



Appraisal of the Nigerian Postal Service's compliance with the Universal Postal Convention: Challenges and prospects

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Abstract

This study investigates the compliance of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) with the provisions of the Universal Postal Convention with a view to assessing the barriers hindering full compliance and options for enhanced conformity. The research problem arises from the seeming lacunae within Nigeria's international obligations under the Convention and domestic management patterns of NIPOST which have led to inefficiencies, non-compliance, and uncompetitiveness of international postal standards. The research aims to inquire into the levels of compliance by NIPOST, analyze legal and institutional barriers hindering the same, and propose meaningful reform. Through a doctrinal research methodology, this research analyzes relevant international documents, domestic legislation, policy documents, and scholarly publications. Finding reveal that while NIPOST has made some attempts at compliance with some parts of the provisions of the Universal Postal Convention, it is plagued with uncertainties of regulation, insufficiency of infrastructure, under-financing, and poor integration of technology, which aggregate to preclude efficient implementation. The research proposes across-the-board legal reforms for harmonization of Nigeria's postal legislation with international standards, higher financial investments by the state for postal infrastructures, and institutional reform to improve NIPOST's capability to implement its treaty obligations effectively.

Keywords: NIPOST, Mail, Postal Services, Universal Postal Union

Introduction

The Nigerian Postal Service or NIPOST serves as the primary public postal organization in Nigeria that was founded as a government corporation to provide secure, accessible, and

universal postal service to the Nigerian public. Based on the platforms of the colonial system and subsequently reorganized through a series of legislative reforms, NIPOST was founded as

a formally established extra-ministerial department under the Communications Ministry following the abolition of the Nigerian Posts and Telecommunications (P&T) Department in 1985 (Nwanolue B.O.G & V. Iwuoha, 2012). With a national designated operator's role, NIPOST operates to provide postal service in the entire country in line with the universal service obligation as such as the delivery of letters, packets, as well as express mail and the offering of financial services to the rural as well as urban communities. Through the decades, NIPOST has served as a central role in national development as a key force towards socio-economic inclusion, communications, as well as commerce in the unconnected as well as marginalized communities (Msosa, 2021).

The Universal Postal Convention (UPC) is one of the major legal tools of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a UN specialized agency established in 1874 to strengthen cooperation between the world's postal operators and standardize and develop international postal services (Volger, 2000). Amended periodically by means of UPU Congresses, the Convention establishes the obligations and rights of the member states and their designated operators to provide international postal services. It standardizes operations standards, technical standards, and security standards; ensures interoperability of postal infrastructures; and guarantees quality of service in cross-border postal services. The ultimate aim of the Convention is to achieve a single postal territory worldwide through standardization of services and standards to enable the free crossing of mail and packages between countries. Adherence to the UPC provisions

remains a necessary element in the assurance of mutual confidence, efficiency, and viability in the global postal system (Canton, 2021).

In the era of globalization and the increase in the need for efficient international logistics and communications, compliance to the Universal Postal Convention has emerged as a requirement for national postal administration. It serves as a benchmark by which the efficiency, quality, and reliability of international postal transactions are determined. For developing countries like Nigeria, adherence to the UPC is not only a legal requirement but a strategic necessity for involvement in the international postal market for the purposes of facilitating trade and service delivery as well as the satisfaction of the customers. Despite that, the Nigerian Postal Service has faced serious challenges that have questioned the extent to which the standards and provisions of the Convention have been complied with. These include infrastructural shortages, poor regulation systems, technological gaps, financial deficits as well as increasing competition by private courier operators (Crew, 1999). It's in this regard that this study shall assess the compliance of NIPOST to the Universal Postal Convention through examination of the institutional, legal and functional structures of NIPOST to ascertain the levels to which these match the expectations of the Convention as well as to unveil the practical barriers to complete compliance. The objective of this research is to critically assess the level of compliance of NIPOST to the UPC, identify the system problems that impede the compliance, and offer reform recommendations for the restructuring and improvement of the Nigerian postal sector

to adhere to international best practice (Madawaki, 2012).

Methodology

This study employs a doctrinal approach to the study of law that directs attention to the scientific examination and interpretation of legal rules, norms, and principles governing the operations of postal services both internationally and domestically. The doctrinal approach is appropriate to the study in the first place because it provides the window for the critical examination of the legal system governing the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) in respect to its responsibilities in line with the Universal Postal Convention (UPC). The approach involves identification of applicable legal norms, exposition thereof, and criticism of the same using the cloak of authoritative legal materials as the reference point. For these reasons, the study relies heavily on primary legal materials in the form of the foundation papers and conventions that have been adopted by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), that is to say, the Universal Postal Convention proper and its Final Protocols as well as the complementary regulation. These agreements determine the core standards, privileges, and obligations of member countries and their designated operators, for example, Nigeria and NIPOST, and are the standard that signifies compliance. The study also draws a comprehensive range of secondary sources in order to provide information to the analysis and frame the legal questions within the broader scholar and policy debate. Journal articles, textbooks, and conference papers on international law, public service provision, compliance regulation, and postal law are

utilized to provide theoretical insight and cross-comparative analysis.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical and conceptual foundation for this study includes an explication of the main concepts as well as application of key theories informing the understanding of postal service compliance within the international law regime of the Universal Postal Convention (UPC). Compliance refers to the extent to which the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) adapts to the operation, technical, regulation, and policy conditions of the UPC. Compliance entails conformity not only to international law obligations but also to the same in practice in the everyday activities of the designated national postal operator (Agboti et al, 2024). Compliance implies a positive institutional reaction towards international standards, consistent supply of service in line with agreed standards, and ability to deliver performance objectives as outlined by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) (Antai et al, 2024). Compliance in measurement focuses on the quality of service, reliability in the delivery of international mail, speed of delivery of international mail, cooperation in foreign postal administration, client satisfaction, and technological upgradation (Utile, & Zayol, 2020).

The second underlying principle in this study is the universal service obligation (USO), which establishes the undertaking by national postal operators to make core postal products and services accessible to all citizens across the country at a reasonable price irrespective of location (Antai, 2024). The USO underlies the UPC and stems from the postulate that postal products and services form a public good to

which everyone should not discriminate. The USO becomes even more significant in developing countries like Nigeria due to geographical, socio-economic, and infrastructural discrepancies inclined to discourage equal access to logistic and communications services (Cremer, 1998). NIPOST as the country operator for Nigeria has the obligation to provide a core range of postal products and services-including delivery of letters, handling of parcels and financial services-at the same price and quality to the whole of the country, including disadvantaged and rural communities. A performance of the USO serves as the ultimate test of UPC compliance and proof of the government's seriousness towards inclusive development and national integration.

Other pertinent concept to this research include postal liberalization, that is the opening up of the postal market to competition to allow private operators to offer services that have traditionally been monopolized by national operators (Antai et al, 2025). While liberalization ensures efficiency and innovation, it imposes new pressures on the national operators like NIPOST to perform their universal service obligations in the face of mounting competition (Borsenberger, 2010). Interoperability is another important concept that refers to the technical and functional compatibility of postal systems within the member countries to facilitate the free exchange and delivery of letters and packages between countries. UPC has a role in setting the rules and standards that provide for interoperability between the member states (Lisboa and Soares, 2014).

Theoretically, the research draws on institutional theory, compliance theory, and

global public goods theory to provide a solid theoretical foundation. Institutional theory purports that organizations, including government institutions like NIPOST, operate in a system of formal rules and informal norms that shape their performance as well as their behavior. It highlights the role played by legal mandates, rule-making regimes, bureaucratic cultures, and the expectations of stakeholders towards the shaping of institutional responses to external pressure as in the form of international agreement (Zucker, 1987). Institutional theory serves NIPOST in illustrating the role played by organizational architecture and national law-making machinery in the extent and nature of compliance to the UPC. The compliance theory in the shape of the rational choice and the managerial models offers insightful explanation as to why institutions and states comply (or do not comply) with international legal regimes (Andenas & Bjorge, 2015). The rational choice model assumes compliance to be a cost-benefit computation in which institutions balance the reward of compliance to international standards against the cost of implementation (Thompson, 2009). It differs with the managerial model that highlights capacity constraints—such as scarce resources, poor technical capacity, and poor institutional arrangements—as primary barriers to compliance. Both models are involved in the consideration of the challenges facing NIPOST in fulfilling its international responsibilities (Aidonojie et al, 2024).

International postal services and more particularly those secured under the Universal Postal Convention are theorized under global public goods as goods and services for the universal good of all countries and peoples.

Postal communication and mail exchange across borders in particular are for the global good insofar as it promotes commerce, social relations, and exchange of information (Antai & Aidonojie, 2024). Global public goods theory highlights the rationale for a global public good regime such as the UPU and the imperative of collective adherence to the UPC for the upkeep of a single and operational global postal territory (Seo, 2006). Together, these concepts and theories project a general paradigm for explaining the legal, institutional, and functional dynamics of NIPOST participation in the Universal Postal Convention. They form the rational basis for determining the degree of compliance, diagnosing the underlying challenges, and offering practicable solutions towards enhancing Nigeria's contribution to the world postal family (Antai et al, 2025).

Legal Framework

The legal framework for the compliance of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) to the Universal Postal Convention (UPC) comprises international and national legal instruments that in totality provide the rights and duties as well as the operation directive of postal services within Nigeria and worldwide. Internationally, the UPC remains the primary legal instrument that regulates the delivery of postal services by member countries of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a specialized body of the United Nations established in 1874 through the Treaty of Bern (Volger, 2000). The Convention as amended periodically in the UPU Congresses lays claim to standardise as well as regulate international postal services through the creation of a comprehensive regime that unites the obligations of designated postal operators, promotes cooperation, and ensures the efficient delivery of mail, packets and financial services

across national borders (Burri, 2013). The primary aim of the UPC under Article 2 of the convention is to realize the creation of a single postal territory through harmonisation of the postal policy, postal practice and quality standards among its 192 member countries and in the process ensuring universality of access to efficient and accessible postal services (Rodríguez & Domínguez, 2010).

Under the Convention, the member states have obligations to abide by a broad range of duties that are aimed to support the evolution of a secure, stable, and customer-oriented international postal system. These duties as enumerated under Article 3 and 4 of the UPC include the commitment to offer a universal postal service to all inhabitants in their territory, guarantee the quality and reliability of service, promote international postal exchanges of letters and other postal products, and the application of common technical standards in order to enable the interoperability of postal networks (Aidonojie et al, 2024). It is the responsibility of the member states to abide by and implement UPU rules in respect to terminal dues, customs procedures, data exchange, and innovation in the services, and actively support the financial and administrative equilibrium of the UPU as provided for under Article 6 to 10. For the designated postal operators by their country or territory, as the case may be, compliance with these duties is not a matter of discretion but a condition of membership of the international postal system with direct ramifications for Nigeria's connectivity to the world, trading logistics, and communications system (Canton, 2021).

The UPC contains several key provisions that have direct application to compliance review of

member states. These include service quality provisions that compel designated operators to meet specific performance standards for delivery times, treatment of registered mail, and complaint resolution. These standards are monitored by independent measurement systems operated by the UPU that audit the efficiency and reliability of international exchange of mail. Interoperability is another critical element under which the member states have to implement the use of standard address systems, bar coding and data transmission techniques, and customs clearance through the use of electronics in order to coordinate with other national postal administrations (Antai et al, 2024). Security also forms a core part of the Convention under which the designated operators have to implement and provide measures to safeguard the integrity of the postal supply chain against threats of mail robbery, forgery, and carriage of prohibited or hazardous articles. These legal standards are reinforced by other protocols, the UPU Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council decisions and regulation in general that taken together set the parameters for the application of the Convention provisions (Allen, 2014).

In Nigeria, the institutional and legal framework for postal services and compliance by NIPOST to the UPC are found in a series of domestic legislations, policy statements and institutional arrangements. The Nigerian Postal Service Act and the Nigerian Communications Act provide the underlying legal foundation upon which NIPOST exists as well as the joint legal mandate for NIPOST to provide national postal services in Nigeria (Antai et al, 2025). NIPOST was established as the public postal service and charged with the functions of designing national postal infrastructural

facilities, delivering mail, offering financial and courier services, and acting for Nigeria in international postal operations, including in the UPU. The Nigerian Postal Service Act establishes the statutory functions of NIPOST, including ensuring equal access to postal services in the entire country and the socio-economic integration of Nigerian people through communications services (Akwule, 1991).

Institutionally, NIPOST reports to the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy as well as to institutions responsible for regulation and policy-making, i.e., the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). NIPOST has also reorganized in the recent past to guarantee efficiency, revenue generation, as well as alignment to international standards, e.g., unbundling of its financial services as a standalone body (PostCash), efforts towards digitalization, and international postal stakeholders' alliances (Komolafe et al, 2024). However, the efficacy of NIPOST's legal framework has also suffered due to antiquated legislation, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and ineffective enforcement mechanisms that collectively discourage the observance of the UPC in its entirety. To that end, NIPOST compliance must therefore also be assessed against twin contexts of international obligation under the UPU and local institutional and legal environments that define and frame its activities (Antai, 2024). The levels to which NIPOST has internalized the UPC provisions into its service delivery practice and policy norms determine the levels to which Nigeria remains a country wedded to international cooperation as well as the competency of

national institutions in embracing international postal standards. Strengthening the legal and regulative environment, the modernization of postal infrastructure as well as institutional coordination are hence core to building compliance capacity as well as to ensuring Nigeria remains a dynamic and functional player in the international postal network (Nwosu et al, 2021).

Assessment of NIPOST's Compliance with the Universal Postal Convention

Assessment of Nigerian Postal Service's (NIPOST) compliance to the Universal Postal Convention (UPC) necessarily entails a critical examination of its legal and functional structure, the extent to which it complies with the technical and functional standards prescribed by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), and the extent of its institutional preparedness and policy concurrency to international postal obligations. Central to this analysis is the fact that compliance to the UPC transcends a matter of form but entails a pledge to a country's integration into the international postal system, the capacity for the rendering of efficient service, and the capacity for safeguarding the right of users in cross-border communications. The Nigerian Postal Service Act forms the legal foundation for NIPOST's operations as the national designated carrier that has the statutory function to establish the national system of postal services in Nigeria. The Nigerian law offers a basis for compliance to international postal regulation but has also been criticized as being archaic and poorly harmonized to the developing standards of the UPC. In addition, although the Nigerian Communications Act and sector-specific legislation provide complementary governance and assistance, the fact that there has not been

a single and latest postal law specific to the dynamic exigency of international postal service represents a structural disadvantage to total compliance (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

In terms of performance in service delivery, NIPOST has attempted to improve its competency in line with the standards of the UPC. These extend from delivery times of the mail to international mail handling efficiency, real-time tracking systems, interoperability of the postal system, security of the mail, and responsiveness to complaints. It is a challenge to render these standards on a consistent basis. For example, even though NIPOST has adopted digital innovations in the form of the implementation of postcode systems as well as utilization of electronic tracking of packages, these facilities lack a consistent performance across all geographical locations in the country, most notably the rural and poor coverage areas (Antai et al, 2025). The delivery times for the mail, most notably international letters, fall below the performance standards in the UPU standards due to logistical inefficiencies, inefficiencies in the transport infrastructure of the country, and inefficiencies in coordination among customs and other agencies involved in cross-border clearance of the mail. This poses the question of whether NIPOST is capable of delivering within a specified time and in a secure and reliable manner in line with the Convention (Nwosu, 2021).

Another area of evaluation entails NIPOST institutional preparedness and policy alignment to the UPC provisions and the UPC principles. Institutional preparedness not only entails the presence of mandates in law but also the presence of human capacity in the form of skilled human capital, technological

infrastructure, working procedures and good leadership that collectively facilitate compliance (Antai et al, 2024). In respect of this, NIPOST has attempted a series of restructuring efforts including the unbundling of financial services, adopting the use of agency-based operations, and collaboration with private logistics companies to facilitate service delivery. Despite these reforms showing positive signs of improvement, these have not also made significant or far-reaching institutional commitments to enhance compliance in the real sense. Policy alignment, however, requires that national strategies, areas of investment and regulative strategies capture the international targets of the UPU such as promotion of inclusive communications, driving digital transformation, and the construction of a secure and sustainable postal service (Aidonojie, et al, 2024). In Nigeria, the process of developing postal policy has largely followed sectoral innovation and the result has been strategic objectives not aligned to realities on the ground. Furthermore, NIPOST's poor representation in the UPU technical committees, decision-making panels, and data reporting channels also erodes the visibility and credibility of Nigeria in the international postal market (Ukwandu & Ijere, 2020).

Case studies and evidence established through anecdotes provide real-life illustrations of NIPOST performance in international mail delivery and how it measures up to the UPC. For example, handling international packets in the Lagos International Mail Processing Centre is characterized by inefficiencies in the form of coordination bottlenecks between NIPOST and customs agencies, a shortage of adequate automation, and service bottlenecks that occur periodically and occasion delay and client

dissatisfaction (Nwanolue, & Iwuoha, 2012). In a comparative analysis, international postal service operators in South Africa (Post Office of South Africa) and Kenya (Postal Corporation of Kenya), for instance, have made more solid strides towards compliance in the form of investing in infrastructure, pursuing e-commerce-oriented service delivery models, and international cooperation. NIPOST performance remains patchy in the sense that advancement in urban areas has not necessarily been accompanied by the corresponding developments in the semi-urban and rural areas. Another example that serves to underscore the point are the tracking of registered mail, for which clients frequently complain about the unavailability of real-time information, a service that serves to increase transparency and the building of confidence in cross-border postal flows (Laseinde & Mpofu, 2017).

Despite the efforts made by NIPOST in the harmonization of its activities in respect to the Universal Postal Convention provisions, yawning gaps in areas of legal modernization, operation efficiency, institutional capacity building, and policy coherence persist. These undermine Nigeria's ability to accomplish effectively its international postal obligations as well as derive maximum socio-economic value out of an efficient postal system. In order to enable more effective compliance, there exists a need that all-round reforms are instituted in enactment of modernized postal legislation in Nigeria, investment in infrastructure and human capacity building, enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, and participation in the international postal governance system. Only through a concerted effort shall NIPOST develop into a modern

efficient as well as compliant international postal carrier that serves its role in the Universal Postal Convention (Arum et al,2024).

Challenges to Compliance

Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST), as a statutory organization that forms part of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), has myriad problems that have tremendously hindered compliance with the Universal Postal Convention (UPC). Top of the list of the myriad problems is the endemic shortages in infrastructures that impart taint on the quality of the postal service in the country and consistency of the service. Nigeria's postal infrastructure in the rural and semi-urban parts of the country remains grossly underdeveloped in infrastructure, road network and support systems. Inefficiencies in sorting and delivery due to the absence of well-facilitated post offices as well as sorting and delivery centers have hindered the capacity of NIPOST to deliver within UPC-prescribed deadlines and the levels of efficiency. Rural areas still have no access to the rudimentary postal service because there are no proximate postal offices or functional delivery systems in operation to deliver the service to the areas as commanded by the spirit of the Convention in the principle of the universal service obligation. This infrastructural shortage is compounded by lack of maintenance of the existing infrastructure and the use of obsolete machinery and the abandonment of investment in modernization efforts to enhance the efficiency levels as expected internationally for the postal service (Olayiwola & Adeleye 2005).

Added to the challenge of infrastructure are the regulatory and policy incompatibilities that have plagued Nigeria's postal sector for

decades. There exists a real incompatibility between national postal policy and international postal obligations because of partly archaic legislation and patchy institutional arrangements. The current institutional framework for NIPOST remains imperfectly tuned to the innovations and the rules of regulation that have recently entered versions of the UPC, and areas of compliance deficits in areas of operation and accountability persist (Anifowose et al, 2024). In addition, the absence of a clear and effective postal regulator has triggered duplicity of role and functions among the stakeholders involved, NIPOST, the Communications Ministry, and other agencies. The policy vacuum strangles coordination and efficiency in compliance efforts, and the repetitious flip-flop in government policy tends to breed uncertainty and complacency in efforts of the sector to adapt. In addition, the slow pace of legislative reform halted the application of visionary postal policy to reform NIPOST's mandate towards the new advances in the international postal system (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

Finance and technological limitations are another major hindrance to NIPOST compliance with the Universal Postal Convention. The postal industry has suffered for decades from chronic under-funding to limit its capacity to modernize the infrastructure, invest in technologies, and expand the scope of services. Budget allocation to the postal service are generally insufficient and irregular, and NIPOST depends heavily on low internally generated revenues that hardly suffice to finance far-sweeping reforms (Antai et al, 2024). It has consequently followed a slow and patchy pace to implement innovative technologies such as Automated Mail

Processing systems, advanced tracking systems, and combined logistics systems. The overwhelming majority of NIPOST working processes remain manual, hence the inefficiencies and inaccuracies in data that compromise the quality of services as well as client satisfaction. In the context of a highly digitized global postal environment, this technological deficit constitutes a serious handicap for NIPOST in catching up to UPU standards in digital transformation, integration in e-commerce, as well as concerted international cooperation (Oluyinka et al, 2013).

Training and human capacity gaps also encroach on the ability of NIPOST to deliver under the UPC. Despite having a huge human capital base within the organization, the professional capacity, exposure, and professional training to manage modern postal operations and international standards are scarce for the bulk of the staff. The absence of technical skills in areas of digital logistics, cross-border regulation, and quality assurance impinges on the efficiency in the delivery of NIPOST services (Ogu, et al, 2024). Opportunities for professional advancement through continuous development and international collaboration are poor and few, and when opportunities for training do exist, these tend to date and not to internationally competitive practice standards. This human capacity gap manifests in mistakes, inefficiency in delivery time, and poor client handling that in turn affect the global reputation of Nigeria's postal services (Ugal & Betiang, 2009).

Corruption and inefficiency also have a debilitating effect in weakening compliance. Instances of misappropriation of revenue,

diversion of mail, disappearance of packets, and poor maintenance of records in NIPOST have recurred in the past. Such malpractice not only erodes public confidence in the postal system but also violates the underlying values of openness to information, accountability, and reliability of service ingrained in the UPC (Ogu et al, 2025). Lack of stringent internal checks and functional disciplinary systems also reinforces a culture of impunity in which workers are not usually held accountable for negligence or indiscipline. Inefficiency also seeps through administrative processes, procurement activities as well as service delivery to the clients, and causes system-wide delay as well as service failure below international standards (Eke, 2016).

Lastly, the advent of private courier operators and market liberalization have challenged NIPOST's permanence and monopoly in the postal market. Market deregulation has also introduced a plethora of private operators more efficient, innovative, and customer-oriented and have captured a huge chunk of the postal and logistics market. While competition will challenge improvement, in the Nigerian context, it has only served to demonstrate NIPOST's institutional weaknesses and reduce its market share and revenue base still further. Such private operators are not bound by the same universality of service requirement to which NIPOST is bound and therefore concentrate on profitable markets and services and marginalize NIPOST to the sidelines and establish a two-tier postal system (Jufri et al, 2025). The lack of a level playing field for regulation also means that NIPOST has to contend with rules not enforced in the same proportion to the private operators, reducing its

capacity to deliver the UPC on a level playing field.

In fact, infrastructural decline, loopholes in legislation, financial and technological limitations, lack of manpower, both internal corruption and pressures of privatization have collectively hindered NIPOST compliance with the Universal Postal Convention. These necessitate sweeping reforms, strategic investment, and institutional consolidation to have Nigeria's postal service achieve international obligations as well as remain a stakeholder in the worldwide postal system (Kalejaiye, 2013).

Comparative Analysis

In examining the compliance of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) to the Universal Postal Convention (UPC), a comparative analysis of fellow Universal Postal Union member countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana provide useful lessons on how other nations with comparable socio-economic and developmental conditions have adapted to the compliance issue and reform challenges of their postal institutions. Such comparative insights are important in determining workable solutions as well as lessons that would guide NIPOST towards enhanced compliance to the UPC provisions. The South African postal administration by the South African Post Office (SAPO) has also faced most of the same institutional and structural challenges that have confronted NIPOST, including deficits in financing, infrastructural decline, and liberalization of the market. However, South Africa has managed to utilize regulatory restructuring and technological integration in order to strengthen compliance to UPC standards. Among the major efforts has been

the corporatization of the SAPO that changed it to a commercial-based public enterprise from the traditional government department. The corporatization process allowed the SAPO to have clearer accountability, management independence, and client-oriented approach in service provision. Further, South Africa initiated a wholesale digital postal vision that incorporates e-commerce services, digital addressing platforms, and e-money transfers—strategies that capture the UPC emphasis on innovation and interoperability. In spite of still having to deal with challenges, the strategic vision and policy frameworks in SAPO have established a favorable environment for compliance that Nigeria ought to adopt within its own distinct legal and socio-economic realities (Kalejaiye, 2013).

Kenya offers a compelling case study of the ability of legal and institutional reform to induce compliance with international postal standards. The Postal Corporation of Kenya (PCK) was comprehensively reorganized following the enactment of the Kenya Communications Act that anchored in law an independent and separate postal and telecommunication regulation. Such clear regulation facilitated the formation of a competitive and innovation-based environment (Umo et al, 2024). PCK also implemented a universal service obligation (USO) fund funded through the contribution of private operators to cross-subsidize postal services in rural and unserved areas—initiatives that prove to increase inclusivity as well as facilitate compliance as a universality principle of the UPC. Monetary and logistics institution partnership also emerged in the Kenyan postal system as a value that sustainability and compliance complement. Kenya's experience

exemplifies the potency of regulatory vision, public-private partnership and service diversification to strengthen efficiency of the postal system as well as international compliance (Chaudoin, 2016).

Ghana's postal sector, operated by Ghana Post, is an example of incremental but focused reform through policy innovation and the adoption of technology. In a response to the limitations of its traditional postal model, Ghana Post began a digital rebirth programme that saw the launch of the GhanaPostGPS that assigns a unique digital address to each location in Ghana. The initiative revolutionized delivery accuracy, planning logistics and delivery to customers, strengthening the country's interoperability in international postal systems as envisaged in the UPC. Apart from this effort, Ghana Post also established internet-based tracking and financial service platforms as well as customer engagement in support of the UPU's vision of superior quality of service and digitalization. Despite the still-untackled challenges of Ghana relating to financial shortages as well as human capacity, its forward-looking efforts in the reform of the postal sector as well as government support in postal sector reform serve as a good case study on how focused investment and strategic innovation support the minimization of compliance gaps (Ankrah, 2015).

The combined South African, Kenyan and Ghanaian experience offers a package of lessons to Nigeria. First and foremost are far-reaching legal reform and institutional certainty. The nations that have modernized their postal law, established independent regulators and defined the functions of key players have found themselves better placed to

fulfill their UPC commitments. Second are innovation and digitalisation (Izevbuwa et al, 2024). Whether through digital addressing systems; e-platforms for e-commerce; or financial service integration, these nations vividly demonstrate that technological solutions are capable of bridging infrastructural and operational weaknesses historically prejudicing postal advancement. Thirdly, the contribution of sustainable finance cannot be exaggerated. Mechanisms in the form of universal service funds; mutual collaboration between the postal service and the private sector; or diversification of services guarantee that postal operators have the financial clout to deliver to international standards. Finally, human capital investment—through staff training, up-skilling as well as global collaboration—has acted as a common denominator for postal systems that have made quantifiable advancements. While Nigeria has much in common with its African counterparts, the comparative analysis illustrates how through concerted reform efforts and investment in the change process as well as careful observance of international standards of practice, NIPOST can make giant leaps in compliance with the Universal Postal Convention (Chinweze et al, 2024). The successes and setbacks of similarly situated countries offer a viable blueprint and serve to validate the hypothesis that NIPOST reformation not only would be desirable but possible based on the right combination of political will, legislative expediency, technological adjustment, and stakeholder acceptance.

Prospects and Opportunities

The destiny of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) is filled to the brim with

opportunities and potential that, strategically utilized, not only increase compliance in the Universal Postal Convention (UPC), but also establish the Nigerian postal system as a global competitive force in the world postal system (Adelakun, 2009). These potentials are solidly rooted in the potential for policy and legislative reform, the increasing role of digital transformation and innovation, enhanced coordination in the Universal Postal Union (UPU), public-private partnerships, regional integration, and a commitment for capacity building and infrastructural investment. One of the brightest spots for hope remains in the potential for policy and regulation reform.

A good and forward-looking legislative framework is key to getting Nigeria's postal service up to international standards and practice (Ufua, 2021). There appears to need to be far-reaching reform to modernize the postal sector to accommodate the realities of the 21st century in a way that remains compliant to the standards of the UPU. Clarity of regulation and consistency of policy, including in the functions of NIPOST, structures of accountability and institutional functions, will be vital (Kisubi et al, 2024). The creation of an independent postal regulator may serve to go some way to eliminate inefficiencies and promote transparency and a favorable environment for enhanced working practice. A transparent definition for the use of the Universal Service Obligation (USO), to accord with the ideals of inclusivity and service to the farthest reaches of the nation, would do much to eliminate the very root of the UPC. This reform of the system of regulation would also serve to provide a solid foundation for the efficient implementation of technological advances as well as the utilization

of both local and foreign investment within the sector (Finger, 2006).

The role of postal innovation and digital transformation provides NIPOST a strategic opportunity to enhance service levels and standards of operation. Across the world, postal systems are increasingly depending on technology to maximize operations, enhance customer experience, and raise efficiency (Aidonjio et al, 2025). Track-and-follow digital platforms, e-commerce enablement platforms, and financial inclusion platforms (such as postal banking) have emerged as the cornerstone to the excellence of modern postal systems. NIPOST can utilize the explosive growth of e-commerce in Nigeria by enhancing digital infrastructure and offering services that cater to the needs of a technologically savvy population (Antai et al, 2024). The use of intelligent address systems, automated sorting centers, and digital payment systems can maximize service delivery timelines and accuracy, putting NIPOST in line with international standards and attuning it to global postal standards. Furthermore, the growth of the digital economy also presents the opportunity to expand NIPOST's share in the provision of secure and efficient digital communications, for example, the provision of certified e-delivery services. Innovations such as the use of the blockchain system for traceable and secure financial transactions and the use of digital postal services have the capacity to catapult NIPOST's role in the international postal family to the next level (Otsetova, 2019).

Deepening Nigeria's involvement in the Universal Postal Union (UPU) offers another vital potential for the future expansion and compliance of NIPOST. Membership in the

UPU entails a very rewarding membership in the organization. The UPU extends technical assistance to Nigeria in the form of capacity building as well as international networking that NIPOST would use to eliminate its weaknesses in operations as well as to embrace new trends in the international postal market (Wakili, 2025). It also enhances NIPOST's ability to access international best practice in the sector, regulation support as well as the capacity for mutual cooperation for expansion. It opens up NIPOST to engage in UPU schemes such as the E-Post scheme, postal data systems worldwide, and the building of a world e-commerce logistics system. With its active role in the UPU's technical committees and fora, NIPOST shall have an input voice in policy-making directly impacting its working conditions to enable it to also be a proactive actor on the international postal market (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

Public-private partnerships as well as regional integration also provide promising avenues for NIPOST's efficiency as well as compliance in operations. Involving the private sector through structured partnerships will enable NIPOST to tap the skills, technical knowledge as well as efficiency-oriented strategies of private courier as well as logistics operators. Such partnerships may include participation in collaborative construction of infrastructure, digital delivery as well as even the construction of logistics hubs for cross-border trade that will enhance NIPOST to deliver to international standards (Antai, 2025). Partnerships with multilateral corporates as well as logistics operators will also support the modernization of NIPOST's technological infrastructure as well as the capacity of the service to provide value-added services to include international express mail,

secure financial services as well as digital mail. Regionally, NIPOST will benefit through participation in larger African postal programmes, including the African Postal Financial Services Initiative as well as the development of pan-African e-commerce as well as logistics solutions. Regional integration not only has the ability to enhance efficiencies in operations but also to make Nigeria a center of gravity in African postal activities as well as achieve economies of scale as well as cooperation with other African postal operators (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012).

Capacity building and infrastructure investment form the cornerstone to NIPOST long-term conformity to the Universal Postal Convention. Capacity building of NIPOST officials through international cooperation, capacity building through workshops of a technical nature as well as through capacity building through seminars would be highly beneficial in arming the staff to face the realities of the modern-day postal service. These seminars should not only include technical competence but also international conventions, use of digital platforms as well as care to the clients (Antai et al, 2025). Alternatively, significant investment in infrastructure forms a cornerstone to NIPOST activities in upgrading the level of service to international standards. Investments for the construction of automated sorting centers, newly refurbished posting centers, efficient transportation systems as well as secure delivery systems would make the bottlenecks as well as inefficiencies a thing of the past (Antai et al, 2024). Public as well as private sector investment in addition to international support can supply investment towards these infrastructural developments to enable NIPOST to effectively face bulk loads of

mail as well as packages in the e-commerce environment (Ikharehon, 2017).

NIPOST today has a chance to capitalize on a series of opportunities to reform, innovate, and transform the way it operates in alignment with the Universal Postal Convention. By reforming regulation, innovating through the use of technology, expanding its engagement in the UPU, capitalizing on public-private partnerships, and investing in capacity building and infrastructure, NIPOST has the potential to overcome its present challenges and join the ranks of a globally competitive postal service. These opportunities not only guarantee closer compliance with international postal standards but also promise Nigeria the potential for leveraging its postal system as a driver of economic prosperity, digital inclusion, and African regional integration (Ekpenisi et al, 2024).

Conclusion

In summary, the research has provided an overall assessment of the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) and conformity with the Universal Postal Convention (UPC). The evidence has established the daunting issues facing NIPOST in conformity with UPC's operation, technical, and legal standards. These range from infrastructural constraints, defective regulation mechanisms, financing gaps, and human capital deficits that collectively impose pressure on NIPOST's ability to conform to international postal standards. Apart from that, NIPOST's performance on international mail delivery, conformity with international postal networks, and service delivery has been spotty, registering a discernable lag with UPC standards of conformity. On the other hand, the research presents a number of hopeful

opportunities for reform from upgrading regulation, digitization, and regional integration that could improve NIPOST's capability to adopt and meet those international standards at a later date (Edet et al, 2022).

It is not enough to stress the necessity for adherence to the Universal Postal Convention. As far as NIPOST is concerned, adherence to the UPC is not only a legal requirement but a strategy for ensuring the efficiency and competitiveness of Nigeria's postal service at the international level. The UPC has to be obeyed to ensure the improvement of service delivery, foster international co-operation, and ensure the credibility of postal services that are crucial for national growth and international business transactions (Antai et al, 2025). The UPC provides a benchmark for functional compliance that enables countries to deliver reliable and safe postal services that facilitate the performance of business, e-commerce, communication, and public services. Adherence of NIPOST to the UPC, thus, will not only improve the growth of the postal service in Nigeria but the overall goal of ensuring international postal efficiency and co-operation as well. Considering the future of NIPOST within the international postal network, there is optimism, but there is also a need to accept that there is a long way to go. Opportunities for growth, especially for digitization, public-private partnerships, and reforms in regulation, present a hopeful direction for NIPOST to upgrade its operations and increase its services. With the proper combination of political resolve, strategic investments, and policy reforms, NIPOST has the potential to overcome its current challenges and become a strength within the African postal network.

The future of NIPOST depends heavily on how well it adapt and cope with the new era of international postal services, from digitization of communications, e-commerce, and carriage innovation (Akpanke et al, 2022). By increasing its involvement within the Universal Postal Union and postal unions within the region, NIPOST has the potential to benefit from international expertise, technology innovation, and cooperative programs that will improve its performance efficiency and international recognition. Finally, while the challenges for NIPOST are daunting, the potential to come into conformity with the Universal Postal Convention is a self-evident course of action. NIPOST's strategic alignment with international postal standards not only will improve its conformity with the UPC but serve as a catalyst for broader national development that puts Nigeria on a higher profile on postal and trade networks across the globe. The future of NIPOST within the world postal system is found within its ability to embrace reform, leverage technological innovation, and unite with public and private partners. NIPOST's journey toward full compliance with the Universal Postal Convention is thus not a matter of meeting international commitments—rather, it is a matter of positioning Nigeria to thrive within a dynamically evolving world postal environment (Antai, et al, 2025).

Recommendation

Based on the study findings, a series of recommendations could be made on how the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) could improve its concordance with the Universal Postal Convention (UPC) and overall service delivery, operational efficiency, and competitiveness on the world stage. These

recommendations cover issues of policy and legal reforms, institutional capacity building measures, public enlightenment, investments in information and communication technology (ICT) and logistics, etc. First and foremost are legal and policy reforms needed for the harmonization of NIPOST operations with the UPC standards. The reforms should be given priority by the government of Nigeria to revise the existing postal laws and regulations aimed at bridging the gaps and challenges in the postal sector. This involves the formulation of a clear and specific postal policy that emphasizes the importance of USO, the services' quality, and efficiency. The reform should also establish an independent postal regulator with the mandate to ensure compliance, performance standards monitoring, and promoting postal industry transparency. The redefinition of the mandate for NIPOST should also be done to position it to respond to new needs of a modern postal service, e.g., the provision for e-commercials and digital services. There should be legal reforms for the purposes of instituting mechanisms for addressing new issues like postal cybersecurity, protection of data, and postal international dispute resolution. At the same time, there should be constant liaison with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to ensure that Nigerian postal legislation remains responsive to international standards to enable the establishment of a dynamic environment for the growth and development of NIPOST's services.

One of the main areas that requires particular attention is building institutions at NIPOST. To be able to respond adequately to the operating requirements of the UPC, NIPOST has to be sufficiently resourced at both the organizational and human capital levels. There has to be a

capacity-building programme with both technical and management courses for NIPOST employees. This will bridge existing gaps at the organization and equip employees with knowledge they need to deal with modern postal network intricacies, such as handling modern postal network intricacies, conducting digital services, mail sorting technology, and international mail delivery standards. Also, promoting a culture of innovation and improvement at NIPOST will be instrumental to taking its overall performance levels to a higher scale. This is so by way of leadership development courses, strategic plan retreats, and partnership with international postal organizations that offer corresponding training and technical assistance. Also, a call for implementing streamlined and transparent organizational setup, clearly outlined functions and duties, shall raise NIPOST's ability to carry out its mandate with an efficient and transparent way.

Public sensitization and stakeholder engagement are also key components of ensuring NIPOST compliance with the UPC and postal industry sustainability in Nigeria. The Nigerian government, through NIPOST, could engage actively with all the varied players, that is, the regulating authorities, the civil society organizations, the customers, and the private sector operators, to come up with consensual solutions to the challenges facing the postal industry. The stakeholders could come with intelligent inputs on the real challenges facing NIPOST and present innovative solutions that could improve the delivery of services. Public consultation, workshops with the players, and public forums should be carried out on a periodic basis on the issues of the state of postal services, regulation

reforms, and expectations for services. Public sensitization programs are also required to educate citizens on the contribution of NIPOST to the citizens' way of life, the benefits of postal services, and improvement of the postal sector for individual and business gain. Public sensitization programs and constructive engagement with the players would enable NIPOST to develop credibility and get support for its agenda for modernization of the postal sector for the delivery of a responsive and accountable postal service to the citizens of Nigeria.

Investment in ICT and logistics is likely the most crucial section with regard to the success of NIPOST in the future and with regard to becoming UPC-compliant. Given the rapid way technology and e-commerce are advancing, NIPOST ought to invest in new ICT equipment to facilitate the automation of services, improve customer services, and ensure security delivery, on-time delivery, and efficient delivery of mail.. Upgrading existing facilities and the implementation of automated mail delivery, tracking, and sorting arrangements will significantly improve the ability of NIPOST to keep up with international postal standards and reduce its delivery time for services.

NIPOST needs to invest in the design of e-commerce postal integration sites where customers can track, purchase services, and pay online. Also, designing a highly efficient national and international network based on public and private investments is crucial in making NIPOST efficient enough to keep up with postal delivery times and standards of mail pricing, security, and delivery time globally. Investment in logistic centers, distribution

centers, and networks of transportation will improve the ability of NIPOST to keep up with the increased volume of mail and packets due to the growth of e-commerce. To overcome infrastructural constraints, NIPOST needs to collaborate with the government ministries and private sector partners to establish modern postal infrastructures, mail hubs at regional levels, modern sorting centers, and secured delivery networks. The PPPs would be a channel for the government financing the establishment of such an infrastructure by utilizing the technology, funding, and expertise of the private sector to achieve rapid returns. The PPPs may be further escalated to co-venture partnerships for building postal services platforms of a modern era, to establish a better integrated and competitive postal network on national and international standards. Initiatives toward financial sustainability based on new revenue streams—such as postal banks and financial services—may allow NIPOST to invest in long-term development of the infrastructures without unnecessarily utilizing public funds.

For NIPOST to become full compliant with the Universal Postal Convention and render world-class postal services, there is a need for a broad strategy that involves legal reforms, development of human capacity, realignment of stakeholders, and massive investments in technology and infrastructure. With attention being given to those areas, NIPOST would be able to modernize services, place much higher on international postal rankings, and serve the Nigerian people better. The integrated strategy would not only be beneficial for Nigeria's image within the world postal community but benefit Nigeria's overall development agenda by being a better participant within

international networks of trade and communications. With the necessary reforms and investments, NIPOST could be one of Africa's top postal authorities, promoting regional integration, innovation, and regional growth within the region.

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