

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Mediation of communication practices in the service provided by notaries

Mediación de las prácticas comunicativas en el servicio que brindan las notarías

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Abstract Effective communication has become established as a strategic component of the quality of public services, particularly in fields characterized by high technical and legal complexity, such as notarial services. In this context, this article aims to analyze how the mediation of communicative practices influences the services provided by notaries, identifying the main communicative practices developed by notaries and assessing their impact on users' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach with a descriptive–interpretative design. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection technique and were administered to 15 practicing notaries and 30 users who attended various notarial offices. The analysis was qualitative, allowing for the identification of analytical categories related to communicative practices and their influence on the service experience. The use of clear and accessible language, active listening, and continuous feedback significantly mediates the understanding of notarial acts, strengthens perceptions of legal certainty, and fosters institutional trust. The absence of these practices generates uncertainty, perceptions of distant treatment, and distrust toward the notarial institution. It is concluded that the mediation of communicative practices constitutes a determining factor in the quality of notarial services, as it strengthens their social function, prevents conflicts, and promotes a more accessible, reliable, and citizen-oriented public service.

Keywords notarial services, communicative mediation, institutional communication, legal certainty, service quality.

Resumen La comunicación efectiva se ha consolidado como un componente estratégico en la calidad de los servicios públicos, especialmente en aquellos ámbitos caracterizados por alta complejidad técnica y jurídica, como el servicio notarial. En este contexto, el presente artículo tiene como objetivo analizar cómo la mediación de las prácticas comunicativas incide en el servicio que brindan las notarías, identificando las principales prácticas comunicativas desarrolladas por los notarios y valorando su impacto en la percepción de calidad y satisfacción de los usuarios. La investigación se desarrolló bajo un enfoque cualitativo, con un diseño descriptivo–interpretativo. Se empleó la entrevista semiestructurada como técnica principal de recolección de información, aplicada a 15 notarios en ejercicio y 30 usuarios que acudieron a diversas notarías. El análisis fue cualitativo, lo que permitió identificar categorías analíticas vinculadas a las prácticas comunicativas y su incidencia en la experiencia del servicio. El uso de un lenguaje claro y accesible, la escucha activa y la retroalimentación constante median de manera significativa la comprensión de los actos notariales, fortalecen la percepción de seguridad jurídica y favorecen la confianza institucional. La ausencia de estas prácticas genera incertidumbre, percepciones de trato distante y desconfianza hacia la institución notarial. Se concluye que la mediación de las prácticas comunicativas constituye un factor determinante en la calidad del servicio notarial, al fortalecer su función social, prevenir conflictos y promover un servicio público más accesible, confiable y orientado al ciudadano.

Palabras clave Servicios notariales, mediación comunicativa, comunicación institucional, seguridad jurídica, calidad del servicio.

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Introduction

Effective communication has been recognized in recent literature as a strategic component in the provision of public services, insofar as it enables the building of trust between institutions and citizens, promotes the understanding of administrative procedures and strengthens the transparency, legitimacy and accountability of the exercise of public power.

From contemporary approaches to public management oriented towards public value, communication ceases to be conceived as a merely informative process and is understood as a dynamic, dialogical and relational interaction through which shared meanings are constructed, expectations are managed and institutional trust is consolidated (Lema, 2025; Suárez, 2015).

In this context, institutional communication acquires a fundamental mediating role between the State and citizens, especially in those services where there is a marked asymmetry of technical and legal knowledge. The quality of public service is no longer evaluated exclusively in terms of administrative efficiency or regulatory compliance, but also based on the user's communicative experience, the clarity of the information received, and the perception of fair, empathetic, and accessible treatment (Jaramillo et al., 2025; Díaz, 2025).

These dimensions are particularly relevant in the legal field, where a lack of understanding of procedures can lead to institutional distrust, subsequent conflicts, and a negative perception of the justice system.

In notarial services, communication takes on singular importance due to the technical complexity of the legal acts formalized and the need to guarantee the legal certainty of the parties involved. Recent research has shown that specialized legal language, when not adequately mediated, constitutes one of the main barriers to effective access to legal services, limiting the understanding of the rights and obligations arising from notarial acts (Mendoza, 2024).

This situation is especially critical in contexts where users have varying levels of legal literacy, which increases communicative dependence on the notary as the authorized interpreter of the law. (Pérez, 2023; López, 2025)

The notary not only acts as a public official responsible for attesting to legal acts and facts, but also as a legal advisor, social mediator, and guarantor of legality. Their role transcends mere document formalization, as it involves advising, explaining, preventing conflicts, and contributing to legal certainty through the proper interpretation and communication of the law (Paniagua, 2024).

From the perspective of preventive law, the notary's communicative clarity is recognized as a key factor in reducing future disputes, strengthening user confidence, and legitimizing the notarial function as an essential public institution (Gaibor, 2024).

However, in various institutional contexts, communication barriers persist, associated with the excessive use of technical jargon, the information asymmetry between legal professionals and citizens (Dueñas et al., 2024), and the limited systematic training in communication skills among legal professionals. Recent empirical studies indicate that these barriers generate uncertainty, perceptions of distant treatment, and even distrust of legal institutions (Ojeda, 2025), increasing the risk of conflicts arising from erroneous or incomplete interpretations of legal acts.

From current approaches to co-production and co-creation of public value, it is recognized that communicative interaction between officials and users is a central element for improving the quality of public services. Effective communication allows citizens to understand procedures, participate in an informed manner, and trust institutional decisions, which is especially relevant in legal services of high social sensitivity, such as the notary's office (Campo, 2025).

In this sense, the relational dimension of the notarial service is configured as a strategic component to strengthen institutional trust and promote a legal culture that is accessible and understandable for the population.

From the perspective of communicative mediation, communication in notarial services can be understood as a process of symbolic translation between specialized legal language and the everyday language of the citizen (Hueto, 2025). This mediation not only facilitates the understanding of procedures but also contributes to humanizing the institutional relationship, reducing the power and knowledge gaps that have historically characterized the legal field (Sánchez & Delgado, 2025).

Recent research in procedural justice and institutional communication shows that when users perceive clarity, active listening, respect and empathy in the communicative interaction, trust in the institution and acceptance of the legal decisions adopted increase significantly (Mendoza, 2025; Martín & Herrera, 2025).

In this context, the present article aims to analyze how the mediation of communicative practices affects the service provided by notaries, identifying the main practices used by notaries and assessing their impact on user satisfaction and perception.

The study is based on the premise that clear, empathetic and accessible communication not only improves the perceived quality of notarial service, but also constitutes an essential component for strengthening the social function of the notary profession and consolidating a citizen-oriented public service, in line with contemporary principles of democratic governance and effective access to justice.

Methodology

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach, with a descriptive-interpretive design, aimed at understanding how communicative practices manifest and are mediated in notarial services, as well as their impact on users' perceptions of quality and satisfaction. This approach is relevant when the study's objective is to explore meanings, experiences, and perceptions constructed by social actors in specific institutional contexts, rather than to measure variables quantitatively.

From an epistemological standpoint, this study adopts an interpretive perspective, which recognizes that social reality is constructed through interaction and language, and that communicative practices constitute a central element in the production of meaning within public institutions (García-Calderón et al., 2022). Within this framework, communication in notarial services is analyzed as a mediating process between specialized legal knowledge and the user's everyday experience.

A cross-sectional qualitative design was used, as the data collection took place at a single point in time. The descriptive design allowed for the identification and characterization of the communicative practices present in the notarial service, while the interpretive component facilitated the analysis of their meaning and impact on the perceptions of the users and notaries interviewed.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a common approach in qualitative research focused on analytical depth rather than statistical representativeness. The sample consisted of 15 practicing notaries and 30 clients who visited various notary offices to carry out legal procedures.

The inclusion of both groups allowed for a comprehensive view of the phenomenon studied, incorporating both the institutional perspective of the service provider and the direct experience of the users. This triangulation of actors contributes to strengthening the interpretive validity of the study (Torres, 2021).

The primary data collection technique was the semi-structured interview, chosen for its flexibility in exploring participants' perceptions, experiences, and meanings of communication practices within the notarial context. The instrument was developed based on theoretical categories derived from a review of recent literature on institutional communication, communicative mediation, and public service quality.

The interviews included open-ended questions designed to explore aspects such as clarity of language, availability to answer questions, interpersonal skills, feedback provided during the notarial process, and overall perception of service quality. All interviews were conducted in person, with prior informed consent from the participants, and were recorded and transcribed in full for later analysis.

The data analysis was carried out using the qualitative content analysis technique, following the phases systematized by Bardin, adapted to contemporary approaches to qualitative research: (1) pre-analysis, (2) coding and (3) categorization and interpretation. (Fernández & Bardales, 2024)

During the coding process, units of meaning were identified related to the notary's communication practices, users' perceptions, and the effects attributed to communication on service quality. Subsequently, these units were grouped into analytical categories that allowed for the interpretation of the results in light of the updated theoretical framework and the study's objectives.

To ensure the methodological rigor of the research, quality criteria specific to the qualitative approach were considered, such as credibility, internal consistency, and interpretive validity. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation (notaries and users) and by comparing the findings with recent literature. Furthermore, efforts were made to maintain clear traceability between the empirical data, the analytical categories, and the interpretations presented in the results and discussion section.

The study adhered to the ethical principles of social research. Participation was voluntary, anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided were guaranteed, and the data obtained were used exclusively for academic purposes. Participants were informed beforehand about the study's objectives and gave their informed consent before the interviews took place.

Results and discussion

Content analysis of interviews with notaries and users identified a set of communication practices that significantly influence the quality of notarial services. The findings demonstrate that communication is not an accessory element of the notarial act, but rather a structural component that directly impacts the understanding of procedures, the perception of legal certainty, and institutional trust (Fuentes Callata, 2024).

One of the most relevant findings relates to the use of accessible language as a core communicative practice. Users repeatedly stated that clear and understandable explanations of notarial acts facilitate informed decision-making and reduce anxiety associated with legal procedures. This finding aligns with recent studies indicating that overly technical legal language is one of the main barriers to accessing legal services and a recurring source of distrust in legal institutions (Eljadue Blanco et al., 2024). In this sense, the linguistic mediation provided by the notary is a key strategy for guaranteeing the effective exercise of citizens' rights.

Furthermore, the results highlight active listening as a communicative practice highly valued by users (Rodríguez,

2024). The notary's willingness to address questions, listen to concerns, and consider the particular circumstances of each case was associated by participants with a greater perception of respect, institutional approachability, and service quality.

From the perspective of procedural justice, this finding is consistent with research that shows that the perception of being heard directly influences institutional trust and the acceptance of legal decisions, regardless of the final outcome of the process (Chávez & Flores, 2024; Posadas, 2021).

Another significant finding relates to the constant feedback provided during the notarial process. Users appreciated that the notary explained not only the content of the legal act, but also its legal consequences, responsibilities, and potential future implications. This communicative practice contributes to the prevention of subsequent conflicts and reinforces the preventive function of the notary profession, in line with contemporary approaches to preventive law and legal certainty (Camacho et al., 2025).

From an integrative perspective, the results show that these communicative practices do not operate in isolation, but rather form a system of communicative mediation that humanizes the relationship between the notary and the user. This mediation reduces the information and power asymmetries inherent in the legal field, fostering a more equitable and understandable institutional experience. In line with approaches to the co-production of public value, communicative interaction emerges as a space where the user is not a passive subject (Pano, 2024), but an actor who actively participates in the understanding and validation of the notarial act.

In contrast, those interviewed indicated that the absence of these communication practices generates negative perceptions of the service, associated with distant treatment, lack of information, and institutional distrust. These results reinforce recent empirical evidence that warns that communication deficiencies in legal services increase the perception of opacity and weaken institutional legitimacy, even when procedures formally comply with current regulations (Carlin, 2024).

In summary, the results and their discussion suggest that the mediation of communication practices is a determining factor in the quality of notarial services. Clear, empathetic, and user-oriented communication not only improves perceived satisfaction but also strengthens institutional trust and consolidates the social function of notaries as guarantors of legal certainty and effective access to justice.

Conclusions

The analysis concludes that effective communication is a fundamental determinant of the quality of notarial servi-

ces, as it directly shapes users' understanding of legal acts, perceptions of legal certainty, and institutional trust. Clear and accessible language, active listening, and continuous feedback reduce information asymmetries, enhance citizens' comprehension of the legal effects of notarial acts, and help prevent future conflicts. The findings also confirm that the relational dimension of service delivery—grounded in empathetic and user-centered communication—significantly increases perceived quality and reinforces trust in the notarial institution as a guarantor of legality and transparency, positioning communicative mediation as a mechanism for public value co-production. Accordingly, the study highlights the need to systematically strengthen notaries' communication competencies, as service improvement depends not only on regulatory compliance and administrative efficiency, but also on the quality of interaction with users, making effective communication a strategic pillar of a more accessible, trustworthy, and citizen-oriented notarial service.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Gleidys L. Rodríguez-Reyes: Conceptualization, data cu-ration, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, supervi-sion, validation, visualization, drafting the original manus-cript and writing, review, and editing.

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The author acknowledges the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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