

## **Bridging the Competence Gap in Ugandan Undergraduate Legal Education**

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### **Abstract**

Curriculum design and development are critical for ensuring the quality and relevance of higher education. In Uganda, undergraduate legal education continues to rely on non-competence-based curricula, with each law school or faculty independently designing its own programme, which is then approved by the National Council for Higher Education and the Law Council. The problem is that, despite Uganda's shift to competence-based curricula at the ordinary secondary level, law schools or faculties continue to offer fragmented, theory-oriented programs. As a result, undergraduates possess strong theoretical knowledge but lack essential professional competencies such as advocacy, legal-drafting, ethical-reasoning, problem-solving, client-management, and critical-thinking. Consequently, law-undergraduates are inadequately prepared for contemporary legal practice, limiting the effectiveness of undergraduate-legal-education and Uganda's compliance with the United-Nations-Sustainable-Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education. The study aims to examine the structure of undergraduate-bachelor of law curricula in Uganda, identify gaps arising from non-competence-based-bachelor of law-curricula, and propose reforms necessary to establish a competence-based-bachelor of law-curriculum aligned with SDG 4. The research questions are: What is the current structure of undergraduate bachelor of law curricula in Ugandan-universities? What gaps arise from non-competence-based bachelor of law-curricula? And what reforms are necessary to establish a competence-based-bachelor of law-curricular aligned with SDG 4? Guided by an interdisciplinary-perspective drawing on educational-theory, sociological-theory, and human-capital-theory, the research is qualitative and doctrinal in nature, employing desktop-review of scholarly articles and reports. Findings indicate that non-competence-based-curricula constrain professional-readiness and underscore the urgent need for a harmonized competence-based-law-curriculum to produce practice-ready-undergraduates.

*Keywords:* competence-based curriculum, Ugandan undergraduate legal education, professional readiness, curriculum reform, SDG 4

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## Introduction

Coşkun Yaşar and Aslan (2021) note that scholars define curriculum in multiple, but closely related, ways, reflecting its complex and multidimensional role in education. They argue that curriculum goes beyond a written syllabus and should be understood as both the planned and unplanned learning experiences provided by an institution, as well as the organised structure of learning opportunities and content. Their review further shows that curriculum has been conceptualised as a comprehensive system that includes objectives, subject areas, learning experiences, and evaluation strategies, emphasising that it encompasses not only what is taught but also how learning is assessed. Drawing on Bintz and Dillard (2007), Yaşar and Aslan also highlight that curriculum is a lived experience and a tool for preparing students for life, while simultaneously functioning as a plan, a content framework, and a belief system that shapes educational practice. Taken together, these perspectives illustrate that curriculum involves the organisation of knowledge, values, and experiences. Therefore, the structure of an undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) curriculum should be understood not merely as a list of course units, but as a broader framework that integrates learning outcomes, teaching approaches, and assessment practices necessary for meaningful legal education.

Building on the above understanding, the quality of undergraduate-legal-education directly determines the calibre of legal practitioners, who subsequently influence justice delivery, policy development, and social governance. In Uganda, however, the LLB programme remains predominantly theoretical and largely non-competence-based, despite the national shift toward competence-based learning at the secondary level. This has created a clear disconnect between academic training and the practical demands of legal practice, underscoring the need to re-examine the structure and orientation of LLB curricula.

The research problem is that LLB undergraduates possess strong theoretical knowledge but many of them lack essential professional competencies such as advocacy, legal drafting, ethical reasoning, problem-solving, client management, and critical analytical skills. Consequently, LLB undergraduates are inadequately prepared for contemporary legal practice, limiting the effectiveness of undergraduate legal education and hindering Uganda's compliance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Currently, law schools or faculties independently design their LLB curricula, leading to substantial variation in course content, teaching-methods, and depth of coverage across universities. This fragmentation undermines consistent undergraduate competence, complicates the enforcement of minimum standards in legal research, ethics, clinical-training, and practical skills, restricts student mobility and credit transfer, and limits professional bodies' ability to assess LLB undergraduates' readiness for legal practice.

The study aims to examine the structure of undergraduate-bachelor of law curricula in Uganda, identify gaps arising from non-competence-based-bachelor of law-curricula, and propose reforms necessary to establish a competence-based-bachelor of law-curriculum aligned with Sustainable-Development-Goal 4. Guided by these objectives, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve curriculum design, enhance practical competence, and ensure that LLB undergraduates are adequately prepared to meet the demands of contemporary legal practice. The research also seeks to answer the following research questions; What is the current structure of undergraduate bachelor of law curricula in Ugandan-universities? What gaps arise from non-competence-based bachelor of law-

curricula? And what reforms are necessary to establish a competence-based-bachelor of law-curricular aligned with the SDG 4?

Importantly, this study is justified by the growing concern that many LLB undergraduates possess strong theoretical knowledge but insufficient practical competence for contemporary legal practice. Legal education plays a central role in strengthening justice systems, rule of law, governance, and national development. Therefore, examining curriculum structure and identifying competence gaps is essential to inform reform efforts that can improve graduate quality and professional readiness in Uganda.

The study is significant because it contributes to the ongoing national and global discourse on competence-based higher education. This research benefits curriculum developers, universities, regulatory bodies, and policymakers by providing guidance for reforming undergraduate bachelor of law curricula. The study also supports Uganda's efforts toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education by proposing strategies for strengthening practical skill development, professional ethics, and employability among LLB undergraduates.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative-research-approach which was doctrinal in nature using a desktop research strategy in order to examine the structure of undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) curricula in Uganda, identify gaps arising from the LLB non-competence-based curriculum, and generate evidence to support reforms toward a competence-based curriculum aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). A case-study-research design focusing on three selected Ugandan universities was adopted to enable an in-depth and contextual-analysis of how LLB curricula are structured, how competencies are (or are not) integrated, and where major weaknesses exist. This research design was therefore appropriate for investigating the central research problem that the current LLB curricula remain largely theory-oriented and fragmented, producing undergraduates with limited professional-competence.

To achieve the research objectives, both primary and secondary data were examined. Primary data consisted of the laws regulating the structure of LLB curriculum at the university. Secondary data comprises of the curriculum documents from the three selected universities which have law faculties in the central region, institutional reports, and scholarly articles. These directly supported the first objective by enabling a systematic examination of the existing structure of undergraduate LLB curricula. These sources reinforced the second objective by helping to identify gaps associated with the LLB non-competence-based curricula, particularly relating to practical skills, professional ethics, and readiness for legal practice. Together, these datasets informed the third objective by providing a basis for proposing reforms toward a harmonized competence-based LLB curriculum in line with SDG 4.

Data analysis involved thematic content analysis, doctrinal legal analysis, and documentary review. Thematic content analysis was used to identify recurring themes and gaps in competence integration across curricula. Doctrinal legal analysis facilitated examination of regulatory and policy frameworks governing legal education and how they support—or fail to support—competence-based training. Documentary-review enabled systematic comparison of course content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies across universities. Through

these complementary analytical techniques, the study directly addressed each of its objectives: examining existing curriculum structures, identifying competence-related deficiencies, and informing reform proposals aimed at strengthening alignment with the SDG 4.

Ethical considerations were observed through accurate citation and acknowledgment of all documents and scholarly articles consulted, as well as careful representation of institutional information without distortion. Confidentiality, intellectual-integrity, and respect for academic and institutional-data were maintained throughout the research process. The names of the universities were not mentioned for ethical reasons.

This study employs an interdisciplinary framework combining Educational-Theory, Sociological-Theory, and Human-Capital-Theory to examine the structure, gaps, and proposed reforms in the undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) curriculum. Educational Theory emphasizes curriculum design aligned with competencies and demonstrates how fragmented, content-heavy, lecture-based programmes limit the development of essential skills such as advocacy, legal drafting, ethical reasoning, and client-centred practice. Sociological Theory explains how institutional norms, policies, and curriculum sequencing embed competence gaps within the higher education system. Human Capital Theory links skills development to employability and national development. Collectively, these theories justify reforms toward coherent, competence-based, and experiential LLB curricula aligned with SDG 4 and capable of producing practice-ready, ethically grounded undergraduates.

## **Literature Review**

### **Structure of Undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Curricula in Uganda**

The study examines the structure of LLB curricula in Uganda across three universities, referred to as University A, University B, and University C. Notably, each law school or faculty designs its own four-year LLB curriculum independently, and there are no specific national laws or policies that regulate or standardize the development of these programmes. As a result, there is no uniformity in curricula across universities, leading to significant variations in course content, structure, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. These variations directly impact the consistency and quality of legal education in the country.

The Bachelor of Laws curricula reveal both similarities and distinctions. In Year One at University C, students are introduced to foundational legal principles and essential skills. In the first semester, compulsory courses include Foundations of Law, Criminal Law, Law of Contract, Constitutional History, Computer Applications, and Language and Communication Skills. In the second semester, students study Criminal Law II, Law of Contract II, Constitutional Law, Legal Methods, and Computer Applications II. Collectively, these courses provide a comprehensive grounding in legal doctrine, communication skills, basic computing, criminal justice, contract formation, and constitutional frameworks.

Year Two builds on this foundation, with all courses remaining compulsory. In the first semester, students take Law of Torts I, Administrative Law, Land Law I, Family Law I, and, covering civil wrongs, government powers, land tenure, and family relations. In the second semester, core courses include Law of Torts II, Land Law II, Family Law II, Law of Sale of Goods and Supply of Services, and Equity and Trusts. These subjects further develop student

competence in commercial transactions, equitable remedies, succession, and advanced tort and land law concepts.

In Year Three, students continue with compulsory courses that deepen practical and doctrinal understanding. The first semester includes Law of Evidence I, Criminal Procedure, Law of Business Associations I, and Law of Banking and Negotiable Instruments, covering evidentiary rules, criminal justice procedures, company law, and financial regulation. The second semester consists of Law of Evidence II, Law of Business Associations II, International Trade and Business, and Legal Research Methods and Methodology, emphasizing evidentiary reasoning, corporate practice, international commercial relations, legal research and writing skills.

In Year Four at University C, only Jurisprudence and Civil Procedure remain compulsory, offered across the two semesters. Jurisprudence I and II explore legal philosophy, theories of law, and methods of legal reasoning, while Civil Procedure and Practice I and II focus on court processes, litigation, and procedural rules. All other Year Four courses are electives, allowing students to specialize in fields such as public international law, human rights, intellectual property, labour law, environmental law, clinical legal education, alternative dispute resolution, oil and gas law, refugee law, and revenue and taxation law. This structure ensures a strong compulsory foundation in the first three years, preserves core theoretical and procedural training in the fourth year, and provides flexibility for specialization through elective courses.

When compared with University A and University B, similarities emerge in the early years, where all three universities emphasize core courses designed to introduce students to essential legal doctrines. In Year One, both University A and University B focus on subjects such as Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law, Legal Methods, and Torts, without incorporating electives. In Year Two, both universities maintain core courses in Family Law, Land Law, Evidence, Administrative Law, Equity, and Trusts, reflecting a shared understanding that competence in substantive law is central to undergraduate legal education.

Differences become more evident in the later years, particularly regarding electives and practical engagement. In Years Three and Four, University A offers a broad range of electives, including clinical legal training, consumer law, gender and the law, environmental law, computers and the law, and criminology and penology, allowing students to tailor their studies to professional interests. University B provides a more focused set of electives in international trade, investment law, international humanitarian law, natural resources law, labour law, taxation, insurance law, and human rights, emphasizing commercial, policy, and public law areas. University C differs by maintaining only two compulsory courses in Year Four—Jurisprudence and Civil Procedure—and offering a wide array of electives for specialization.

A further distinction lies in research and practical requirements. University B mandates a research paper as a core component of the final year, ensuring all students undertake independent legal research. At University A, the research paper is typically elective, with practical and clinical training offered through elective units in clinical legal education. University C integrates practical skills through elective courses in clinical legal education, alternative dispute resolution, and other applied fields in the fourth year. These differences reflect variations in pedagogical emphasis: University B prioritizes research as a universal

requirement, University A emphasizes flexible practical skills development, and University C balances foundational knowledge with elective specialization in senior years.

Understanding the structure of undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) curricula is central to evaluating how legal education prepares students for professional practice. Contemporary scholarship consistently emphasises that curriculum structures must move beyond fragmented, content-heavy models toward frameworks that foster progressive professional competence. There is broad consensus that traditional curricula, which prioritise theoretical knowledge transmission, are increasingly inadequate for preparing graduates for real-world practice. This observation mirrors the current structure of many LLB programmes in Uganda, where curricula remain largely content-driven and lecture-centred, offering limited opportunities for developing practical legal skills (Açıkgöz & Babadoğan, 2021; Bhatia & Kumar, 2025; Harianto, 2024).

A significant theme in the scholarship is the paradigm shift from teacher-centred, content-heavy instruction to competency-based education (CBE). Bhatia and Kumar (2025) argue that 21st-century education increasingly prioritises demonstrable skills and practical application over rote memorisation. Açıkgöz and Babadoğan (2021) emphasise that effective curricula should be structured around clearly defined learning outcomes, mastery-based progression, and integrated assessment to ensure systematic competence development. Harianto (2024) further highlights that CBE must prioritise problem-solving, adaptability, creativity, and critical thinking, rather than solely accumulating theoretical knowledge. Collectively, these studies underscore that curriculum structure is not merely a sequence of subjects but a framework that shapes the gradual development of professional skills.

Another key theme is coherence and integration within curricula. The Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report (2025), Cambridge International (2025), and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2012) all argue that effective curriculum design requires integrated, logically sequenced learning pathways rather than isolated subject lists. The First International Conference on Curriculum Development (NCDC-Uganda) observes that post-colonial African curricula, including legal education, often retain content-transmission models that emphasise knowledge recall over applied competencies. This literature collectively highlights the importance of progression, linking foundational, intermediate, and advanced content to ensure that students systematically acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Critically, while these studies provide substantial guidance on curriculum structure, they largely focus on school-level or general higher education curricula and do not specifically address professional programmes such as LLB in Uganda. This gap is significant because Ugandan law schools or faculties continue to offer fragmented, theory-heavy programmes, leaving undergraduates with strong theoretical knowledge but insufficient professional competencies, such as advocacy, legal drafting, ethical reasoning, problem-solving, client management, and critical analysis. Therefore, there is a clear need to investigate how LLB curricula are structured, whether they support cumulative skill development, and how they can be reformed to align with UN Sustainable-Development-Goal 4 (Quality Education).

In brief the reviewed scholarship demonstrates that curriculum structure fundamentally shapes learner outcomes. For Ugandan LLB programmes, adopting integrated, coherent, and competency-oriented frameworks is essential to ensure that undergraduates are both

knowledgeable and professionally prepared, bridging the persistent gap between theory and practice in legal education.

### **Gaps Arising From Non-Competence-Based LLB Curricula**

Despite these structural strengths, the predominance of theoretical, non-competence-based curricula across the three universities limits the development of essential practical and professional skills. Consequently, LLB undergraduates often possess strong conceptual knowledge but lack adequate readiness for real-world legal practice, negatively affecting the overall quality and effectiveness of legal education in Uganda.

The variances in course units present both advantages and disadvantages. While differences in elective options allow students to specialize in areas of interest, practical, hands-on training is largely absent across all three universities. Moot court exercises and community engagement are treated as co-curricular activities rather than integrated, credit-bearing components, and the Socratic method is minimally applied, limiting critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and active participation. Clinical legal education is offered only as an elective at University A and University C and is not a core requirement, leaving many students without structured exposure to real-world legal practice.

The significant variation in core and elective course units, combined with the predominance of theoretical, non-competence-based instruction and lecture-heavy teaching methods, creates major disadvantages. Undergraduates complete their LLB programs with uneven knowledge and skill sets, resulting in disparities in professional readiness and employability. Essential competencies—such as advocacy, legal drafting, client management, and practical problem-solving—are inconsistently developed, while active learning, experiential engagement, and critical thinking are limited. Although some students benefit from elective diversity, the overall non-competence-based approach reduces the ability of Ugandan legal education to consistently produce practice-ready undergraduates and undermines the uniformity and quality of the legal profession nationally.

Furthermore, the absence of centralized regulation or a national policy governing LLB curricula exacerbates these challenges. Without uniform standards, universities independently determine course content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies, resulting in considerable disparities between institutions. This lack of uniform-standards hinders the enforcement of minimum professional competencies, complicates credit transfer and student mobility, and limits the capacity of professional bodies to evaluate whether undergraduates meet baseline requirements for legal practice. In turn, these gaps weaken public confidence in the quality and consistency of legal education and contribute to an uneven supply of competent legal practitioners across the country.

Assessment methods across University A, University B, and University C follow a similar structure, combining summative and formative components. Examinations carry a weight of 70 marks and primarily test theoretical knowledge, while the remaining 30 marks are allocated to formative assessment, often delivered through lecture-based group assignments, presentations, or tests. This reliance on written exams and lecture-oriented formative exercises limits opportunities for students to develop practical legal skills, including advocacy, negotiation, drafting, client counseling, and courtroom procedures. Consequently, assessment reinforces rote learning over critical thinking, problem-solving, and applied competence. The absence of structured, hands-on evaluation methods—such as practical

simulations, moot courts, clinical placements, or supervised legal practice—means that undergraduates may pass exams without acquiring essential professional skills. Ultimately, this approach to assessment perpetuates the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world readiness, further undermining the quality and professional relevance of undergraduate legal education in Uganda.

Notably, despite the growing global emphasis on competency-based education, many Ugandan Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programmes continue to rely on traditional, theory-heavy curricula that prioritise content delivery over the development of practical skills. This misalignment is highlighted across multiple studies. Bhatia and Kumar (2025) argue that conventional curricula, structured around time-bound instruction and fixed content lists, often fail to cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and applied competencies. Similarly, Açıkgöz and Babadoğan (2021) note that curricula that lack explicit learning outcomes and mastery-based progression leave graduates unable to translate theoretical knowledge into professional practice. Harianto (2024) reinforces that the absence of structured standards or policies for adaptability, creativity, and applied problem-solving undermines the preparation of students for complex, real-world challenges.

Ugandan studies further illustrate these gaps. Kitasse and Ssembatya (2024) show that competency-oriented reforms in secondary schools falter without clear structural frameworks, explicit competencies, and coherent sequencing of learning tasks. Muwanguzi, Kibaya, and Serunjogi (2023) add that even when competency-based principles are adopted, limited teacher preparedness, inadequate resources, and weak assessment strategies compromise their implementation. Translating these insights to the LLB context, it becomes apparent that law programmes remain fragmented: foundational, intermediate, and specialised courses are often disconnected, and opportunities to practice legal drafting, advocacy, client management, and ethical reasoning are minimal.

The persistence of lecture-based teaching methods exacerbates the problem. Herlinawati, Marwa, Ismail, and Situmorang (2024) emphasise that curricula focused on isolated theoretical content tend to produce graduates who can memorise information but cannot apply it in authentic contexts. Ayasrah (2023) and Owolabi and Ajayi (2023) similarly note that a lack of coherence, standards, and progression within curriculum structures undermines the development of higher-order thinking and professional competence. This gap is particularly critical in the Ugandan LLB context, where undergraduates often enter the legal profession theoretically knowledgeable but underprepared for practical challenges.

Collectively, this body of scholarship reveals a persistent gap between curriculum design and professional readiness. While global and Ugandan studies highlight the benefits of integrated, competence-oriented curricula, the specific structure of LLB programmes in Uganda remains largely unexamined. This underscores the importance of the present study, which seeks to evaluate LLB curricula structures, identify gaps in the LLB non-competence-based-curricular, and propose reforms that align undergraduate-legal-education with the practical demands of the profession and the objectives of UN-Sustainable-Development-Goal 4 (Quality Education).

### **Proposed Reforms to Establish a Competence-Based LLB Curriculum**

The combination of a non-competence-based LLB curriculum, lecture-dominated pedagogy, minimal experiential learning, and the absence of detailed standards on curriculum design

and development constrains the quality of Ugandan undergraduate-legal-education. To align with UN-Sustainable-Development-Goal 4 (Quality Education), reforms should include standardizing the curricula across universities to ensure consistency in foundational and advanced legal training. Integrating experiential learning—such as mandatory moot courts, clinical placements, field placements, simulations, writing assignments, supervised pro bono activities, community engagement, and research projects—would enhance practical competencies. Teaching methods should emphasize the Socratic method, active learning, and problem-based approaches to cultivate critical thinking and applied legal skills. Additionally, assessment frameworks should balance theoretical knowledge with practical, hands-on evaluation to ensure undergraduates are practice-ready. Enacting and implementing a national policy or regulatory framework to guide curriculum design, assessment, and teaching methodologies would strengthen quality assurance, enhance uniformity, and ensure that all LLB graduates meet minimum professional competencies.

### **Results and Discussion**

Using a qualitative, doctrinal approach with desktop research, this study systematically examined the structure of undergraduate LLB curricula across three Ugandan universities (A, B, and C). The analysis of curriculum documents, institutional reports, and regulatory frameworks revealed that each university independently designs its four-year LLB program, with the absence of detailed standards on curriculum design and development constraining the quality of Ugandan legal education. Early-year courses across universities consistently cover foundational subjects such as Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Contracts, Torts, and Legal Methods, establishing a strong doctrinal base. Differences emerge in later years: University A provides diverse electives including clinical legal education and criminology, University B emphasizes commercial, public, and policy law, and University C offers only two compulsory courses in Year Four with broad elective options. Practical and research components are inconsistently integrated; for example, University B mandates a research paper, while clinical legal education remains elective at Universities A and C.

From a theoretical perspective, Educational Theory frames these findings as illustrating how content-heavy, lecture-oriented curricula limit the systematic development of competencies such as advocacy, legal drafting, ethical reasoning, and client-centered practice. Sociological Theory contextualizes the variation and fragmentation as products of institutional structures, norms, and the absence of detailed standards on curriculum design, reflecting systemic limitations in ensuring education quality. Human Capital Theory highlights the implications for professional readiness and societal outcomes, indicating that inconsistent curricula constrain undergraduates' employability and contribution to national development.

The thematic and documentary analysis revealed persistent gaps in practical and professional competence. Experiential learning opportunities—moot courts, clinical placements, simulations, and pro bono engagements—are often elective or co-curricular, and assessment methods focus predominantly on theoretical examinations and lecture-based assignments. This reinforces memorization over applied skills, leaving undergraduates theoretically knowledgeable but underprepared for real-world legal practice. The analysis also showed uneven development of core competencies, with some students accessing advanced electives while others complete the LLB with minimal exposure to client management, legal drafting, and courtroom procedures.

The findings align with global and local scholarship demonstrating that conventional, non-competence-based curricula fail to foster problem-solving, critical thinking, and applied legal skills (Bhatia & Kumar, 2025; Harianto, 2024; Herlinawati et al., 2024). Desktop research revealed that gaps are compounded by inconsistent sequencing of foundational, intermediate, and advanced courses, reflecting structural limitations within the higher education system, as emphasized by Sociological Theory.

Analysis of the curricular gaps using thematic content and doctrinal review supports targeted reforms. The study recommends standardizing core LLB courses units across universities to ensure uniformity in foundational and advanced training. Experiential learning should be integrated as mandatory credit-bearing components, including moot courts, clinical-placements, simulations, supervised pro bono work, community-engagement, and research projects. Pedagogical approaches must shift from lecture-dominated teaching to Socratic, problem-based, and active learning methods to cultivate analytical, critical, and applied skills. Assessment frameworks should balance theoretical knowledge with practical evaluation to ensure competence. Establishing a national-policy or regulatory-framework for curriculum design, teaching, and assessment would enhance quality assurance, ensure minimum professional standards, and improve the uniformity and relevance of LLB programs.

Applying Human Capital Theory, these reforms would strengthen undergraduates' employability, professional readiness, and societal contribution. Educational Theory supports designing curricula around explicit learning outcomes and cumulative skill development, while Sociological Theory underscores the need for institutional and policy alignment to embed competence-based education within the higher education system. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that transitioning from fragmented, theory-heavy curricula to coherent, competency-oriented programs is essential for producing practice-ready, ethically grounded law-undergraduates aligned with the SDG 4.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the structure, gaps, and potential reforms of undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) curricula in Uganda through a qualitative, doctrinal analysis of curriculum documents from three universities. The findings reveal that LLB programmes are largely content-heavy, lecture-driven, and fragmented, with significant variation in course offerings, electives, and practical components. The absence of detailed standards on curriculum design and development constrains the quality and consistency of undergraduate-legal-education, resulting in undergraduates who possess strong theoretical knowledge but limited practical competence in advocacy, legal drafting, ethical reasoning, and client management.

The implications of these findings are significant. Fragmented, non-competence-based curricula reduce professional readiness, limit employability, and weaken public confidence in Uganda's undergraduate-legal-education-system. From a theoretical perspective, Educational Theory highlights misalignment between curricula and desired competencies, Sociological Theory situates the gaps within institutional structures and practices, and Human Capital Theory underscores the lost societal and economic potential of underprepared undergraduates.

The study is limited by its reliance on desktop research; data were drawn solely from curriculum documents and scholarly sources, without input from students, faculty, or legal

practitioners. Future research should complement these findings with empirical fieldwork to verify how proposed reforms impact professional competence.

Based on the findings, the study recommends standardizing curricula across universities, integrating compulsory experiential learning such as moot courts and clinical placements, adopting competency-focused teaching methods, reforming assessments to include practical evaluation, establishing a national policy framework for curriculum design, investing in faculty development, and implementing continuous monitoring and review. These measures will promote coherent, competence-based LLB curricula, producing ethically grounded, practice-ready undergraduates aligned with United-Nations-Sustainable-Development-Goal 4 (Quality Education).

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### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

The author declares that no AI or AI-assisted technologies have been used to generate, refine, or correct the content in the manuscript. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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