

# JUDICIAL COMMUNICATION

By: Hon. Justice Nelson C.S Ogbuanya\*

Protocols ....

## 1. Introduction

It is my pleasure to be honoured, once again, with an invitation by the management of the *National Judicial Institute (NJI)*, to make a presentation on the topical issue of *Judicial Communication*, this time, at the *RoundTable of the Heads of Courts*, constituting the management heads and leadership of the various courts across both Federal and States' Courts. The *NJI* had earlier, sometime in July 2024, invited me to do a presentation on the topic of *Judicial Communication* at the *2-Day Workshop for Justices and Judges on Judicial Independence and Judge Craft, organized by the NJI in collaboration with the Forum Against Counterfeiting (FAC)*. I did, and that perhaps led to this invitation, now before a more revered and critical audience—the gathering of Heads of Courts of the Nation's Judiciary!

*Judicial Communication*, which is often regarded as a mundane topic, scarcely written about, and perceived as not worth devoting scarce judicial time to learn, appears to be at the nerve-centre of challenges and benchmarking of judicial performance in modern society, which thrives on openness and quest for transparency. As society embraces innovative advancement in communication technology and new way of doing things, the judicial system is under constant pressure to open up its conservativeness, but which requires careful embrace, so as not to unwittingly fall a victim of associated adverse communication impacts in the digital era.

It is therefore the object of this discourse to highlight the emerging concept of *Judicial Communication*, and bring to bear its various aspects and interfaces, as well as ethical issues arising in judicial communication and implications. A cursory review of the relevant provisions of the *Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers* relating to *Judicial Communication*, indicating permitted and non-permitted communication for Judicial Officers, underscores the challenges of the digital era and the impact of social media, necessitating *Judicial Communication* imperatives for the Judiciary as an Institution. Understanding and entrenching appropriate *Judicial Communication* mechanism becomes imperative for positive corporate branding of the Judiciary, reflective of its needed corporate culture, for a repositioned pride of place and vigour, guaranteeing independence of the Judiciary, in playing its noble but onerous role as custodian of rule of law in democratic governance.

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## 2. The Concept and Aspects of Judicial Communication

### *The Concept of Judicial Communication-*

Any attempt at conceptualization of '*Judicial Communication*', would entail highlight of the meaning of '*Communication*', which in itself, is not susceptible to universal definition. The *Authors of USlegal.com*<sup>1</sup> simply put '*Communication*' to mean: "*Expression or exchange of information by speech, writing, gestures, conduct or electronic medium. It is the process by which an idea is brought to another's perception. The information that is so expressed or exchanged is also referred to as communication*". In other words, '*Communication*' is not only written expression. It connotes 'verbal and non-verbal' communication. And verbal does not mean only written but also oral expression, while non-verbal constitutes not only gestures (body language) but also other signs and visual expressions in electronic medium, such as *emoji*.

Thus, '*Communication*' is basically an expression (verbal or non-verbal) which creates perceptive information which is passed to the recipient party through any medium. '*Judicial*', on the other hand, involves 'acts in a judicial system', by Judicial Officer(s) and/or the Judiciary as a body. Conceptually, any '*Communication*' which involves the *Judiciary* as an Institution or Judicial Officers in the judicial system, constitutes '*Judicial Communication*'.

To contextualize the topic of the discourse, the concept of *Judicial Communication* should therefore be understood to mean: various aspects and interfaces of expressions by Judicial Officers and the Judiciary in the course of carrying out the mandate of the Judiciary towards entrenching rule of law in the setting of the judicial system within the nation's polity of democratic governance.

### *Aspects/Layers of Judicial Communication-*

*Judicial Communication* occurs in various aspects and layers of judicial duties and interactions, as Judges/Justices are the embodiments of *Judicial Communication*. The aspects and interfaces of *Judicial Communication* include:

- a. *Judge's Comportment and Courtroom Management*-The Judge's personal comportment expressed in and out-of-courtroom communication is also captured as an aspect of *Judicial Communication*, as the Judge is seen as the Court<sup>2</sup>. For instance, *Judicial Communication* which involves Judicial Officer solely discharging his/her judicial duties in courtroom include: Managing Courtroom atmosphere and composure, docket management and adjournments, judgment writing and judicial pronouncements, including timely release of copies, and accuracy of the oral pronouncement in relation to the certified true copy of Judgments/Orders obtained after oral pronouncement in open court.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://definitions.uslegal.com>

<sup>2</sup> See: B. McLachlin (Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada), "The Role of Judges in Modern Commonwealth Society", *Law Quarterly Review* (1994), vol.110, pp.260-269

Courtroom composure etiquette and efficacy in docket management are easily noticed, even by a first time comer in courtroom, and the visual assessment are usually the take away of both counsel and litigants from the courtroom, which turns to be the basis of the mental impression shared by court users and the public about the Judiciary, which underscores the need to include psychology-infused orientation courses for newly appointed Judges and refresher course for sitting Judges/Justices. Honourable Judges/Justices should, in deed, portray the attributes of nobility in the manner of dressing, self-carriage, and demeanour, to attract the positive first impression of self-respect, valour and charisma, being the often deciphered public impression of good image of the Judiciary, communicated by each Judge/Justice in the judicial system.

Learned Scholar, *Joseph P.Nadeu*, had expressed the perceptions of and expectation from Judicial Officers on duty, when he posited thus:

*Each Judge in their individual Courtroom projects the face of the Judiciary, with the ability to demonstrate how well our government works, and how well Judiciary functions in an ordered society. Being a Judge means 'Accepting the responsibility to represent the Justice system at your very best- To exhibit Patience, Tolerance and Understanding'<sup>3</sup>.*

b. *Efficacy of Judgment Writing-* Judges speaks through Judgements and Orders, which should be clear and succinct in terms and decision made devoid of clumsy expressions with attendant confusion. Use of language, even on point of dissent or distinguishing of precedents and clarifying conflicting Judgments should also be done with candour and dignifying tone and edifying presentation, for effective judicial communication on the issue. Hear the communication style of *Lord Bridge of Harwich* in *Leech v. Deputy Governor of Parkhurst Prison*<sup>4</sup>:

*My Lords, these two appeals raise the important question whether the court has jurisdiction to entertain an application for judicial review of adjudication by a prison governor on a charge against a prisoner of a disciplinary offence and an award of punishment for the offence under the Prison Rules 1964. The Court of Appeal in R v, Deputy Governor of Camphill Prison, ex parte King [1985] QB735 held that there was no such jurisdiction. But the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland took the opposite view in accepting jurisdiction to review a governor's adjudication and award under the corresponding rules applicable in Northern Ireland: R v Governor of the Maze Prison, ex parte McKiernan (1985)6NIJB 6, This is the conflict which must be resolved...*

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph P.Nadeu "What it means to be a Judge", The Judges Journal 34,35 (American Bar Association Judicial Division), Summer 2000

<sup>4</sup> [1988]1AC533,HL

- c. *Abuse of power of issuance of Interim Orders ex-Parte and resultant counter-Orders by Courts of Coordinate Jurisdiction*- This is an aspect of Judicial Communication that brings untold embarrassment to the Judiciary, and often over-heats the polity and portrays the Judiciary as if it does not operate with guiding rules and ethics, with the resultant battered image whenever it occurs. The worst being the incessant issuing of conflicting and counter-Orders from Courts of coordinate jurisdiction. Despite clear jurisdictional mandates of trial Courts of coordinate jurisdiction, some Judges, acting as if the conferred jurisdictional mandate on certain subject matters, particularly relating to elections and political matters, have imbued them with superiority status over other Courts of equal status, do brazenly assume jurisdiction or even issue counter-Orders on matters already seized by another Court of competent jurisdiction and of coordinate status. A *Legal Reporter, Deborah Musa*, painted the awful picture thus:

*The Nigerian Judicial system is facing a crisis of confidence as conflicting court judgments flood the legal landscape. Despite the principle that courts of coordinate jurisdiction should not overrule one another, recent events have highlighted numerous instances of contradictory and counter-orders from various courts.*

*...this troubling trend is raising serious concerns about the integrity and reliability of the judiciary, the supposed last hope of the common man. Courts of coordinate jurisdiction, by law, are not supposed to overrule one another. If a party is aggrieved or dissatisfied with the decision of the court, the aggrieved has the constitutional right to appeal to a higher court. A court of coordinate jurisdiction cannot give directions over its equal. To this extent, a court of coordinate jurisdiction cannot overrule itself or its equivalent in any state or for any reason. However, recent events from courts in the country have shown that this law has been breached. Enormous contradictory and conflicting judgments can be seen currently flooding the entire Nigerian courts<sup>5</sup>.*

- d. *Peer Communication by Judicial Officers*- This aspect involves exchange of ideas on legal issues involving live cases in court, conference review of cases at appellate court or at courts with panel sitting. This aspect is encouraged for the purposes of sharing ideas and honing adjudication skills and improved output. It also aids in detecting conflicting judgments and over-ruled precedents, which helps to strengthen the adjudicatory jurisprudence in the legal system.
- e. *Routine Communication between Judicial Officer and Court Staff* - This is usually communication relating to official duties, which include: secretarial services by court staff, service of process and Hearing Notices, diary management and casefile handling, and processing of certified true copies from the court. Efficiency and confidentiality are key components of this aspect of Judicial Communication. Judicial Staff should also be enlightened on their sensitive role of interfacing with the court users and the public, so as to avoid meddling or projecting wrong

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<sup>5</sup> "Judiciary faces Integrity Crisis over Conflicting Judgments" Deborah Musa, Punch June 14, 2024: <https://barristerng.com/judiciary-faces-integrity-crisis-over-conflicting-judgments>

See also: "Mike Ahamba SAN Warns: Nigeria's Judiciary On Brink Of Collapse Due To Political Meddling": <https://thenigerialawyer.com/mike-ahamba-san-warns-nigerias-judiciary-on-brink-of-collapse-due-to-political-meddling/>

impression of the system, or even descending into posturing as conduit for corrupt practices. Judicial Officers should note and take recourse on the *Rule 11(ii) of the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers*, which requires that: “A Judicial Officer should require his staff and other court officials under his direction and control to observe the standards of integrity and diligence that apply to him”. Also, enforcement of *Code of Conduct for Court Employees* is necessary to safeguard this aspect of Judicial Communication.

- f. *Communication involving Judicial Officer with Third Parties*- This is a challenging aspect of Judicial Communication, not only that it is unethical but also that it is risky, such as: communication with litigants or counsel or proxy persons, or other interested persons on the pending matter. This is most dangerous as such persons usually harbour mischief, and do prepare to get or instigate incriminating information from the Judicial Officer for a potential adverse petition.
- g. *Collective posturing giving rise to public perception of the Judiciary*- This is Judicial Communication perceived as position of the Judiciary on certain national issue, which can be deciphered from various judgments/pronouncements on such subject matter, which drops the hint that Judiciary as an Institution has taken a position. As perception often outweighs reality, care should be taken to forestall or correct such impression, if it is negative, as it may impact on the corporate brand of the Judiciary, either portraying it as not independent or not predisposed to upholding rule of law, and as the last hope for the common man. Imagine the perception which portrays the Judiciary as no longer servicing its traditional role and trademark notion as the ‘*last hope of the common man*’. Hear this remark: “*Forgive me, I don’t mean to be rude. So, the judiciary is no longer the last hope of the common man alone, it is also, or majorly now, the last hope of the big shots*”<sup>6</sup>

Whatever that has led to this reversed notion, should be corrected, for effective Judicial Communication positing positive image of the Judiciary in the democratic governance in Nigeria. To that end, it is for the Judiciary to respond through adoption of the *Concept of Judges Craft*. The Hon. Justice Amina Augie, CFR, JSC (Rtd.), writing on the topic of “*Judges Craft: The Art and Practice of Judging*”<sup>7</sup>, posited thus:

*Judges like artists responding to new artistic movements, must adapt their approach to remain relevant and effective. This may involve re-interpreting existing statutes, considering the influence, the effect or impact of emerging technologies, and acknowledging the changing needs of society. The ability to navigate this evolving legal terrain is a testament to the ongoing creativity and adaptability required of Judges, which no doubt, heightens the Court’s acceptance by the community, based on faith and trust in the system.*

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<sup>6</sup> See: “AGF Fagbemi: Judiciary Now Serves Politicians And Influential People, Not The Common Man”:<https://thenigerianlawyer.com/agf-fagbemi-judiciary-now-serves-politicians-and-influential-people-not-the-common-man/> accessed Sept 20 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Paper presented at the *at the 2-Day Workshop for Justices and Judges on Judicial Independence, Organized by the Forum Against Counterfeiting (FAC) in Collaboration with the National Judicial Institute (NJI), held at NJI Abuja on 8-9 July 2024*

### 3. Ethical Issues In Judicial Communication and Implications

Judicial Communication is basically regarded as ethical issue and regulated under the *Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers*. The *Rules 3-6 of the National Judicial Council Revised Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Feb, 2016)* (CCJO) contain elaborate rules covering various aspects of Judicial Communication, specifying prohibited and extent of permitted judicial communication. For instance, *Rule 3.3 of the CCJO* states:

*A judicial Officer should accord to every person who is legally interested in a proceeding, or his legal representative full right to be heard according to law, and except as authorized by law, neither initiate, encourage, nor consider ex-parte or other communications concerning a pending or impending proceeding.*

*For the purpose of this sub-rule an "ex parte communication is any communication involving less than all the parties who have a legal interest in the case, whether oral or written, about a pending or impending case, made to or initiated or entertained by the Judicial Officer presiding over the case.*

The *Rule 4 of the CCJO* imposes on Judicial Officer, the duty to abstain from comments about pending or impending proceedings in any court in the country and also to maintain professional confidentiality. In *Rule 4.1*, it states:

*A judicial Officer should abstain from comments about a pending or impending proceeding in any court in this country, and should require similar abstention on the part of the court personnel under his direction and control, provided that this provision does not prohibit a Judicial Officer from making statements in the course of his official duties or from explaining for the public or private information, the procedure of the court so long as such statements are not prejudicial to his integrity, of the judiciary and the administration of justice.*

And the *Rule 4.2* states:

*A Judicial Officer shall be bound by professional secrecy with regard to his deliberations and to confidential information acquired in the course of his duties. Accordingly, confidential information acquired in the judge's judicial capacity shall not be used or disclosed by the Judge for any other purpose not related to the Judge's judicial duties.*

Although the *Rule 5* preserves Judge's right to freedom of expression like any other citizen, it however, cautioned that "*in exercising such rights, a Judge shall always conduct himself in such a manner as to preserve the dignity of the judicial office and the impartiality and independence of the judiciary*". It went on to prescribe such restraint as to: "*a. maintain public confidence in the impartiality and independence of the judiciary; b. avoid involvement in public discussion or discourse if his or her involvement could reasonably undermine confidence in his or her impartiality; c. avoid such occasions and circumstances where such involvement may unnecessarily expose the Judge to political attacks or be inconsistent with the dignity of a Judicial Officer; and or d. adhere strictly to political silence*".



Although these ethical prescriptions of the *Code of Conduct relating to Judicial Communication* are well intended, the breach of which would amount to misconduct necessitating disciplinary measures against erring Judicial Officer, yet, how these rules would be applied/reformed to balance the flipside of the upsurge of attacks on the Judiciary and Judicial Officers' reputation, by those taking undue advantage of the infinite access to digital media, is a challenge in modern Judicial Communication.

#### 4. Digital Era and Impact of Social Media on Judicial Communication

Given the gagged prescriptions of the *Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers* in respect of Judicial Communication, the Judiciary has been exposed to often undue severe scrutiny and open abusive criticism in modern time. Mischief makers, often leverage on the evolving digital era with multiple facets of social media channels deployed to achieve the sinister attack on the institution of Judiciary, just to ridicule the noble institution and lower its esteemed reputation and public confidence in the Judiciary, which tends to weaken the very foundation upon which the judicial system thrives. In the spate of all that, the *Code of Conduct* still prescribes restraint, and in *Rule 6* imposes a duty on the Judicial Officer to abstain from involvement in public controversies by adopting the '*convention of political silence*'. By *Rule 6 (c)*, "*the convention of political silence requires the Judge concerned not to ordinarily reply to public statement*". The *Rule 6(c)* further states thus:

*Although, the right to criticize a Judge is subject to the rules relating to contempt, these are not to be invoked today to suppress or punish criticism of the judiciary or of a particular Judge. The better and wiser course is to ignore any scandalous attack or criticism outside the court room rather than to exacerbate the publicity by initiating proceedings.*

The approach is well noted on the genuine intendment to prevent exacerbation of the issue in controversy, and so as not to be seen as using contempt proceedings to hack down and suppress judicial criticism. It is even made to be seen and taken as an aspect of the '*job hazard*'. Nonetheless, a balance needs to be maintained in cases of deliberate malicious and unjustified attack on the personality of a Judicial Officer or the Judiciary, given that in the digital world of today, it is said that '*internet does not forget*'. So, without adopting the legally acclaimed contempt proceedings approach, such un-debunked attack remains permanently engraved in the internet and accessible the world over, and can be believed and relied on, to the detriment of the Judicial Officer and or his/her family, or even those merely associated with his/her name. Even as Judges appear to be '*lawyers without right*', the *Information and Communication Unit* of the relevant Court could be handy to do a rebuttal/rejoinder publication, which would tag the already posted malicious attack, and clarify the trending malicious information communicated in the internet. Thus, if there would be no '*retaliatory*' contempt proceedings, let there be an official debunk of such malicious publication to create a parallel tag on the initial defamatory publication, so as to make it unreliable by internet users, who would be afforded the full view through the official rebuttal/rejoinder. Protection of the hard-earned reputation of individual Judicial Officers is at the core of uplifting the reputation of the Judiciary.

Given the sensitive nature of judicial duty, Judicial Officers should also be very careful and wary of inappropriate use of social media with its attendant implication, and also guard against open communication with GSM gadgets, which can be compromised, and impact on their privacy and confidential communication. Also, digital literacy is recommended for Judicial Officers to obviate the often compromise of sensitive judicial works in the possession of the Court Staff, particularly the Confidential Secretary and Research Assistants, and Personal Aides of the Judicial Officer.

Effective Judicial Communication also entails regular digital interface. Adopting strategic information management approach would ensure an open-guided public interface with the judicial system, which also needs to guard its conservative nature. Courts should maintain prominence in digital platforms/websites and regularly update vital judicial information, to create enough transparency in the operation of the Court's activities, and provide authentic information and resources online. Happily, the *National Industrial Court*, under the able leadership of the Court's President, *Hon, Justice B.B Kanyip PhD, OFR, FNIALS, FNJI*, is pioneering court digital drive by not only maintaining digital presence with social media handles and interactive website<sup>8</sup>, but also owns a *Mobile App*, and hosts *Virtual Court*, with platform where *Cause list, News flash and Judgments* are regularly posted and updated, and certified true copies of the Courts' decisions processed online. There lies the future of Judicial Communication.

## 5. Judicial Communication and Corporate Branding of the Judiciary

### *Basis for Corporate Branding of the Judiciary-*

As noted earlier, judicial posturing, a form of non-verbal communication (body language), constitutes an aspect of Judicial Communication, in that, the inference of pointed judicial attitude would invariably brand the entire Judiciary as an Institution. As Judiciary is collective, so also, it is prone to collective attack on its brand. There is basis for this behaviour. From the perspective of jurisprudence of governance structure in the Nigerian democracy, unlike the other *Arms of the Government*, which are subject to periodic elections<sup>9</sup>, and of course, material change of membership, the Judiciary has the singular advantage of maintaining long consistency of membership (primarily altering by retirement and new entrants by appointment). Again, the judicial authority does not vest on individuals (singly or in group) as the case with the Legislature and Executives<sup>10</sup>. For the Judiciary, the judicial powers vest on the

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<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.nicnadr.gov.ng>.

<sup>9</sup> Just recently on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador signed into Law the controversial judicial reform, making the country the first to elect all its Judges by popular vote through periodic election, subjecting all their Judges to holding office by election.

See: <https://thenigerialawyer.com/mexico-president-signs-contested-law-to-elect-all-judges/>

<sup>10</sup> Under the Nigerian Constitution, while the legislative powers vest on the group of persons constituting the National Assembly or State House of Assembly, at Federal and States' level respectively, the executive powers vest on the single person being the President at the Federal level and the Governor at the State level, respectively. See: Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999(As Amended).



Institution called Courts, operating in hierarchical order; from the trial through appellate to apex court system, ending with the Supreme Court.

The Judiciary is also the only *Arm of Government* that operates both in democratic and non-democratic governance-setting, and the only *Arm* being manned and operated by a sole profession of law. It serves as the representative of God on earthly governance, solely charged with dispensation of justice; a core ingredient of humanity and human governance. No wonder the high performance expectation from the Judiciary. To whom much is given, much is also expected!

Because, the Judiciary operates as an Institution, its corporate image and branding, readily come to fore at every noticeable nuance of misfeasance by the Judges. It is that of collective glory and collective shame! Everyone readily points to the Judiciary not necessarily the Court or Judge involved in the issue, which is Judicial Communication of brand. For instance, the Nigerian Judiciary gained notoriety for adjournments and delays, not because every Court or every Judge is involved, but that is the posturing that has been communicated and perceived by the people. If any Court is inefficient, it invariably rubs off on the entire Judiciary, prompting the often echoed rhetoric: 'Go to Court'! This judicial bashing may be reflective of weak corporate culture<sup>11</sup> of the Judiciary in entrenching best practice for positive outlook.

#### *Imperative of Entrenching Corporate Culture for the Judiciary-*

A recipe for strengthening the *corporate branding* of the Judiciary lies on entrenching *corporate culture* for the Judiciary on the basis of the reality that Judiciary is an *Organization*, and should imbibe the concept of corporate branding as other corporate organizations operating in the economy. The Judiciary charged with the mandate of dispensing justice, should reposition itself as a service provider with somewhat *customer service orientation* and strong brand in the polity, by having an entrenched corporate culture reflective of its brand. Learned Scholar, Prof. Amuda-Kannike SAN, had provided insight into the concept and imperative of corporate culture for organizational sustainability, thus:

*Corporate culture serves as the foundation upon which organization operate, influencing every aspect of organizational behaviour, decision-making, and performance. Corporate culture can be defined as the collective values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize an organization and guide its interactions both internally among employees and externally with stakeholders. At its core, corporate culture encompasses a set of shared norms and practices that shape the organizational identity and influence individual and collective behaviour<sup>12</sup>.*

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<sup>11</sup> Fisse, B: "Recent Developments in Corporate Criminal Law and Corporate Liability to Monetary Penalties" (1990)UNSWLJ 1 @ Pp.15-16

<sup>12</sup> See: Prof. Abiodun Amuda-Kannike SAN, "Corporate Culture and Its Impact on Intrapreneurship Management in Nigeria Economy". Presentation at the 11<sup>th</sup> Entrepreneurship & Security Conference/Induction/Graduation/Award Conferment Ceremony And 4<sup>th</sup> Mandatory Professional Administrative Training/Workshop, Held at Covenant University Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria, on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2024: <https://thenigerialawyer.com/corporate-culture-and-its-impact-on-intrapreneurship-management-in-nigeria-economy/>

The corporate culture of the Nigerian Judiciary should be passionately positive in its vision and mission. Deliberate and constant monitoring and benchmarking of judicial performance in efficiency and integrity with deterrent and incentive-driven reward system, would be recipe for rebranding the perceived communication of inefficiency and corrupt tendencies, with which the judicial system in Nigeria has been branded and labelled. Also of note is the unwittingly indulgence of use of adulterated version of complimentary greeting of Judicial Officers. Without tracing the origin, the creeping adulteration of 'My Lord' to 'Milord', 'Mee Lord', 'Malood', and other demeaning versions, particularly in official setting and correspondence, should be discouraged. Such adulterated and derogatory remark constitutes adverse Judicial Communication, as it tends to lower the Judiciary brand in the sight of the public, who are also quick to emulate the anomaly. Instead, there are alternative dignifying modes, such as: 'His Lordship', 'Your Lordship', etc.

*Corporate branding* is therefore *Judicial Communication* imperative for the Judiciary as an *Institution*, expressed through entrenched *corporate culture* in its *vision and mission statements* imbibed and practiced by Judicial Officers carrying out their duties in the legal and judicial system.

## 6. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, Communication plays pivotal role in shaping human activities and perceptions, as exchange of informative expressions are desirable and inevitable. The medium for communication is diverse and widening. Whether written, oral or by conduct, or even by visual displays and signs, ideas and information are made and exchanged, even on electronic/digital platforms. The various aspects and layers of Judicial Communication expose the dimensions of Judicial Communication, which ought to be taken seriously and put it in rightful place in Judicial Administration. The *2024 Roundtable for Heads of Courts, with the Theme: Strengthening the Legal and Judicial Systems in Nigeria*, indeed, provides the veritable forum to interrogate the emerging issues around the topic of Judicial Communication. The impact of social media on Judicial Communication in the evolving digital era has underscored the imperative of effective Judicial Communication, to reposition the Judiciary with transparent outlook. As the Judiciary's pre-eminent role in the society is rooted in public confidence, it is imperative that effective Judicial Communication is entrenched at various aspects and layers of Judicial Communication. Concerted efforts should therefore, be geared towards re-branding the perceived negative public branding of the Judiciary as communicated through judicial conducts which invariably condensed as what the Judiciary represents(the brand), albeit erroneously.

Guided embrace of the emerging communicative medium with strategic information management approach, and entrenched *corporate culture* reflective of the *corporate brand* of the *Judiciary*, is the way forward towards achieving effective Judicial Communication for strengthening the legal and judicial system in modern time!