a paradigm shift, with a renewed emphasis on the importance of work-life balance. Companies have begun to adopt well-being policies and stress prevention programs to deal with the increasingly complex demands of the contemporary world (Marten; Wilkerson, 2003).

Today, society recognizes that mental health at work is not just an individual issue, but a shared responsibility between employers, governments, and society at large. The implementation of specific public policies for the mental health of public servants thus becomes an integral part of this historical evolution, aiming to create healthier and more sustainable work environments for all. In the legal sphere, several countries have recognized the importance of promoting healthy work environments and have implemented specific legislation to deal with issues related to mental health at work (Leka; Nicholson, 2019).

In Brazil, for example, the Federal Constitution guarantees the right to health, and Law No. 8,112/1990 provides for the legal regime of civil servants, making room for the implementation of policies aimed at protecting the mental health of these professionals (Bontempo, 2023).

In view of the growing recognition of the challenges faced by public servants in relation to mental health, there is a demand for specific public policies. These policies seek not only to diagnose and treat pre-existing conditions, but also to prevent mental illness through the promotion of healthier work environments and ongoing psychosocial support. The Public Policy Cycle is a model that describes the process by which policies are conceived, developed, implemented, evaluated, and, if necessary, adjusted. Composed of several stages, such as formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation, this cycle offers a broad framework for the development and continuous improvement of public policies (Nardodkar *et al.*, 2016).

The formulation of public policies usually occurs as a response to a demand identified in society. In the case of the mental health of public servants, this stage may involve the analysis of epidemiological data, consultation with specialists, and the active participation of civil servants and their representatives. Legitimacy comprises the official approval of the policy, whether through legislative, regulatory or other institutional mechanisms. This step is indispensable to ensure that the policy has legal backing and is recognized as a priority at the governmental level. However, it is in implementation that public policies become tangible. This phase is central to the study in question, as it is at this moment that the actions are put into practice. The effectiveness of strategies to mitigate mental illness in public servants is directly linked to the quality of implementation. This includes the proper allocation of financial and human resources, the training of professionals to deal with mental health issues, and the creation of mechanisms that facilitate employees' access to support and treatment programs. The evaluation is a subsequent stage, where the results and impacts of the implemented policies are analyzed. In the case of the mental health of public servants, this assessment may cover indicators such as the reduction of cases of mental illness, the increase in job satisfaction and the improvement of the work environment. Based on these analyses, adjustments can be proposed to optimize the effectiveness of policies. The review phase closes the loop, allowing for the continuous adaptation of policies according to changing social, economic, and health conditions. This flexibility is significant in addressing emerging challenges and ensuring that policies remain aligned with the needs of public servants over time (Knill; Tosun, 2020).

The work environment for public servants is often associated with stressful and challenging factors, which can lead to mental illness. In view of this scenario, there is a need to investigate how public policies can fulfill an attribution in mitigating these problems, with emphasis on the implementation stage of the Public Policy Cycle. The central issue is to understand how the policies implemented can effectively contribute to the promotion of the mental health of public servants.

In view of this assumption, the central question of this research arises: In view of the evident prevalence of mental illness among public servants, how can public policies, with a special focus on the implementation phase, be designed and executed efficiently to mitigate the adverse impacts on the mental health of these professionals?

Thus, the objective of this research is to investigate the importance of public policies in mitigating mental illness in public servants, focusing on the implementation phase of the Public Policy Cycle, aiming to provide subsidies for the formulation and execution of effective strategies in this context.

The relevance of this study lies in the understanding of the specific dynamics of the implementation of public policies aimed at the mental health of public servants. By identifying challenges and opportunities in this process, it will be possible to develop practical recommendations for managers and policymakers, contributing to healthier work environments and, consequently, to increasing the quality of public service.

Based on the assumption that the effective implementation of public policies aimed at the mental health of public servants can have a positive impact on the work environment, we believe that well-

designed and executed strategies in this phase of the Public Policy Cycle can significantly reduce the rates of mental illness, promoting a healthier and more productive environment for civil servants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of preventive strategies for mental illness among public servants represents a critical dimension in human resources management, considering the direct impact on the efficiency and well-being of these professionals (Lamontagne *et al.*, 2014).

The *Job Demand-Resource Model* emerges as a central framework. He postulates that the balance between the demands inherent to work functions and the available resources directly influences the mental health of workers. Therefore, evaluating the effectiveness of well-being and mental health programs for public servants requires careful consideration of how these programs manage the specific demands of the work environment and provide the resources necessary to promote mental health (Lu *et al.*, 2021). In addition, the application of the Ecological Model of Mental Health at Work enriches understanding by recognizing the complex interplay between individual, organizational, and social factors. This broader perspective contributes to a global analysis of the effectiveness of the programs, taking into account not only the individual aspects, but also the organizational and social dynamics that permeate the context of public service (Sallis *et al.*, 2015).

In terms of behavioral and psychological theories, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory offers interesting insights, as the belief in one's own ability to face challenges directly impacts the behavior of servers. Thus, in the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs, the promotion of self-efficacy emerges as a primary indicator, indicating the potential positive impact on the levels of mental well-being of public servants (Maddux, 2016). Social Support Theory also plays a significant role in highlighting the importance of social relationships in the context of work. Programs that strengthen support networks and foster a supportive work environment are analyzed from this perspective, considering the positive impact on the mental health of public servants (Harandi *et al.*, 2017). When exploring risk factors in the workplace, the Occupational Stress Theory is instrumental. The critical analysis of these factors, such as professional pressure, work overload, and challenging environments, provides decisive clarifications for the identification and mitigation of risks associated with mental illness in public servants. At the same time, strategies to promote resilience, inspired by the Occupational Stress Theory, are fundamental. Coping skills training, *mindfulness* programs, and psychosocial support emerge as key elements in mitigating the negative effects of these risk factors (Dawson *et al.*, 2016).

Analysing the impact of legislation on the mental health of public servants is a complex and invaluable task, as shaping healthy and sustainable work environments involves not only legal aspects but also social implications. Understanding this intersection between laws and mental well-being is critical to

critically evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies and norms and proposing necessary improvements. In the Brazilian context, the Federal Constitution and specific legislation, such as Law No. 8,112/1990, establish the legal framework for the rights and duties of civil servants. Critical evaluation of these laws, particularly as they relate to mental health in the workplace, is essential to understand how civil servants' rights are guaranteed and what gaps or challenges still persist. The Federal Constitution guarantees the right to health, and, in this sense, the legislation should be examined as to its effectiveness in promoting a work environment that contributes positively to the mental health of civil servants. The legal analysis of these provisions seeks to identify whether current laws provide a solid basis for the implementation of effective mental health prevention and promotion policies (Bontempo, 2023).

The legal analysis also extends to the practical and operational implications of laws in the implementation of specific policies for the mental health of public servants. Investigating practical cases in which legislation has influenced the implementation of such policies is essential to understand the real dynamics and to identify challenges and obstacles that may arise in the application of the standards. The discussion of legal challenges and strategies to overcome them offers remarkable interpretations for policymakers, managers, and human resource professionals. The interaction between current legislation and day-to-day practices in public institutions requires careful evaluation to ensure that mental health policies are implemented effectively and that the rights of public servants are adequately protected. In addition to the legal analysis, it is essential to consider the social implications of the legislation on the mental health of civil servants. Legislation does not operate in a vacuum, and the way it is perceived and implemented by society can influence its effectiveness. This involves assessing how laws are understood by civil servants, how they are communicated, and how they impact the organizational culture in relation to mental health. While social analysis is inalienable to identify possible gaps between the legislation and the reality experienced by civil servants. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of public officials in relation to legal mental health policies offers a relevant perspective to adjust and improve the effectiveness of these measures (Bontempo, 2023).

The evaluation of the implementation of public mental health policies is a complex process that involves the critical analysis of the effectiveness of the strategies adopted, identification of challenges faced, and recognition of opportunities for continuous improvement. This assessment is critical to ensure that policies achieve their objectives while effectively promoting the mental health and well-being of public servants (Wainberg *et al.*, 2017).

The critical analysis of the implementation of mental health policies in public servants should begin by evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies adopted. This includes examining the coherence between the objectives set out in the policies and the results achieved in practice. Tangible metrics, such as the reduction in cases of mental illness, the increase in job satisfaction, and the improvement of the work

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environment, are key indicators to consider. The effectiveness of the strategies can be analyzed by comparing data before and after the implementation of the policies, as well as by comparing them with benchmarks and best practices of other organizations. The quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the results provides a comprehensive view of the effectiveness of mental health policies. The quality of monitoring and evaluation plays a role in the effectiveness of mental health policies. Examining the methods used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies is essential to ensure that the data collected is relevant, accurate, and useful. This involves clearly defining performance indicators, collecting data regularly, and systematically analyzing the results. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be sensitive to the nuances of the organizational context and the specific needs of public servants. The implementation of continuous feedback systems, involving the active participation of civil servants in the evaluation, contributes to a more complete and accurate understanding of the impact of policies (Zuiderwijk; Janssen, 2014).

Identifying and analyzing the challenges faced in the implementation of mental health policies is essential to propose solutions and improvements. Common challenges may include organizational resistance, lack of adequate resources, cultural barriers, and stigma associated with mental health. The indepth analysis of these challenges allows the development of more effective strategies adapted to the reality of the public service. Opportunities for improvement arise from identifying good practices, lessons learned, and areas that can be strengthened. Analysis of experiences, both inside and outside the organization, provides analysis to improve the implementation of mental health policies. The search for innovations, collaborations, and the incorporation of evidence-based approaches contribute to the continuous improvement of policies. The review cycle closes the analysis, allowing for the continuous adaptation of policies in response to changing social, economic, and health conditions. This flexibility is significant in addressing emerging challenges and ensuring that policies remain aligned with the needs of public servants over time (Zhou *et al.* 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research adopts the systematic review of the literature, aiming to identify, analyze and synthesize the available evidence on the central theme: "The Importance of Public Policies for the Mitigation of Mental Illness in Public Servants, with emphasis on the Implementation Stage of the Public Policy Cycle."

The research question that guides this systematic review is formulated as follows: "How have public policies, especially during the implementation stage, been addressed in the literature in the context of mitigating mental illness in public servants?"

The keywords selected for the search encompass terms pertinent to the theme, including "public policies", "mental illness", "public servants" and "implementation". The use of Boolean operators AND and OR allowed a comprehensive search, addressing several perspectives related to the public policy cycle and the mental health of public servants, forming the following combinations: (Public Policies) AND (Mental Health) AND (Government Employees) OR (Civil Servants) OR (Public Servants).

The databases chosen for this systematic review are SCIELO and SPELL. The selection of these databases is justified by their multidisciplinary scope and the ability to provide a generalized view of academic and practical discussions on the proposed theme.

The inclusion criteria were rigorously defined, covering direct thematic relevance, scientific quality (with the inclusion of peer-reviewed studies), and a publication period in the last five years (2019 to 2023) to ensure the timeliness of the information. For research in Scielo, documents from the Brazilian collection were considered, of the citable article type, in the Portuguese language and in the thematic areas of human sciences and applied social sciences. For research in Spell, we considered documents of the article type, in English and Portuguese. Exclusion criteria were established to avoid studies that were irrelevant to the proposed scope, had low scientific rigor, and were not available in Portuguese or English.

The conduct of this systematic review will follow the guide of the PRISMA diagram (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*), providing transparency and replicability to the data collection process. This systematic method will allow a clear visualization of the flow of information, from the initial search to the final selection of the articles included in the review.

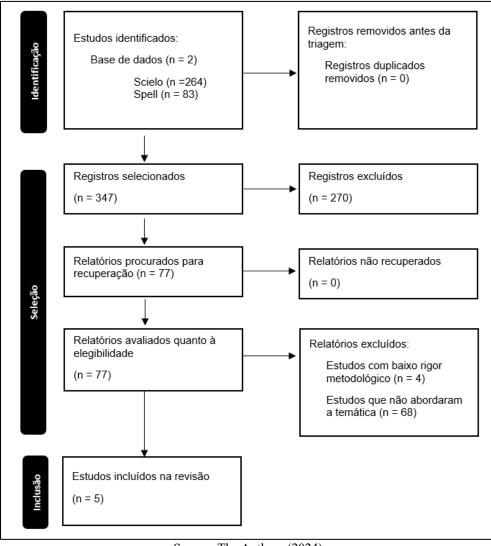


Figure 1: PRISMA diagram prepared for research

Source: The Authors (2024)

After data collection, a corpus of studies will be defined, consisting of articles that meet the established inclusion criteria. This final selection will represent the analytical basis for the conclusions of this systematic review, providing relevant information on the implementation of public policies to mitigate mental illness in public servants.

During the analysis of the selected articles, a structured *checklist* (Table 1) will be implemented, developed as a systematic tool to critically evaluate and analyze the included studies.



Table 1. Quantitative Evaluation of the Implementation of Public Policies for the Mitigation of Mental Illness in Public Servants

No.	Criterion Analyzed	Rating Scale (0 to 3)
1	Incorporation of the Public Policy Cycle: To what extent does the study consider the Public Policy Cycle, especially the Implementation phase, as a theoretical framework in the approach to mental illness in public servants?	0 (Does not consider) 1 (Partially considers) 2 (Consider moderately) 3 (Consider Completely)
2	Identification and Detailing of Implementation Challenges: How detailed is the analysis of the specific challenges encountered during the implementation of public mental health policies in public servants?	0 (Identifies no challenges) 1 (Partially identifies) 2 (Identify moderately) 3 (Fully identify)
3	Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Strategies Implemented: To what extent does the study perform a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented during the implementation phase, considering measurable indicators related to mental illness?	0 (Does not perform comprehensive analysis) 1 (Partially perform) 2 (Perform moderately) 3 (Fully performs)
4	Detailed Consideration of Resource Allocation: How in-depth does the study discuss the appropriate allocation of financial and human resources during the implementation of public policies, with a focus on mitigating mental illness in public servants?	0 (Not discussing) 1 (Partially discusses) 2 (Discuss moderately) 3 (Discusses completely)
5	Active Involvement of Civil Servants in Implementation: To what extent does the study highlight the active involvement of public servants in the process of implementing policies, considering their experiences and needs related to mental illness?	0 (Does not highlight) 1 (Partially Stands) 2 (Moderately highlighted) 3 (Fully Stand Out)

Source: The authors (2024)

This *checklist* It addresses specific topics related to the implementation of public policies, from the identification of challenges to the analysis of strategies adopted to mitigate mental illness among public servants. Each point of the *checklist* It represents a focal area, ensuring a detailed and targeted focus during the review of articles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After data collection, it was possible to compose the corpus of the study, and the conclusions of five articles related to the theme were synthesized, according to their objectives and conclusions.

No.	Database	Author/Year	Title	Objective	Conclusion
1	Spell	Kobernovicz, and Stefano (2020)	Engagement at Work: An Analysis of the Engagement of State Public Servants of a Higher Education Institution	To analyze the engagement in the work of public servants of a Higher Education Institution in the state of Paraná.	High engagement in the work of the employees, not only financial, but covering several organizational aspects.

 Table 2. Summary of the studies collected on the research "The importance of public policies for the mitigation of mental illness in public servants"

2	Spell	Montezano, et al. (2019)	Perception of Public Servants Regarding the Implementation of Risk Management in a Secretariat of the Federal Government of Brazil	Describe the perception of civil servants about the implementation of risk management in a federal public organization, including difficulties and possible gains.	Perception of more gains than difficulties in the adoption of risk management, with emphasis on process improvement, preventive action, increased engagement and institutional strengthening. Identification of four difficulties to be faced.
3	Spell	Andrade et al. (2019)	Dimensions of Quality of Life at Work and Organizational Justice: A Study with Municipal Public Servants	OBJECTIVE: To analyze the perception of municipal public service employees about Quality of Life at Work (QWL) and Organizational Justice.	Contribution to the proposition of the BPSO- SP instrument for the diagnosis of QWL in the municipal public area. Worse satisfaction rates in social aspects. BPSO- SP is an adaptation and validation of the BPSO- 99 model.
4	Spell	Ribeiro and Marra (2021)	Relations between the Meanings of Work and Job Satisfaction: An Analysis with a Category of Public Servants	To analyze whether the meanings of work influence the satisfaction of federal public servants.	Identification of moderate forces of association between the meanings of work and job satisfaction. Genuine effect of the senses of work on satisfaction. Aspects such as ethics, autonomy, relationships, and learning positively influence the level of satisfaction.
5	Spell	Camões et al. (2023)	The cycles of engagement in the work of federal public servants	Describe the work engagement cycles of federal public servants based on their professional life histories, identifying relevant demands and resources of the occupational environment.	Identification of positive and negative cycles of engagement, related to opportunities, appreciation, dysfunctional productivity and administrative discontinuity. Proposal of the concept of "coping cycle" as a subsidy for policies aimed at disengaged civil servants.

Source: The authors (2024)

The quantitative analysis provided an in-depth view of the bias adopted by the articles in relation to public policies for the mitigation of mental illness in public servants. The average of 76% in the incorporation of the public policy cycle reflects a substantial understanding on the part of the authors about this fundamental process. This indicates that, in general, the articles recognize the importance of following the phases of the public policy cycle, with special emphasis on implementation.

However, when we look at an average of 48% in identifying and detailing implementation challenges, an area of opportunity emerges. This score suggests that there is room for improvement in the analysis of the specific barriers faced by servers during policy implementation. Detailing these challenges is imperative to provide findings and guide more effective actions in mental health promotion.

Therefore, although there is a significant understanding of the public policy cycle, the gap in the detailed identification of challenges highlights the importance of deepening the analysis for a more effective implementation of policies to mitigate mental illness. This improvement can lead to more precise and adaptable strategies, aligned to the specific needs of public servants and thus contributing to the effectiveness of proposed policies.

Regarding the analysis of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, the average of 60% reveals a moderate evaluation in this aspect. This score indicates that the articles address, to a certain extent, the effectiveness of the strategies proposed for the mitigation of mental illness. However, she underscores the need for a more detailed analysis to identify which strategies have proven most effective in specific public service settings. A deeper understanding of this prism is essential to guide the implementation of more targeted and effective interventions, considering the particularities of the organizational context and the demands of civil servants.

With regard to the detailed consideration of resource allocation, the average was also 60%, indicating a moderate conception in this irreplaceable aspect. This score reflects that the articles recognize the importance of adequate allocation of financial and human resources during the implementation of mental health policies. However, it should be noted that a more in-depth analysis could provide more specific understandings on how to optimize the allocation of these resources, considering the different demands and challenges encountered by servers. A more efficient management of resources can enhance the results of implemented policies, contributing to the promotion of mental health in the public service.

As for the active involvement of public servants in the implementation of policies, the average of 60% suggests a moderate consideration at this point. This score indicates that the articles recognize, to a certain extent, the importance of the active participation of civil servants in the process of implementing mental health policies. Highlighting the central role of these professionals in this context is substantial, as they are directly involved in organizational dynamics and are fundamental to the success and effectiveness of actions aimed at promoting mental health.

Reinforcing the emphasis on the active participation of civil servants can strengthen policies, since these professionals have practical knowledge of the demands and challenges faced in the work environment. Active involvement not only contributes to the more accurate identification of critical areas in need of intervention, but also fosters a participatory and collaborative work environment. The active inclusion of civil servants in the implementation process not only promotes the acceptance of policies, but also enables adaptations that are more adjusted to the reality of the public service.

Thus, even with a moderate consideration, the importance of emphasizing and fostering the active involvement of civil servants in the implementation of mental health policies is emphasized. This more participatory tactic can maximize the effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that policies are more aligned with the real needs of civil servants and, consequently, more effective in mitigating mental illness in the context of public service.

Considering these results, there is an opportunity for improvement in the scope of public policies. Reinforcing the identification of specific challenges, deepening the analysis of the effectiveness of strategies, and considering in more detail the allocation of resources are important aspects that can strengthen the implementation of policies aimed at the mental health of public servants. The active involvement of these professionals deserves to be highlighted and should be considered as a central point in public policy strategies.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This research revealed that the implementation of public policies to mitigate mental illness in public servants requires an in-depth understanding of the Public Policy Cycle, especially in the implementation phase. Although the studies demonstrate a solid theoretical apprehension of this cycle, a critical gap was identified in the detailed analysis of the specific challenges faced during implementation, indicating the need for further study in this aspect. The strategies implemented and the allocation of resources were evaluated moderately, pointing to the importance of a more detailed analysis to identify effective approaches.

The active involvement of civil servants also demands prominence, suggesting that their active participation is key to the success of these policies. In light of this, the conclusion highlights the complexity in the implementation of these policies, emphasizing the importance of personalized and context-sensitive approaches in order to build healthy and sustainable work environments throughout the career of public servants.



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APPENDIX A

Table 2: Application of the Checklist in selected as	rticles
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No. Criterion Analyzed Rating Scale (0 to 3) Article 1 Incorporation of the Public Policy Cycle 3 (Consider Completely) 2 Identification and Detailing of Implementation Challenges 2 (Identify moderately) 3 Implemented 2 (Perform moderately) 4 Detailed Consideration of Resource Allocation 1 (Partially discusses) 5 Active Involvement of Servers in Implementation 3 (Fully Stand Out) No. Criterion Analyzed Rating Scale (0 to 3) Article 2 Incorporation of the Public Policy Cycle 2 (Consider moderately) 1 Incorporation of the Public Policy Cycle 2 (Consider moderately) 2 Identification and Detailing of Implementation Challenges 3 (Fully identify) 3 Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Strategies 2 (Perform moderately) 4 Detailed Consideration of Resource Allocation 1 (Partially Stands) No. Criterion Analyzed Rating Scale (0 to 3) Article 3 Incorporation of the Public Policy Cycle 2 (Consider moderately) 2 Identification and Detailing of Implementation 1 (Partially discusses)		Table 2: Application of the <i>Checklist</i> in select	ed articles
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	4		1 (Partially discusses)
	5	Active Involvement of Servers in Implementation	2 (Moderately highlighted)

Source: The authors (2024)