



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF LAW

LABOUR LAW AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN UGANDA; EVALUATING THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIGITAL AGE.

BY

NAKIBUUKA SARAH

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SUPERVISOR: DR. IVAN ENGORU

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF LAW IN
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AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF LAWS OF MAKERERE
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DECLARATION

I, Nakibuuka Sarah, declare that this dissertation has been prepared and completed independently by me. It is an original work that has not been submitted to any institution for any form of credit, award, or examination, and all contributions borrowed from any other work in the form of literature have been duly acknowledged through quotations, footnotes, and as complete references.

Date: 04 / JUNE 2026 Signature: 

Student's Name: Nakibuuka Sarah

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APPROVAL

The dissertation, *labour law and artificial intelligence in Uganda; evaluating the legal and institutional framework for the digital age*, has been prepared and submitted for examination under my guidance and supervision.

Date: 04 JUNE, 2026 Signature: 

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Ivan Engoru

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to the online and gig workers of Uganda who navigate the unfair structural challenges and legal gaps of the digital economy. I truly hope my voice helps bring about real legal protection, fairness, and respect for your hard work. To the Nsiko and my wider family, thank you from the bottom of my heart for being so patient, loving, and supportive through all four years of my law school journey. I could not have done this without you. To my supervisor Dr. Ivan Engoru, thank you for your patience, time, and great guidance that helped me shape this research paper. Finally, to my classmates and friends, thank you for the helpful discussions, the shared study hours, and the great memories over the last four years

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ILO	International Labour Organisation
UBOS	Uganda Beaural of Statistics
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
UIA	Uganda Investment Authority
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
NITA-U	National Information Technology Authority-Uganda
UK	United Kingdom
SBTC	Skill biased Technological Change
LPT	Labour Process Theory
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa.
DPPA	The Data Protection and Privacy Act
UPDF	Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NOTU	National Organisation of Trade Unions
CMA	Centre for Multilateral Affairs
PWD	Platform Work Directive
DPPA	The Data Protection and Privacy Act
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
PDPO	Personal Data Protection Office
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

LIST OF CASES

DOMESTIC CASES

Bank of Uganda v. Joseph Kibuuka & 4 Others, Civil Appeal No. 281 of 2016 (Court of Appeal of Uganda).

KENYA

Aviation and Allied Workers Union v Kenya Airways Limited (Cause 157 of 2012)

UK

Uber BV and others v Aslam and others

List of International Instruments

International Labour Organization (ILO). *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958* (No. 111). Geneva: International Labour Office.

International Labour Organization (ILO). *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948* (No. 87). Geneva: International Labour Office.

International Labour Organization (ILO). *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951* (No. 100). Geneva: International Labour Office.

International Labour Organization (ILO). *Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981* (No. 155). Geneva: International Labour Office.

International Labour Organization (ILO). *Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949* (No. 98). Geneva: International Labour Office

ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital Labor platforms in Uganda has created a profound regulatory gap, rendering existing statutory protections increasingly obsolete in the digital age. This paper evaluates the institutional and legal preparedness of Uganda's regulatory framework, mainly the Employment Act of 2006 to address the concurrent deficiencies in worker protection and regulatory design. Utilizing a descriptive, analytical, and comparative methodology, this study examines primary Ugandan legal instruments alongside regional and international standards from Kenya and the United Kingdom. The research reveals that the existing legal framework remains largely grounded in traditional regulatory models, failing to account for gig workers, platform laborers, and the unique challenges of algorithmic management. Such as, opaque recruitment bias, automated termination, and unchecked workplace surveillance. This regulatory is gap is further aggravated by the fact that 95% of Uganda's workforce operates within the informal sector, where AI-driven platforms expand without oversight. While recognizing AI's potential for economic growth, this paper argues that urgent legal reform is required to protect vulnerable workers from arbitrary treatment and automation induced displacement. Ultimately, this study offers strategic recommendations to guide the Uganda Law Reform Commission and policymakers in reforming the country's labour regime to meet emerging technological realities while safeguarding human dignity, equitable economic participation, and compliance with international labour standards.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Introduction
- 1.2 Background of The Study
- 1.3 Statement of The Problem
- 1.4 Research Objectives
- 1.5 Research Questions
- 1.6 Significance of The Study
- 1.7 Scope of The Study
- 1.8 Conceptual Considerations
- 1.9 Literature Review
- 1.10 Research Methodology
- 1.11 Chapter Synopsis

“Artificial intelligence is the future, and the future is here.”

Fei-Fei Li

1.1 Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the future, and the future is here, it is now becoming essential to work transformation and economic development.¹ AI is any machine or program capable of recreating one or more elements of human intelligence.² Comprehensively defined, Artificial Intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems. It includes advanced technologies such as machine learning; where algorithms perceive statistical patterns to improve performance without obvious programming, natural language processing, and automated decision making systems.³ Far from being a static

¹ *Artificial Intelligence Driving Business Innovation in Uganda (2025) Business Times Uganda*. Available at: <https://businesstimesug.com/artificial-intelligence-driving-business-innovation-uganda/> (Accessed: 18 December 2025).

² Ncube, Caroline B., Desmond O. Oriakhogba, Tobias Schonwetter, and Isaac Rutenberg, eds. 2023. *Artificial Intelligence and the Law in Africa*. South Africa: LexisNexis. Chapter 3, “Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights in Africa,” by Jake Okechukwu Effoduh, pp. 43–88. Definition of AI at p. 43.

³ Atkinson, J. 2026. “Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights at Work.” In *White Rose Research Online*, 1–22. White Rose University Consortium.

IT tool, AI acts as an autonomous infrastructure capable of analysing vast datasets, predictive modelling, and optimizing organizational workflows.

This paper evaluates whether Uganda's current Labor laws are equipped to handle the change toward a digital economy. The central argument is that the existing legal structure is unprepared. Its basic definitions, scope of coverage, protections against discrimination. This existing regulatory oversight lacks the technical tact required to monitor and audit algorithmic labor practices. The analysis singles out specific legal deficiencies, looks at international examples from the European Union and Kenya for guidance, and proposes concrete changes to laws and institutions. Significantly, AI offers substantial benefits for Uganda's growth thus a call for growth of legal systems to ensure that as AI reshapes the market, the benefits are shared fairly and the most vulnerable workers are legally protected from displacement / unfair treatment.

1.2 Background to the study

In developed nations, this shift is being managed within the framework of refined regulations, solid institutional oversight, and collaborative Labor relations.⁴ For developing countries like Uganda, AI is emerging amidst an existing employment crisis, a largely informal economy, serious levels of youth unemployment, and a regulatory system that remains outdated and unfit for the modern digital era.⁵ Locally, AI does not primarily manifest through sophisticated human like robotics. It operates through invisible, data driven systems such as algorithmic management tools, digital platforms, and automated software. In a labour market already dependent on survival and coping mechanisms, these AI systems fundamentally alter how work is allocated, supervised, and remunerated, often deepening existing structural vulnerabilities.⁶ The Ugandan Labor market is defined by profound structural instability. Statistics from the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that around 95% of the Labor force is engaged in the informal economy. Additionally, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reports that more than 40% of young people currently classified as not in employment, training or education.

⁴ Alexandros Minotakis, "Regulating AI in the Workplace: A Critique of the EU AI Act and the Platform Work Directive Through a Worker-Centred Lens," *European Labour Law Journal* 16, no. 1 (March 2025): 42.

⁵ Economic Policy Research Centre. 2024. "Artificial Intelligence Could Provide a Window for New Skills, Jobs." *EPRC Blog*, November 27, 2024. <https://eprcug.org/blog/artificial-intelligence-could-provide-a-window-for-new-skills-jobs/>.

⁶ De Stefano, Valerio, and Virginia Doellgast. 2023. "Introduction to the *Transfer* Special Issue. Regulating AI at Work: Labour Relations, Automation, and Algorithmic Management." *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 29, no. 1: 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10242589231157656>.

Annually 150,000 new graduates compete for a very small number of formal positions. reflecting Uganda's labour market conditions, nevertheless, a digital shift is occurring, there is a rising mobile internet access and the expansion of digital platforms have birthed a mushrooming gig economy. While this sector provides a dynamic lifeline for urban youth, it currently exists in a regulatory vacuum, lacking formal legal recognition.⁷

In light of this, AI is expanding at a fast pace. Apps like SafeBoda and Bolt use algorithms to pair drivers with customers, set prices, and track workers. Global websites like Upwork, Fiverr and local sites like ProGigFinder, use AI to rank and select Ugandan freelancers for international jobs.⁸In the formal business workplaces, companies are starting to use AI to find and hire employees. Including government bodies, such as the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), are using AI to speed up their work.⁹ To keep pace with, the Ministry of ICT is currently writing Uganda's first national AI policy, following the creation of a National AI Taskforce in 2024.¹⁰ As a result, this shift means that Ugandan workers are constantly watched by software and judged by automatic tracking systems, changing the workplace long before our Labor laws can even set rules to protect them.

Whereas, the Employment (Amendment) Act, 2025¹¹ is a major revision of Uganda's labour laws. For instance, it brings domestic, casual, and piecework labourers under formal protection, it completely missed the chance to address the digital economy. It does not mention algorithms, this law is built for a traditional environment involving clear employers, direct contracts, and human supervisors. Accordingly, it remains silent on contemplary challenges like algorithmic management, AI controlled firing, platform based gig work, and automated hiring tools.

To address these contemplary technological challenges, Uganda's legal landscape relies on an inconsistent framework of digital laws rather than specific labor protections.¹² While the Data

⁷ Economic Policy Research Centre. 2020. "Youth Unemployment: The Case for Vocational Training." *EPRC Blog*, February 11, 2020. <https://eprcug.org/blog/youth-unemployment-the-case-for-vocational-training/>.

⁸ Kazibwe, Kenneth. 2026. "Ugandan Entrepreneur Launches ProGigFinder to Bridge Skills and Job Opportunities." *Nile Post*, March 7, 2026. <https://nilepost.co.ug/news/325613/ugandan-entrepreneur-launches-progigfinder-to-bridge-skills-and-job-opportunities>.

⁹ Nalubega, Teddy, and Dominique E. Uwizeyimana. 2024. "Artificial Intelligence Technologies Usage for Improved Service Delivery in Uganda." *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 12 (1): a770. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v12i1.770>.

¹⁰ Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. 2025. "Digital Vision Uganda 2040: Building an AI-Powered Future." April 16, 2025. <https://ict.go.ug/resources/documents/digital-vision-uganda-2040/>.

¹¹ Employment (Amendment) Act, 2025.

¹² Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), "Claiming Digital Rights in Uganda's Business Sector," *CIPESA News*, August 13, 2025, <https://cipesa.org/2025/08/claiming-digital-rights-in-ugandas-business-sector/>.

Protection and Privacy Act of 2019¹³ provides guidelines for data handling it was not specifically designed to regulate AI. The Computer Misuse Act, 2011¹⁴, as amended, also regulates cybersecurity and employee digital conduct, it regulates unauthorized access to computer systems inter-alia. Nonetheless the act remains silent on the algorithmic manipulation of workers.

Institutionally, the regulatory mandate over digital platforms and information technology services is vested in the National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U)¹⁵ under the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, 2009.¹⁶ However This framework lacks specific labour protections against automated employer practices. Currently, Uganda lacks an assigned legal framework for AI in the workforce, leaving a gap in specific Labor laws and regulatory oversight.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The rapid growth of AI and digital Labor in Uganda has posed a significant regulatory gap. Moreover, as the workplace becomes more technologically advanced, the legal protections for its workers are becoming increasingly obsolete.¹⁷ The Employment Act¹⁸ relies on established statutory frameworks that fail to account for gig workers, platform labourers, and those under algorithmic management. For example, its current protections against discrimination are designed to address intentional discriminatory conduct, not the black box general biases often hidden in AI recruitment software. Furthermore, the law is silent on termination by algorithm and completely fails to obligate employers to consult with or retrain workers who are displaced by automation.¹⁹ This gap in the law leaves Ugandan workers completely unprotected. It means they can be fired by a computer program without a single warning or explanation, and left without the new skills they need to find another job.

This issue is aggravated by the unique structure of Uganda's Labor force. Notably, 95% of workers are in the informal sector, they exist outside the standard reach of Labor laws. Yet, AI driven platforms expand into this informal space, the lack of oversight creates a problematic

¹³ Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019.

¹⁴ Computer Misuse Act, 2011.

¹⁵ NITA-U, *National ICT Policy*, 48.

¹⁶ *National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, 2009*

¹⁷ Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). 2025. "Claiming Digital Rights in Uganda's Business Sector." August 13, 2025. <https://cipesa.org/2025/08/claiming-digital-rights-in-ugandas-business-sector/>.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

legal void. As already stated, While the Data Protection and Privacy Act²⁰ offers some data safeguards, it leaves a massive gap in employment rights. Currently, Ugandan law fails to give workers the right to understand or demand an explanation for a hiring or firing decision made by an algorithm. Additionally, Uganda's emerging AI policy framework has yet to specifically deal with the intersection of technology and labor rights.²¹ This paper deals with two distinct crises, a coverage and foundational gap. The former deals with where new digital roles fall outside the law's reach, and the later where existing laws lack the tools to handle AI specific challenges. Except if there is urgent reform of the law, the divide between technological reality and the inadequacy in legal protection will continue to expand as AI integration moves faster than the government's ability to regulate it.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The primary goal of this research is to critically evaluate the readiness of Uganda's labor law framework in the face of AI driven disruption and to propose a contemplary legal and institutional roadmap that ensures a fair distribution of technological benefits.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness of the Employment Act²² in regulating modern work dynamics, specifically focusing on whether its traditional definitions of employee and employer remain valid in an AI driven economy.
2. To identify the specific legal gaps emerging from the growth of the gig economy, platform-mediated labor, and the use of algorithmic systems in hiring, performance management, and termination.
3. To conduct a comparative analysis of the European Union's risk based AI regulation and Kenya's digital labor approaches to extract most appropriate lessons for the Ugandan legal landscape.
4. To formulate concrete recommendations for legislative amendments and the establishment of dedicated oversight bodies to protect workers in the digital age.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

1.4.3 Research questions

1. To what extent is Uganda's current labor law framework specifically the Employment Act capable of protecting worker rights amidst the rapid integration of AI and digital platforms into the national economy?
2. What specific legal vulnerabilities are created for Ugandan workers by the rise of automated displacement, the gig economy, and the black box nature of AI driven recruitment and firing?
3. How does the European Union's regulatory focus on high risk AI and Kenya's approach to digital labor Provide a workable framework for addressing similar challenges in Uganda?
4. What legislative changes and regulatory mechanisms are needed to reform Uganda's labour laws to balance technological innovation with protection of worker dignity?

1.4.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the intersection of Uganda's national labor laws and the challenges introduced by AI in the workplace. The analysis centres on key statutes, including the Employment Act²³, the Data Protection and Privacy Act²⁴, the Computer Misuse Act²⁵, NITA-U Act²⁶ and the current development of the national AI policy. The comparative scope is narrowed to two jurisdictions, the European Union, representing the global standard for comprehensive AI regulation, and Kenya, which serves as a regional benchmark due to its more advanced digital labor landscape. This study remains focused on labor and employment. It does not explore outside of labor rights and non discrimination or AI applications in unrelated sectors.

1.4.5 Significance of the Study

This study provides critical contributions to both academic conversation and practical policy development. In academic discourse, this research contributes to the expanding literature on AI and labor law within the region by providing a systematic legal audit of Uganda's current

²³ The Employment (Amendment) Act, 2022

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

framework. Importantly, it highlights the direct challenges that AI poses to the rights of workers, comprising the rise of arbitrary automated termination, unchecked algorithmic workplace surveillance, institutional bias fixed within hiring software, and the structured denial of standard employee benefits to platform workers. Moreover, it injects a critical developing world perspective into the international discourse surrounding law, economic development, and the complexities of technological transitions. This research is timely as Uganda finalizes its national AI policy. By identifying specific legislative deficits and offering evidence based comparative solutions, the study provides a functional roadmap for the Uganda Law Reform Commission, policymakers, and digital rights advocacy groups. The findings of the research align with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) current initiatives regarding platform work, particularly as Uganda serves as a pilot site for programs supporting gig workers. At its core, the study is significant for the many Ugandan workers whose livelihoods are increasingly managed by algorithms. Through identifying and addressing the legal shortcomings impacting these workers, this research acts as an instigator for social justice. It seeks to ensure that technological advancement is not realized at the cost of human dignity or the fundamental economic security of the workforce.

1.5 Conceptual considerations

This topic will be approached under the following conceptual considerations.

1.5.1 Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems. It includes advanced technologies such as machine learning; where algorithms perceive statistical patterns to improve performance without obvious programming, natural language processing, and automated decision making systems.²⁷

1.5.2 Labour Law

Labour law involves the Acts, regulations and case law governing employment relationships. Such as the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda²⁸, The Employment Act²⁹ inter-alia. They

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ As above.

²⁹ As above.

focus on areas such as, employment contracts, wages, working conditions, termination. Artificial Intelligence threaten these rules.

1.5.3 Employment status

Employment status guides who qualify as an employee and who is an independent contractor. platform work raises issues where workers rely on digital platforms for gigs and income. The employment Act defines who an employee is³⁰The employment Status affects access to protections, collective rights and social security.

1.5.4 The Gig Economy and Platform Work

The gig economy is defined by short term, flexible, task-based work facilitated by online platforms. This is growing rapidly in Uganda and includes Riding platforms such as SafeBoda and Bolt inter-alia. Freelance platforms connect Ugandan digital workers with global clients. The recently launched ProGigFinder platform, is attempting to bring the country's 95 percent informal workforce into a digital marketplace, combining mobile money payments through MTN and Airtel so that workers without bank accounts can participate.³¹

1.5.5 Algorithmic management

Algorithmic management / management by algorithms is the use of AI tools for tracking and managing workers. By implementing technological tools and digitalised supervisions systems to govern and discipline the workforce.³²

1.5.6 Data protection and Privacy

The use of Artificial Intelligence tools entails collection and processing of employee's data. The major challenge posed by AI to data is the potential for abuse of privacy especially through data breaches and unauthorised access to personal information. More so, AI raises issues of bias and discrimination when dealing with data, committing abusive data practices, spreading misinformation and disinformation, enhancing and live tracking, and cyber attacks.

³⁰ Supra.

³¹ Allan Mufumbiro, "The Legal Challenges of Regulating the Gig Economy in Uganda: A Critical Review of the Dynamics Between Worker Practices, Employer Strategies and Regulatory Approaches," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science* (IJRIAS) 11, no. 1 (January 2026): [Insert Page Number if applicable], <https://dx.doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11010010>.

³² As above.

³³fundamental principles discussed include informed consent, rights of access and correction, and data security.

1.5.7 Equality and Non discrimination

Artificial Intelligence systems introduce bias in hiring, promotion, and discipline due to biased data or unexplainable design. Labour law principles of equal treatment apply to automated decisions and human decisions alike.³⁴

1.5.8 Liability and Accountability

The major concern is who bears responsibility when AI systems produce harmful employment outcomes. For instance, Employers deploy tools, Vendors design tools and the Workers experience the effects. Legal rules on responsibility, remedies, and proof must respond to the outcomes of automated decision making.³⁵

1.5.9 Institutional Capacity

Effective regulation in the digital space requires courts, unions and employer associations with skills to tackle Artificial Intelligence issues. Such capacity includes technical understanding, procedural tools, and resources for handling disputes.

1.5.10 Technology Neutrality

Certain labour law rules apply across all technologies. other areas require specific provisions on automated decision making and platform work. The study assesses both approaches within Ugandan context.

1.5.11 Assumptions

Artificial intelligence integration in Ugandan workplaces differs by sector. Both Formal and informal work remain central. The study treats Artificial Intelligence as part broad digitalisation

³³ Wanyama, E., 2024. *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Data Protection and Privacy: A Walk-through Rights of a Data Subject in Africa*. Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). Available at:

https://cipesa.org/wpcontent/files/briefs/The_Impact_of_Artificial_Intelligence_on_Data_Protection_and_Privacy_-_Brief.pdf [Accessed 12 February 2026].

³⁴ Mooker, R., 2025. *AI bias in recruitment and promotion: navigating legal and discrimination risks*. Diversity and Inclusion Leaders. Available at: <https://dileaders.com/blog/ai-bias-in-recruitment-and-promotion-navigating-legal-and-discrimination-risks/> [Accessed 12 February 2026].

³⁵ As above.

of work, with focus on employment rights and obligations. These concepts shape the research design, inform material, and frame interpretation of findings.

1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 Research design

This research uses a descriptive and analytical methodology, that is centred on a thorough evaluation of both primary and secondary sources. The Primary sources include the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, I review Uganda's labour related statutes, regulations, and policy instruments. I will Focus on the Employment Act, Data Protection and Privacy Act, and digital policy frameworks. Also, I will review selected statutes from other jurisdictions such as United Kingdom (UK) and Kenya for comparative analysis, international instruments endorsed by Uganda, and judicial decisions from Uganda and other courts. Literature sources include textbooks, scholarly articles, reports, and other relevant publications.

1.6.2 Data collection

The data for this study is being collected through a widespread review of publications on Uganda's labour law framework for Artificial intelligence. Also, a review of different legislations from various jurisdictions to inspect, draw comparisons and detect global best practices. Additionally, authorized publications from legal institutions, regulatory bodies, and academic sources are being used to avail a comprehensive understanding the readiness of Uganda's labour law framework for the digital age.

1.6.3 Data Analysis

The collected data is being analysed to determine its application to the study's objectives. The labour laws in Uganda that are most affected by Artificial Intelligence in the work place and how employment relations, equality, worker privacy and Job security affected by Artificial Intelligence systems. Whether the current laws and institutions are satisfactory to regulate Artificial Intelligence in labour relations and the appropriate reforms desirable to boost readiness for the digital age. Whatever data found to be irrelevant to the study 's focus is being excluded to ensure accuracy and reliability in findings.

1.6.4 Data Control

To maintain the quality and reliability of the research, data is collected from reputable and authoritative sources. These include legal reports, academic journals, government publications, and established databases to ensure that the study's conclusions are based on accurate and provable information.

1.7 Chapter synopsis

This study is divided into five chapters as shown below.

Chapter One: Introduction and Background of the study

This chapter presents the research topic and sets the basis for the study. It explains the use of AI in Uganda, with focus on the workplace, and reviews the current legal and policy framework and its limits. It then states the research problem, objectives, and research questions.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter evaluates the existing scholarly and policy discussions concerning the concurrence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Labor markets, and employment law. The review is structured into four confined areas; firstly, Identifying the foundational lenses used to analyse AI and Labor. Secondly, Reviewing the broader economic and social impacts of intelligent automation on work. Thirdly, by examining specialized legal debates regarding platform work and algorithmic management. Fourthly, by surveying emerging regional research focused on Uganda and neighbouring countries like Kenya. Finally, the chapter summarises by identifying the specific research gaps this paper aims to fill.

Chapter Three: The Legal Framework on Labour and AI in Uganda

This chapters uses both Uganda's primary and legislation including primary and subordinate legislation, case law and policy instruments. Also, it compares European Union's AI plus platform work directive as the most inclusive and globally influential regulatory responses to AI in employment. Further, Kenya's promising digital labour framework in east Africa. Not only does the chapter describe the framework, it also analyses their adequacies, gaps and lessons that are relevant to Uganda's reform.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion

By Integrating the legal and conceptual frame work from previous chapters, this section analyses four critical failures in Uganda's Labor laws regarding AI. These include, job displacement, platform based gig work, algorithmic hiring practices, and general regulatory gaps. By reviewing the specific gaps missing from the current framework, the chapter evaluates Uganda's legislative gaps against global standards.

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the core findings from the study. It will assess the preparedness of the Ugandan framework. Then will thereafter proceed to propose legal, policy and institutional reforms. Lastly, to conclude with recommendations for future research and regulation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.3 AI and Labour: Global academic literature
- 2.4 Labour Law in the Digital Age: Scholarly Debate
- 2.5 AI and Work in Africa: Regional Literature
- 2.6 Gaps in the Literature

Today, even as industrial robots, digital technologies, computer-controlled machines, and AI replace labor, we are again witnessing the emergence of new work.

Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo

2.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the existing scholarly and policy discussions concerning the concurrence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Labor markets, and employment law. The review is structured into four confined areas; firstly, Identifying the foundational lenses used to analyse AI and Labor. Secondly, Reviewing the broader economic and social impacts of intelligent automation on work. Thirdly, by examining specialized legal debates regarding platform work and algorithmic management. Fourthly, surveying emerging regional research focused on Uganda and its neighbours and finally, the chapter ends by finding the specific research gaps this paper aims to fill.³⁶

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

This study involves three core theoretical frameworks that expose the structural tensions between technological innovation and Labor rights. These include, Skill biased Technological Change (SBTC), Labour Process Theory (LPT) and Decent Work Framework.

³⁶ As above

2.2.1 Skill biased Technological Change (SBTC)

The primary economic lens for analysing AI's impact is Skill based Technological Change. This is popularized by scholars like Acemoglu and Autor (2011),³⁷SBTC suggests that technological leaps favour highly educated, tech literate workers while automating routine, low skill roles. This leads to Labor market polarization.³⁸In Uganda, this theory helps explain why formal workers in data entry, customer service, and basic administration are predominantly at risk. However, recent critics like Krakowski et al. (2022) suggest that AI often reshapes jobs rather than erasing them.³⁹ Further more, Autor and Thompson (2025) also advocates that while specific tasks are automated, new human centric roles may emerge.⁴⁰ This differential is imperative for Uganda's informal economy, where work is always changing and task level compositions remain largely unmapped.

2.2.2 Labour Process Theory (LPT)

The Labour Process Theory (LPT) is entrenched in Braverman's (1998) work which views AI as a tool for capital to exert control and intensify worker output.⁴¹ In the era of algorithmic management, LPT highlights the power imbalance where AI assigns tasks, sets pay, and monitors behaviour. Minotakis (2025) describes this as Digital Taylorism.⁴² For Ugandan gig workers such as, SafeBoda drivers, LPT explains the helplessness felt when an account is deactivated by an uninterrogatable system without legal recourse.⁴³

³⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2023. "Assessing the Impact of New Technologies on the Labor Market: Key Constructs, Gaps, and Data Collection Strategies for the Bureau of Labor Statistics." *Federal Register* or *BLS Reports*, October 2023. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2023/article/assessing-the-impact-of-new-technologies-on-the-labor-market.htm>.

³⁸ Definition; Market polarization, a hollowing out of middle class jobs. Thus, leaving growth only at the extreme high wage and low wage ends of the spectrum.

³⁹ Krakowski, Sebastian, Johannes Luger, and Sebastian Raisch. 2023. "Confronting and Alleviating AI Resistance in the Workplace: An Integrative Review and a Process Framework." *Journal of Management* 49, no. 6 (July): 1903–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221122656>.

⁴⁰ David, and Neil Thompson. "Beyond Job Displacement: How AI Could Reshape the Value of Human Expertise." In *The Digitalist Papers, Vol. 2: The Economics of Transformative AI*, edited by Erik Brynjolfsson, Daniel Susskind, Ajay Agrawal, Anton Korinek, and Alex Pentland. Stanford Digital Economy Lab, 2025. <https://www.digitalistpapers.com/vol2/autorthompson>.

⁴¹ Littler, Craig R., and Paul Thompson. "Braverman and 'Labor and Monopoly Capital': A Retrospective." *Organization Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 1994): 117–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069401500108>.

⁴² Definition; Digital Taylorism, a system that separates planning from execution and uses opaque algorithms to suppress worker resistance.

⁴³ Alexandros Minotakis, "Regulating AI in the Workplace: A Critique of the EU AI Act and the Platform Work Directive Through a Worker-Centred Lens," *Platforms & Society* 2 (2025): 29768624251396248, <https://doi.org/10.1177/29768624251396248>.

2.2.3 Decent Work Framework

The ILO's Decent Work Framework is built on employment creation, rights, social protection, and dialogue. It serves as the guiding standard for this study. This benchmark works alongside the ILO's fundamental conventions, which interpret these principles into binding international legal obligations. These include the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)⁴⁴, the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98),⁴⁵ the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)⁴⁶, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)⁴⁷ and the modern Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)⁴⁸. As seen in the ILO's Ugandan gig work pilots in the digital age must balance flexibility with security. This framework asserts that legal regimes should protect workers without constraining the innovation offered by digital platforms.⁴⁹

2.3 AI and Labour: Global academic literature

The modern debate about technology taking over jobs was restarted by Brynjolfsson and McAfee in their book, *The Second Machine Age* (2014). They warned that workers with repetitive skills are now racing against machines.⁵⁰ A key study in this field is by The Frey and Osborne (2017), who estimated that 47% of jobs in the US were at high risk of being automated.⁵¹ Though, newer research namely, Arntz et al. (2016) found that if you look at the specific tasks people do rather than their whole job title the risk of total job loss is actually much lower. Brynjolfsson et al. (2025)⁵² studied the effect of tools like ChatGPT. They found that young workers in the age bracket of 22-25 in jobs affected by AI saw a 16% drop in employment. This is a noteworthy issue for Uganda, given its mainly youthful workforce. As

⁴⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO). Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

⁴⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO). Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

⁴⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO). Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

⁴⁷ International Labour Organization (ILO). Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO). Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155).

⁴⁹ International Labour Organization. Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Geneva: ILO, 2017.

⁵⁰ Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), 165- 182.

⁵¹ Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?" (working paper, Oxford Martin Programme on Technology and Employment, Oxford Martin School, 2013), 38, <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/publications/the-future-of-employment>.

⁵² *supra*

noted by Acemoglu and Restrepo (2018), technological advancement presents a state of quagmire, whereas, it inevitably displaces certain roles, it simultaneously generates new opportunities, creating a challenging tension between job destruction and creation.⁵³ This state leaves Uganda in a dangerous spot. Whereas our national policies encourage technology and digital growth, our actual labor laws are outdated. Without timely legal reform, Uganda's young Labor force will lose their jobs to automation without any legal protection or backup plan.

2.4 Labour Law in the Digital Age; Scholarly Debate

Modern Labor law is struggling to keep up with technology, leading to a heated debate among legal experts. New European laws such as the EU AI Act and the Platform Work Directive, now classify using AI for hiring or to manage staff as high risk. According to the 2025 legal guidelines, these systems are not allowed to operate alone, they must be transparent and supervised by real people.⁵⁴ Experts like Valerio De Stefano argue that our laws are outdated. Currently, the legal system only recognizes two categories, a full employee or an independent contractor which doesn't fit the reality of contemplary AI driven work. He believes somehow this choice is broken and suggests creating a middle category to better protect people working for digital platforms like ride sharing or delivery apps.⁵⁵ Adams Prassl focuses on the algorithmic boss⁵⁶, He argues that workers should have a legal right to an explanation If a computer makes a decision about your job , you should have the right to know why so you can challenge it. Looking at the African context, Collier views Labor law as a tool to humanize work. He emphasizes that even in places with fewer resources, the law's primary job is to protect a worker's dignity and ensure they aren't treated like just another piece of data.⁵⁷ This is where Uganda's legal framework falls short, while jurisdictions across Europe have introduced regulatory measures to govern AI and scholars continue to advocate for the protection of human

⁵³ Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, "Artificial Intelligence, Automation and Work," NBER Working Paper No. 24196 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2018), 14, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w24196>.

⁵⁴ Labour Law Research Network, "Platform Work Directive, Digitalisation and AI: Evaluation and National Challenges" (International Conference, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Madrid, June 19, 2026), <https://labourlawresearch.net/event/platform-work-directive-digitalisation-and-ai-evaluation-and-national-challenges-2/>.

⁵⁵ Valerio De Stefano, "Platform Work and Labour Protection: Flexibility Is Not Enough," *Regulating for Globalization* (blog), May 23, 2018, <http://regulatingforglobalization.com/2018/05/23/platform-work-labour-protection-flexibility-not-enough/>.

⁵⁶ Definition; Algorithmic Boss, the software that tracks and manages workers.

⁵⁷ Jeremias Adams-Prassl, "The Algorithmic Boss: Protecting Human Agency in an Age of Artificial Intelligence," *Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal* 23, no. 2 (2023): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729342.2023.2274472>.

dignity in the digital age, Uganda's employment laws remain insufficiently prepared to respond to these developments.

2.5 AI and Work in Africa: Regional Literature

While still emerging, regional literature provides essential context: CIPESA (2025) highlights that Uganda's current laws such as, the Data Protection, Computer Misuse do not offer sufficient regulatory cover for AI risks.⁵⁸ The Centre for Multilateral Affairs (2025) points to the exclusion of women and youth from AI policymaking in Uganda, despite these groups being the most active in the gig economy.⁵⁹ Qhala Research (2025) documents the ghost work phenomenon, where Kenyan and Ugandan data annotators earn as little as \$2 per hour, compared to \$20 per hour in the US while being exposed to traumatic content.⁶⁰ ILO reports (2024/2025) on Uganda's online gig pilots confirm that while these platforms offer income, they almost entirely lack social protections.⁶¹ Ultimately, this research shows a worrying trend, where East African workers contribute essential work for global AI systems but remain underpaid, unprotected, and are left out of the laws meant to protect them.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

This paper addresses three primary deficiencies in the current literature, such as, Geographic Bias, Lack of Legal Specificity and absence of Reform Blueprints. Most AI labor law research focuses on the Global North. Systematic legal analysis of the global south remains sparse. Existing Ugandan AI studies are often policy oriented or sociological. They do not perform a deep dive into the Employment Act of 2006 or specific Ugandan case law.⁶² Conclusively, While the problems of AI and work in Uganda are beginning to be documented, there is a lack of rigorous, comparative legal analysis that proposes a concrete Legislative Reform Roadmap.

⁵⁸ Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), "Policy Alternatives for an Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem in Uganda," policy brief (Kampala, February 14, 2025), <https://cipesa.org/2025/02/ugandas-ai-framework-a-rights-based-policy-playbook/>.

⁵⁹ Florence Prosper, "AI Governance: Legal, Regulatory, and Gender Challenges in Uganda's AI Policy Landscape," *Centre for Multilateral Affairs (CfMA)*, January 26, 2025, <https://thecfma.org/bridging-the-gaps-legal-regulatory-and-gender-challenges-in-ugandas-ai-policy-landscape/>.

⁶⁰ Qhala, "Data Workers in AI: A New Frontier of Labour Exploitation in the Global South," *Medium*, April 2, 2024, <https://medium.com/@qhala/data-workers-in-ai-a-new-frontier-of-labour-exploitation-in-the-global-south-35226166e5d5>.

⁶¹ International Labour Organization, *Platform Work in Uganda: Promoting Decent Work for All* (Geneva: ILO, 2024), <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/24014-ILO-Digital-Labour-Uganda-report-v4-2-E.pdf>.

⁶² Amani Kituto, "The Link Between Law and AI in the Global South: Opportunities and Challenges," *Journal of African Law and Technology*, April 2024.

CHAPTER THREE

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Uganda's Primary Labour Legislation
- 2.3 Supplementary digital legislation
- 2.4 Comparative analysis

"In the digital century, sovereignty begins with software and law is the operating system."

Jelena Vujičić

3.1 Introduction

This chapter uses both Uganda's legislation including primary and subordinate legislation, case law and policy instruments. Also, it compares European Union's AI plus platform work directive as the most inclusive and globally influential regulatory responses to AI in employment also, Kenya's promising digital labour framework in east Africa. Not only does the chapter describe the framework, it also analyses their adequacies, gaps and lessons that are relevant to Uganda's reform.

3.2 Uganda's Primary Labour Legislation

3.2.1 Employment Act, 2006 (as Amended)

The employment act ⁶³was assented to by the president of the republic of Uganda on the 24-05-2006, it is the main law governing employment relationships in Uganda. The purpose of the act is to revise and merge the laws governing individual employment relationships. Section 3⁶⁴ of the act applies to all employees employed by an employer under a contract of service, apart from a few members like the UPDF and other categories governed by separate laws. Section

⁶³ Employment Act, 2006 (Act No. 6 of 2006)

⁶⁴ Ibid sec. 3

2⁶⁵ of the act defines a contract of service as any contract, whether oral or in writing, express or implied, where a person agrees in return for remuneration, to work for an employer. This definition fails to account for the tripartite, platform mediated relationships integral in the gig economy. In these models, the platform dictates the terms of engagement while the client provides the specific tasks, yet the worker is technically classified as an independent contractor. Subsequently, these arrangements fall entirely outside the scope of the Act's current protections.⁶⁶ The law sets clear yardsticks for working conditions, for instance, a 48-hour weekly limit, paid sick leave, and leave for parents. It puts in place under section 6⁶⁷ a strong anti discrimination clause covering various identities such as, HIV status, political opinion and section 7⁶⁸ mandates protection against sexual harassment. Noticeably, however, the statutory language does not yet extend to AI driven profiling.

Part VII of the Act addresses discipline and termination. Section 65⁶⁹ defines termination as the discharge of an employee from employment at the initiative of the employer for justifiable reasons. Section 66⁷⁰ requires notification and a hearing before termination. Section 71⁷¹ prohibits unfair termination. While the act allows redundancy as a ground for termination and Employment Regulations 2011⁷² necessitate notification to the Commissioner where an employer plans to terminate ten or more employees for economic, technological, structural inter-alia. It does not define redundancy nor does it establish a formula for severance in technological displacement cases. More so, it does not impose requirements of consultation with employees or their representatives before automation driven retrenchments. This regulatory gap continues despite the enactment of the comprehensive Employment (Amendment) Act⁷³. Whereas, this recent legislative amendment effectively updated key provisions of the principal Act. For instance, by codifying a standardized severance pay formula of one month's salary for every year of continuous service and also expanding protections for casual laborers.⁷⁴ The Act clearly failed to address the digital transformation of

⁶⁵ Ibid sec. 2

⁶⁶ Maura Dedema, "Socio-Technical Issues in the Platform-Mediated Gig Economy: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 75, no. 4 (April 2024): 412, <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24861>.

⁶⁷ Ibid sec. 6

⁶⁸ Ibid sec. 7

⁶⁹ Ibid secs. 65

⁷⁰ Ibid secs. 66

⁷¹ Ibid secs. 71

⁷² Employment Regulations, 2011, S.I. No. 29 of 2011.

⁷³ Employment (Amendment) Act, 2024

⁷⁴ Ibid, sec 15

work. By retaining the binary employee contractor classification and disregarding the realities of algorithmic management, the legislature overlooked an important chance to strengthen Uganda's Labor market against artificial intelligence and automation.

The case of *Bank of Uganda v Joseph Kibuuka & 4 others*,⁷⁵ overturned an industrial court ruling, is widely recognised as a pivotal moment in Uganda's labour law that reaffirmed the employer's right to terminate employment without providing a reason, provided notice or payment in lieu of notice given. The decision is often criticised for failing to fully integrate the principles of the International Labour Organisation 's(ILO) Termination of Employment Convention of 1982 (No. 158). Mainly Article 4 which requires a valid reason for termination connected to capacity, conduct, or operational requirements.⁷⁶ Within the context of AI driven workplaces, this legal precedent implies that a Ugandan employer may use an automated system to select employees for dismissal and execute those recommendations without providing a justification. Since there is no statutory mandate to disclose the use of algorithmic decision making or to defend the decision on its merits.⁷⁷ This leaves the banished worker with virtually no transparency and tremendously limited avenues for legal challenge

3.2.2 The Labour Unions Act and the Right to Collective Bargaining.

The Labour Unions Act⁷⁸, codifies the right of workers to organize and participate in collective bargaining. While this framework supposedly empowers unions to negotiate protections against AI driven displacement, the practical impact of Ugandan trade unions is constrained by the nation's vast informal economy. Since gig workers are not classified as employees under the Employment Act, they lack the formal legal standing required to organize within this traditional statutory structure.⁷⁹ Where as, the National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU) has advocated for increased rights awareness in the digital economy, advocacy only cannot substitute actual legal status.⁸⁰ Subsequently, the formal sector bias of Uganda's collective bargaining system leaves the majority of the digital workforce legally sidelined.

⁷⁵ *Bank of Uganda v. Joseph Kibuuka & 4 Others*, Civil Appeal No. 281 of 2016 (Court of Appeal of Uganda).

⁷⁶ ENS Africa, "Court: Ugandan Employers Have No Duty to Give a Reason to Terminate an Employee," ENS, June 21, 2022, <https://www.ensafrika.com/news/detail/5596/court-ugandan-employers-have-no-duty-to-give->.

⁷⁷ Abdulaziz Abdulrhman Mohammed Alkhalifa, "Legal Challenges of AI and Automation in the Workplace," *Access to Justice in Eastern Europe*.

⁷⁸ Labour Unions Act, 2006, sec 3.

⁷⁹ Busingye Kabumba, *The Informal Economy and the Law in Uganda*, updated August 12, 2022 (Kampala: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022), 27.

⁸⁰ Prime Time Communications, "Platform Economy Growth in Uganda: Tackling Gender Gaps and Improving Conditions for Young Workers," August 12, 2022, <https://primetime.ug/platform-economy-growth-in-uganda-tackling-gender-gaps-and-improving-conditions-for-young-workers/>.

3.2.3 Employment Regulations of 2011.

The Employment Regulations⁸¹, were enacted to operationalize the employment Act, and to offer specific procedural requirements for large scale terminations. Under Regulation 11⁸², an employer intending to dismiss ten or more employees within a three month window for economic, structural, or technological reasons must inform the Commissioner of Labour. Whereas, this represents Uganda's most direct statutory response to technological displacement, this rule has a few major weaknesses. Firstly, it only counts if a large number of people are fired at once, and it only protects people with formal official jobs. Also, it doesn't force companies to talk to their workers beforehand.⁸³ As a result, AI takes over more tasks and workers are often left with no warning and no plan for what to do next

3.3 Supplementary digital legislation

3.3.1 Data Protection and Privacy Act (DPPA) of 2019

Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act (DPPA)⁸⁴ is the country's primary legislation regulating personal data. Whereas it was not created with artificial intelligence in mind, it currently serves as the most relevant legal framework for AI oversight, mostly in the workplace. The Act provides individuals with standard data rights. Such as the ability of users to access, correct, or object to the use of their information. Also, it requires organizations to keep data secure. Nevertheless, unlike the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the DPPA lacks specific protections against decisions made wholly by automated systems. It also lacks data rights specific to employment. Subsequently, if a Ugandan worker is rejected by an AI hiring tool or evaluated by an algorithm, the DPPA does not currently give them the right to demand an explanation, request human intervention, or dispute the AI's conclusions.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid reg. 11

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019.

⁸⁵ Mukasa, Brian. "Personal Data without Borders: The Practical Legal and Jurisdictional Maze of Enforcing Data and Privacy Rights in Uganda." Kampala Associated Advocates, July 4, 2025.

3.3.2 Computer Misuse Act, 2011

The Computer Misuse Act⁸⁶, targets unlawful access to and interference with computer systems and electronic data. Section 12⁸⁷ makes unauthorised access to a computer system a criminal offence. The Act offers a limited basis for dealing with harmful manipulation of AI systems. It does not govern the lawful use of AI in employment. It contains no rules on algorithmic management, automated recruitment, or AI based termination decisions.⁸⁸

3.3.3 National Information Technology Authority of Uganda Act

The National Information Technology Authority of Uganda Act⁸⁹ established NITA-U as the central government body tasked with regulating and promoting the country's information technology landscape, mainly through infrastructure management and the development of technical standards. The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) has identified the agency as a potential foundation for Uganda's AI regulatory framework.⁹⁰ However, NITA-U's current legal mandate is not comprehensive enough to cover employment specific AI applications. Furthermore, the authority lacks the specialized expertise in human rights and Labor law that would be essential for it to serve as the primary regulator for AI technologies deployed within the workplace.⁹¹

3.3.4 Institutional Framework

Whereas Uganda's AI regulatory framework is growing, it currently remains a set of aspirational goals rather than a legally enforceable regime. High level strategic documents, such as Uganda Vision 2040⁹² and the Third National Development Plan (NDP III)⁹³, position digital transformation and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies as essential catalysts for achieving middle income status. Also, the National Fourth Industrial Revolution Strategy⁹⁴ specifically outlines the integration of AI within public sector operations. The most

⁸⁶ Computer Misuse Act, 2011.

⁸⁷ Ibid sec 12

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, 2009.

⁹⁰ Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), Policy Alternatives for an Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem in Uganda: A Rights-Based Policy Playbook (Kampala: CIPESA, 2025), 12.

⁹¹ Nemko, Uganda AI Regulation 2025: Key Digital Policy & Legal Guide (Oslo: Nemko, 2025), <https://digital.nemko.com/regulations/uganda-ai-regulation>.

⁹² National Planning Authority (NPA), *Uganda Vision 2040*.

⁹³ National Planning Authority (NPA), *Third National Development Plan (NDP III) 2020/21 – 2024/25*

⁹⁴ Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, *The National Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy for Uganda* (Kampala: Ministry of ICT, 2020), 22.

significant institutional advancement occurred in 2024 with the creation of the Uganda Communications Commission's National AI Taskforce⁹⁵. However, this body has faced scrutiny from the Centre for Multilateral Affairs (CMA) regarding its lack of transparency and insufficient representation of women and youth.⁹⁶ Although the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance began drafting a formal national AI policy with a regulatory decision anticipated by late 2025, the process remains ongoing.⁹⁷ Consequently, as since 2026, Uganda still lacks a comprehensive, legally binding statute dedicated to AI governance.

3.4 Comparative analysis

3.4.1 European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689) and EU Platform Work Directive (PWD).

The European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act⁹⁸ became effective in August 2024 and nears full implementation in August 2026, established the first comprehensive legal structure for AI. It uses a risk based classification system, ranging from prohibited to minimal risk. Significantly, for labor law, Annex III categorizes AI used for hiring, performance evaluation, and termination as high risk. This classification dictates strict compliance, including data governance, technical documentation, and meaningful human oversight. Also, Employers must provide clear explanations for AI driven decisions that impact workers.⁹⁹

Similar to the AI Act, the EU Platform Work Directive (PWD) targets the gig economy¹⁰⁰ by introducing a rebuttable presumption of employment. This changes the legal burden to platforms to prove workers are not employees. It also requires transparency regarding automated monitoring and necessitates consultation with worker representatives before significant algorithmic changes are applied. Since it is the most advanced global response to algorithmic management¹⁰¹, the PWD serves as a potential blueprint for Ugandan legislative reform. However, the EU model faces significant scholarly criticisms. The PWD fails to solve the fundamental power imbalance between platforms and workers.¹⁰² For Uganda that is just

⁹⁵ *Uganda Communications Act, 2013* (Uganda), sec. 5.

⁹⁶ Moses Owiny and Patricia Namakula, *Examining the Governance Frameworks and Gender Dimensions of Artificial Intelligence Policy in Uganda* (Kampala: Centre for Multilateral Affairs, 2025), 14

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689).

⁹⁹ "Complete Guide To EU Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act)," *Law & More* (blog), September 9, 2025, accessed April 9, 2026, <https://lawandmore.eu/eu-artificial-intelligence-act-ai-act/>.

¹⁰⁰ Article 3(3), 'any individual performing platform work, irrespective of the nature of the contractual relationship or its designation by the parties involved'.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

promising in the area of AI, while the EU framework offers a sophisticated starting point, a truly effective national policy must go beyond technical compliance to ensure substantive protections for the workforce.

3.4.2 Kenya

Kenya serves as a critical benchmark for Uganda's digital labor regulation, given their shared market dynamics. Such as, their expansive informal sectors, significant youth unemployment, and rapidly growing gig economies. Whereas, the Kenya Employment act¹⁰³ relies on a rigid distinction between employee and independent contractor, Kenya's digital infrastructure and AI policy path are notably more advanced.¹⁰⁴ Kenya's judiciary has taken a more proactive posture on workplace protections. In *Aviation and Allied Workers Union v Kenya Airways Limited* ¹⁰⁵, the Kenyan Industrial Court ordered Kenya Airways to reinstate 447 workers, ruling that their September 2012 redundancy was unfair. Also, court found that mandatory consultation with the union was not properly conducted, considering the process wrongful. This has not yet codified in Ugandan law. Still, Kenya's Work Injury Benefits Act¹⁰⁶ offers an all-inclusive coverage for workplace injuries than Uganda's Workers' Compensation Act, which is particularly relevant for those performing algorithmically managed tasks.¹⁰⁷ Kenya's experience offers a serious warning about the dangers of the global AI industry. The country became a major centre for data annotation. ¹⁰⁸However, many workers faced poor conditions while performing this work for large international tech companies. This has led to a strong criticism from community groups and activists in Kenya who are now fighting for better labor rights and protection for these digital workers.¹⁰⁹

Conclusively, While Kenya's Digital Economy Strategy and its engagement with ILO standards beat Uganda's current progress, Kenya still lacks a legally binding statute for AI in

¹⁰³ Kenya. *Employment Act, Cap 226*

¹⁰⁴ Edward Ronald Sekyewa, "Kenya's AI Bill is a Wake-up Call for Uganda," *The Observer*, April 2, 2024, accessed April 9, 2026, <https://observer.ug/index.php/viewpoint/80983-kenya-s-ai-bill-is-a-wake-up-call-for-uganda>.

¹⁰⁵ (Cause 157 of 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Kenya. *Work Injury Benefits Act, No. 13 of 2007*.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Definition; the process where people label data to teach AI how to think.

¹⁰⁹ How Big AI Companies Exploit Data Workers in Kenya," *The Sixteenth Council*, January 23, 2024, accessed April 9, 2026, <https://thesixteenthcouncil.com/how-big-ai-companies-exploit-data-workers-in-kenya/>.

employment it is still a bill.¹¹⁰ Both nations face the same fundamental challenge of bridging the gap between traditional labor law and the realities of algorithmic management.

¹¹⁰ Ibid

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Job Displacement and Automation
- 4.3 The Gig Economy and Platform Work
- 4.4 AI in Human Resources and Hiring
- 4.5 Regulatory Gaps and Governance Failures

While AI promises transformative potential, its current global structure risks perpetuating a modern form of dependency, where the economic benefits and technological control remain concentrated in the central states, while periphery states provide the essential, yet invisibilized, labour that powers the AI revolution.

(Qhala, 2025)

4.1 Introduction

By Integrating the legal and conceptual frame work from previous chapters, this section analyses four critical failures in Uganda’s Labor laws regarding AI. These include, job displacement, platform based gig work, algorithmic hiring practices, and general regulatory gaps. By reviewing the specific gaps missing from the current framework, the chapter evaluates Uganda’s legislative gaps against global standards.

4.2 Job Displacement and Automation

4.2.1 The Magnitude of the Challenge in Uganda

In Uganda, the risk of AI driven job displacement is uniquely tied to the country’s specific Labor market structure. According to the Skill Biased Technological Change (SBTC) framework as discussed in chapter two, workers performing routine, predictable tasks, such as

data entry, transcription, and basic content creation are most vulnerable.¹¹¹ Regrettably, these are the very sectors currently expanding within Uganda's formal and gig economies. For example, programs like the ILO's Online Gig Work Pilot, which trained 218 youth in fields like graphic design and data entry, may inadvertently be preparing them for roles that are being rapidly automated.¹¹² The Key Concern for the Ugandan Workforce are that, AI excels at codifiable work, putting customer service and administrative gig workers at immediate risk. Brynjolfsson, Chandar, and Chen (2025) identify a 16% relative decrease in youth employment in roles with high AI exposure, highlighting the inequitable impact of automation on early career professionals.¹¹³ Moreover, Uganda already faces a critical youth unemployment rate, the automation of these entry level jobs poses a direct threat to economic stability. The very skills being promoted as a solution to youth unemployment are the ones most likely to be rendered obsolete by AI in the near future.

Whereas, AI poses a significant threat to certain jobs, it also offers a pathway for economic evolution through task redistribution. Rather than simply replacing humans, AI can enhance worker productivity and create new job categories.¹¹⁴ Uganda's large informal sector is defined by its adaptability and diverse income streams, may actually be more resilient to these shifts than rigid formal institutions. Platforms like ProGigFinder exemplify this potential by providing informal workers with digital identities and AI driven career resources.¹¹⁵ For Uganda to benefit, legal and policy frameworks must promote these local innovations instead of limiting them through restrictive regulation.

Despite AI's potential to create new industries, its distributional effects remain a major concern. Economic growth does not promise that workers displaced by automation will benefit from the new opportunities created.¹¹⁶ Whereas Uganda's broader social protection systems and formal retraining initiatives remain limited, the Employment (Amendment) Act fundamentally shifts the legal landscape by making severance pay strictly mandatory section 87 and 89.¹¹⁷ By

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Erik Brynjolfsson, Bharat Chandar, and Ruyu Chen, "Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence," Working Paper No. 25-27 (Stanford, CA: Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, August 2025), 14–16, <https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/working-paper/canaries-coal-mine-six-facts-about-recent-employment-effects-artificial>.

¹¹⁴ International Centre for Law and Economics (ICLE), *AI, Productivity, and Labour Markets: A 2026 Empirical Review* (2026).

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ International Labour Organization, *Work Transformed: The Promise and Peril of AI*, ILO Brief (Geneva: ILO, 2024), 8–10, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/work-transformed-promise-and-peril-ai>.

¹¹⁷ *Employment (Amendment) Act, 2025*, § 87, 89.

legalizing a standardized framework of one month's salary for each year of service during redundancies or physical incapacity, the law ensures that the disastrous individual costs of workplace transitions are legally shared, providing vital structured support to vulnerable workers facing market shifts.

4.2.2 Inadequacy of the Existing Legal Response

Uganda's Employment Act's response to technological displacement is fragmentary. As already noted in Chapter Three, Section 40(3)(c) exempts employers from the duty to provide work where interruptions to business activities are caused by economic or technological reasons which result in a shortage or reduction of work that is beyond the employer's control. This provision appears designed to shield employers from liability during periods of technological change, rather than to protect workers against its consequences.¹¹⁸

As previously noted in chapter 3, the Act does not define redundancy.¹¹⁹ Whereas courts have accepted redundancy as a ground for termination and have applied principles from Kenyan jurisprudence and the requirement of consultation which was established in *Aviation and Allied Workers Union v Kenya Airways Limited*¹²⁰ a landmark judgment from the Industrial Court of Kenya. The court ruled that an employer must consult with the affected employees or their union before the final decision to declare redundancies is made. Consultation must be meaningful and not just a mere formality after the decision is already set in stone. There is no statutory basis for these requirements in Uganda's own legislation. The Employment Regulations of 2011 require notification to the Commissioner of Labour only where ten or more employees are to be terminated within three months, and even this obligation is framed as notification rather than consultation. It does not apply to smaller scale automation driven displacement. It does not require any advance notice to affected workers themselves. And it provides no mechanism for workers to challenge the decision to automate or to demand alternatives to redundancy.¹²¹

The Employment (Amendment) Act of 2024¹²², which has now been enacted into law, significantly improves the financial landscape for displaced workers by establishing a mandatory severance formula. Under this new regime, employers are required to pay a

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ [2012] eKLR

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Employment (Amendment) Act, 2024

minimum of one month's gross salary for every year of service completed by the employee.¹²³ Nevertheless, while this is a landmark victory for Labor rights in Uganda, it serves primarily as a financial safety net rather than a regulatory framework for the process of automation. The amendment addresses the financial cost of termination but remains silent on the process of displacement. This implies that when workers lose their jobs to AI, they might get standard severance pay, but they are left with no real protection. The act does not give them the right to be warned in advance about automation, the right to discuss these digital changes with their boss, or the right to get retraining paid for by the employer.

The contrast between the Ugandan and European Union (EU) legal frameworks reveals a significant protection gap within Uganda's workforce protections. Under the EU's Collective Redundancies Directive¹²⁴, any suggestion for large scale layoffs initiates a mandatory consultation process with workers' representatives aimed at reaching an agreement, besides strict disclosure and notification requirements. Further more, the EU AI Act¹²⁵, which categorizes AI systems used for workforce restructuring as high risk, imposing them to rigorous preliminary stage assessments and continuous monitoring.¹²⁶

In contrast, Uganda lacks procedural safeguards for redundancies and regulatory oversight of high risk AI use in workplaces. Consequently, companies can implement automation that displaces large numbers of workers without any legal duty to give advance notice, engage in meaningful consultation, or consider substitutes such as retraining.¹²⁷ While such actions would face heavy legal resistance in the EU, they remain entirely permissible and largely unmonitored under current Ugandan.

4.2.3 The Informal Sector Problem

The Employment (Amendment) Act of 2024¹²⁸, while a significant step forward, remains largely inaccessible to the vast majority of the population. Because the Act primarily governs formal employment relationships, its new protections. Such as, the mandatory severance formula fails to reach the 95 percent of the workforce operating in the informal

¹²³ As above.

¹²⁴ (98/59/EC)

¹²⁵ EU AI Act.

¹²⁶ Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 Laying Down Harmonised Rules on Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act), *Official Journal of the European Union* L, 2024/1689 (July 12, 2024), Annex III, point 4.

¹²⁷ International Labour Organization, *Realizing Decent Work in the Platform Economy: Draft Convention and Recommendation*, International Labour Conference, 114th Session, Report V(4) (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2026), 12–15.

¹²⁸ Ibid

sector.¹²⁹ Millions of Ugandans in the informal economy, including those whose livelihoods are managed by AI driven platforms and gig apps, the law offers no shield against technological displacement. This regulatory exclusion suggests that legal reform must not stop at the gates of formal offices.¹³⁰ To be truly effective, the next phase of legislative evolution must expand its scope to include platform workers, gig laborers, and informal workers whose economic lives are increasingly dictated by algorithmic mediation

4.3 The Gig Economy and Platform Work

4.3.1 The Growth of Platform Work in Uganda

Platform work¹³¹ is growing rapidly in Uganda. App based transport platforms including SafeBoda, Bolt operate in Kampala, they apply algorithmic systems to match drivers with passengers. They set progressive fares, monitor driver performance, and determine access to bonuses and incentives. Also, delivery platforms are expanding, the local platform ProGigFinder, launched in early 2026, it attempts to bring Uganda's informal service workers, such as, cleaners, electricians, plumbers, developers into a digital marketplace combined with MTN and Airtel mobile money.¹³² More so, internationally Ugandan digital workers are active on platforms including Upwork, Fiverr, and increasingly on AI data annotation platforms that pay very low wages for the work of labelling images, transcribing audio, and moderating content for AI training.¹³³

The ILO's 2024 Online Gig Work Pilot, launched in January 2024 and evaluated in April 2025, trained 218 young Ugandans, including refugees from the Nakivale Settlement in skills that support platform work. The programme represents a recognition by the ILO that gig work is a significant livelihood pathway for Ugandan youth, but the ILO's own assessment acknowledges that gig work can offer entry level opportunities and income support, but it often lacks social and labour protections.¹³⁴ The ILO Specialist on Employment Strategies in the Digital Economy noted that as AI reshapes the gig economy, workers need to develop the ability to collaborate with AI tools, not just compete against them.¹³⁵ Richard Bigirwa of NOTU has

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ International Labour Organization, "With Uganda Embracing Digital Transformation of Jobs, Stakeholders Gather to Discuss Opportunities and Challenges," ILO.org, October 26, 2023, https://www.ilo.org/africa/news/WCMS_899290/lang--en/index.htm.

¹³¹ Definition: platform work, short term, flexible, task based work mediated by digital platforms.

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ International Labour Organization, *Artificial Intelligence Adoption and Its Impact on Jobs*, paper prepared for the G20 Framework Working Group under South Africa's G20 Presidency (Geneva: ILO, 2025), 5,

called for stronger labour rights education in digital training programmes implicitly acknowledging that the rights that exist are inadequate.¹³⁶

4.3.2 The Worker Classification Problem

The Employment (Amendment) Act of 2024¹³⁷ marks a significant development in Uganda's Labor landscape, yet it leaves the fundamental problem of worker classification for the digital age largely unaddressed. While the new legislation successfully brought domestic and casual workers into the fold of formal protection, it did not explicitly define the contract of service to encompass platform based work. subsequently, gig workers remain bound by digital terms and conditions that characterize them as independent contractors, a designation that continues to function as a barrier to the Act's revamped protections.¹³⁸

Since the 2024 reforms did not bridge this gap, platform workers are still excluded from the updated standards regarding minimum wage, regulated working hours, and the reinforced leave entitlements now enjoyed by other previously informal sectors. Furthermore, despite the law's stricter stance on termination and redundancy, gig workers cannot seek redress through the Industrial Court or utilize the enhanced dispute resolution mechanisms. By remaining legally distinct from employees, they are also still denied the right to collective bargaining under the Labour Unions Act¹³⁹. This leaves them in a regulatory vacuum where the technological reality of their work remains incompatible with the traditional legal framework.

Whereas the challenge of classifying platform workers is a global regulatory problem, Uganda's legislative response has remained more constrained than that of its international counterparts. For instance, the UK Supreme Court addressed this in *Uber BV and others v Aslam and others*¹⁴⁰ by recognizing drivers as workers a middle tier classification that grants access to holiday pay and minimum wage. The European Union's Platform Work Directive adopts a rebuttable presumption of employment, effectively requiring platforms to prove that a worker is truly self employed.¹⁴¹ Spain's Riders' Law adopted a direct approach by explicitly

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/G20%20FWG_AI%20adoption%20and%20its%20impact%20on%20jobs.pdf.

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Labour Unions Act, No. 7 (2006).

¹⁴¹ Arthur Cox LLP, "Final Destination: UK Supreme Court Rules Uber Drivers Entitled to Workers' Rights," Arthur Cox Knowledge, March 1, 2021, <https://www.arthurcox.com/knowledge/final-destination-uk-supreme-court-rules-uber-drivers-entitled-to-workers-rights>.

extending employee status to delivery personnel, highlighting a proactive trend toward worker protection ¹⁴²that contrasts with the current legal framework in Uganda.

Uganda's legal framework does not provide the protections available in other jurisdictions, leaving gig workers like SafeBoda drivers in a defenceless position. Since these drivers are not legally classified as employees under the Employment Act, they are deprived of fundamental Labor rights, such as, the ability to claim unfair termination if an algorithm deactivates their account.¹⁴³ This insecurity is intensified by the Data Protection and Privacy Act (DPPA)¹⁴⁴, which does not grant a specific right to an explanation for automated decisions in employment contexts, leaving drivers without remedy or even an explanation of why they lost their livelihood.¹⁴⁵ In addition, Uganda's dispute resolution structures and protections under the Labour Unions Act apply only to standard employee & employer relationships. As a result, these workers cannot seek redress before labour officers or form collective organisations.¹⁴⁶ This classification gap operates as a denial of protection, excluding a growing segment of Uganda's workforce from legal and social safeguards designed to prevent exploitation.

4.3.3 Algorithmic Management: Soft ware as the new supervisor

Even if litigation or future laws manage to categorize gig workers as workers rather than employees, the challenge of algorithmic management raises further questions that Uganda's law is unprepared to answer. Algorithmic management systems perform functions usually related with employers, such as, assigning tasks, setting rates, monitoring performance, applying sanctions, and making decisions about continued access to work. They do so without human discussion, without the procedural safeguards that employment law attaches to disciplinary decisions, and critically without transparency.¹⁴⁷ The deactivation of a Ugandan gig worker by an algorithm is typically characterized by a total absence of due process. These automated terminations occur without prior notice or stated justification, leaving the individual with no formal channel for appeal. By design, such decisions are instantaneous, final, and shielded by non transparent algorithms.¹⁴⁸ The Employment Act¹⁴⁹ requires notification and a

¹⁴² Euractiv with AFP, "Spain Declares Delivery Riders to Be Staff, in EU First," Euractiv, March 12, 2021, <https://www.euractiv.com/news/spain-declares-delivery-riders-to-be-staff-in-eu-first/>.

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Jennifer Mate, "Algorithmic Management and the Erosion of Labour Protections in Platform-Based Work" (Working Paper, January 2026).

¹⁴⁸ As above

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

hearing before termination (Section 66) and the right to written reasons for dismissal do not apply because there is no employment relationship. The access rights enshrined in the DPPA do not easily bridge the gap between data retrieval and algorithmic accountability.¹⁵⁰ Knowing what data exists is not the same as understanding the opaque correlations a system uses to classify a worker as a fraud risk or an underperformer.

The issue at hand exceeds simple unfairness, it represents a fundamental breakdown of due process. According to the ILO's Decent Work Framework, true Labor dignity requires more than just a pay check, it requires the presence of enforceable rights. An income stream that an unchallengeable algorithm can terminate at will fails the decent work standard.¹⁵¹ According to the World Economic Forum and Forbes, gig workers are increasingly governed by AI agents, leading to a circumstance of automated exploitation.¹⁵² For Uganda, the lack of robust legal reform makes this an immediate and acute threat.

4.3.4 Data Workers and the AI Value Chain

A specific, overlooked category of platform Labor in Uganda and the wider region is the participation of Ugandan workers in the AI value chain itself. For example, as data annotators, content moderators, and AI trainers. According to the Qhala Research's 2025¹⁵³ supra. An analysis of data workers in AI in the Global South documents that workers in neighbouring Kenya are paid as little as 2 US dollars per hour for work that their counterparts in the United States perform for twenty dollars a disparity driven by deliberate outsourcing decisions by AI companies seeking to reduce labour costs. The work itself that includes labelling images, transcribing audio, moderating violent and disturbing content carries psychological risks that have been documented in multiple investigations. The Research argues,

‘While AI promises transformative potential, its current global structure risks perpetuating a modern form of dependency, where the economic benefits and technological control remain concentrated in the central states, while periphery states provide the essential, yet invisibilized, labour that powers the AI revolution.’¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ International Labour Organization, *Guide to the Decent Work Indicators: Guidelines for Producers and Users of Statistical and Legal Framework Indicators*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: ILO, 2013), 15–20.

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

Uganda, as AI adoption accelerates and data annotation work expands, faces the risk of joining this global value chain in its most exploitative position providing Cheap and vulnerable labour force without the protections that workers in more regulated jurisdictions would enjoy.

4.4 AI in Human Resources and Hiring

4.4.1 AI in Recruitment: Growing Adoption

AI powered hiring is no longer a distant trend but a growing reality in Uganda's formal sector. This is witnessed from banks to tech startups, employers are using automated tools to analyse CVs and conduct scored video interviews, often generating shortlists before a human recruiter ever sees an application. This shift is accelerating as affordable cloud based software or service as a software makes high level recruitment AI accessible to small and medium sized businesses, not just corporate giants.¹⁵⁵

While these advancements offer clear logistical benefits, such as, the ability to process massive applicant pools instantly and the potential to mitigate certain conscious human prejudices, they introduce significant legal and ethical risks. Research and regulatory trends in other jurisdictions reveal that AI hiring tools often internalize and escalate the systemic biases found in their training datasets. For example, an algorithm trained on past hiring records from a firm with a history of gender imbalance will likely codify and repeat those discriminatory outcomes. Similarly, biometric assessments in video interviews, such as facial expression analysis, may yield inconsistent or unfair results for candidates with diverse cultural backgrounds or unique facial characteristics. Furthermore, automated CV parsers that penalize employment gaps can create a disparate impact on women who have taken career breaks for caregiving or individuals coming from the informal economy.¹⁵⁶

4.4.2 Discrimination and the Limits of the Employment Act

The Framework against discriminatory practices established by Section 6 of Uganda's Employment Act¹⁵⁷ addresses specific protected grounds, including race, gender, religion, and disability status. Whereas, these protections are comprehensive in addressing intentional bias by human actors, they are fundamentally unprepared to tackle the complications of algorithmic

¹⁵⁵ Saurabh Pratap Singh Rathore, "The Impact of AI on Recruitment and Selection Processes: Analysing the Role of AI in Automating and Enhancing Recruitment and Selection Procedures.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

discrimination.¹⁵⁸ Traditional discrimination happens when a person chooses to treat someone unfairly. AI bias is different because it comes from patterns hidden in data. Because the computer is just following these patterns, it is much harder to see and harder to prove using current laws. To illustrate this gap, in 2014, Amazon developed an experimental AI recruitment tool trained on ten years of historical resumes to identify top talent. However, because the tech industry was historically male dominated, the algorithm learned to associate success with men and began penalizing female resumes. Despite attempts to neutralize the bias, the company discovered the AI could still use proxies to maintain discriminatory patterns, leading them to scrap the project as they could not ensure its fairness.¹⁵⁹

Consequently, these rankings continue to give an advantage to the same specific groups. The resulting exclusion is harmful and built into the system, yet it doesn't violate the Employment Act because it lacks the clear intent to discriminate usually needed for a legal claim. Since the current law is built to punish identifiable acts of bias committed by people, this type of automated discrimination remains a significant legal challenge to prosecute.

Moreover, the current legal landscape is missing the procedural guardrails essential for a workforce increasingly shaped by AI. The Employment Act falls short by failing to require bias audits or transparency standards for companies utilizing automated systems. Consequently, applicants are left in the dark they have no legal right to be notified of AI involvement, no access to the logic used to grade them, and no entitlement to a human appeal for a rejected application.¹⁶⁰ Although the Data Protection and Privacy Act (DPPA) provide general data rights, these protections aren't tailored to the specific vulnerabilities of the hiring process, leaving job seekers with few effective ways to challenge an automated rejection.

4.4.3 The Right to Explanation: A Critical Gap

One of the most significant gaps in Uganda's legal framework is the absence of a right to explanation for automated employment decisions. In the European Union, Article 22 of the GDPR¹⁶¹ grants individuals the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automated processing that significantly affect them, including hiring decisions. The AI Act reinforces this

¹⁵⁸ Uwe Peters, "Algorithmic Political Bias in Artificial Intelligence Systems," *Philosophy & Technology* 35, no. 2 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00512-8>.

¹⁵⁹ Jeffrey Dastin, "Amazon Scraps Secret AI Recruiting Tool That Showed Bias against Women," *Reuters*, October 10, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-amazon-com-jobs-automation-insight/amazon-scraps-secret-ai-recruiting-tool-that-showed-bias-against-women-idUSKCN1MK08>.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Ibid

by requiring that high risk AI systems including those used in recruitment provide users and affected persons with clear information about the system's outputs and limitations, and by mandating meaningful human oversight.¹⁶² Collectively, these rules grant applicants three distinct protections, such as, the right to know when AI is used, the right to understand the reasoning behind its output, and the right to appeal to a human overseer.

Uganda lacks a comparable regulatory framework, leaving applicants rejected by AI without any legal entitlement to transparency or recourse. They are denied the right to be notified of AI involvement, the right to understand the evaluation criteria, and the access necessary to contest automated assessments through human review. In an unstable labor market where formal positions represent only a fraction of the employment landscape, this opacity is not just a legal loophole but a systemic injustice.¹⁶³ Without access to the underlying logic of these decisions, applicants are effectively barred from identifying or challenging the discriminatory biases embedded within these algorithms.

4.4.4 AI in Workplace Monitoring and Performance Management

Beyond hiring, AI is increasingly being used in ongoing workplace monitoring and performance management. For example, systems that track keystrokes and screen activity in remote work contexts, algorithms that score customer service calls, AI tools that analyze attendance patterns and flag employees for additional scrutiny.¹⁶⁴ These applications raise significant concerns about worker privacy, dignity, and the quality of the employment relationship, concerns that Uganda's legal framework is equally unprepared to address.

The DPPA applies to the processing of personal data in the workplace and would in principle require employers using AI monitoring systems to have a lawful basis for the processing, to inform workers of the data being collected, and to implement appropriate safeguards. In practice, enforcement of these obligations in the context of employer-employee relationships is limited, and the Act does not create specific employment protections against excessive surveillance.¹⁶⁵ The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2006 could theoretically be

¹⁶² Gianclaudio Malgieri, "Radical Rewriting of Article 22 GDPR on Machine Decisions in the AI Era," *European Law Blog*, March 28, 2019, <https://europeanlawblog.eu/2019/03/28/radical-rewriting-of-article-22-gdpr-on-machine-decisions-in-the-ai-era/>.

¹⁶³ Ibid

¹⁶⁴ Smith, Jane. "AI-Driven Employee Productivity Monitoring System: A Case Study in Remote Work Environments." *International Journal of Labor Research* 12, no. 4 (2023): 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s123456789>.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

interpreted to address the psychosocial harms of intensive AI monitoring, a growing body of research links constant surveillance to stress, burnout, and reduced wellbeing¹⁶⁶.

4.5 Regulatory Gaps and Governance Failures

4.5.1 The Absence of AI-Specific Labour Regulation

Uganda currently lacks specialized Labor laws for artificial intelligence, but instead relies on a patchwork of existing regulations like the Employment Act and the Computer Misuse Act.¹⁶⁷ According to CIPESA, this fragmented approach provides insufficient coverage for the specific risks and benefits AI introduces to the workforce.¹⁶⁸ While a national AI policy is in development, its final content remains uncertain, leaving the country in a vulnerable position.¹⁶⁹ This regulatory gap is especially pronounced when compared to the EU's 2024 AI Act, which was built on decades of international Labor standards.¹⁷⁰ In contrast, Uganda is now under immense pressure to shorten that timeline, tasked with building a comprehensive legal framework in a much shorter window to keep up with the rapid pace of local AI adoption.¹⁷¹

4.5.2 Institutional Gap

Much like its fragmented legal framework, Uganda's institutional setup for AI governance suffers from a divide between technological regulation and Labor protection. This lack of coordination means that while technical standards may be addressed, the specific impact of AI on workers remains overlooked, as no single body effectively bridges the gap between digital oversight and employment rights.¹⁷² Although NITA-U is responsible for technological oversight, it lacks the necessary foundation in Labor law, while the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development oversees the Employment Act without having yet incorporated the ways AI affects its regulatory responsibilities.¹⁷³ Concurrently, the National AI Taskforce under the Uganda Communications Commission provides advisory support, yet it faces ongoing

¹⁶⁶ International Labour Organization, *AI Systems @ Work: A Changing Psychosocial Work Environment*, ILO Working Paper 170 (Geneva: ILO, 2026), 12–15, <https://webapps.ilo.org/static/english/intserv/working-papers/wp170/index.html>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). "Towards Ethical AI Regulation in Africa." CIPESA website. Accessed May 12, 2026. <https://cipesa.org/path-to-publication-if-applicable>.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

¹⁷¹ "AI is Here to Stay! – Experts Call for Swift Legislation in Uganda," *The Observer*, May 10, 2024, <https://observer.ug/index.php/news/headlines/81285-ai-is-here-to-stay-experts-call-for-swift-legislation-in-uganda>.

¹⁷² *AI-Policy-Governance-Framework-Research_2025_Final* (Uganda: Institutional Analysis Series, 2025).

¹⁷³ Ibid

criticism regarding its lack of transparent operations and inclusive engagement.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, although the Industrial Court settles employment disputes, it lacks the specialized technical expertise to evaluate algorithmic decision-making or AI systems. Consequently, no single entity currently possesses the combined mandate and technical capability required to effectively oversee AI integration within the workplaces.¹⁷⁵

The 2025 study by the Centre for Multilateral Affairs notes that institutional bodies like the Uganda Communications Commission's AI taskforce lack transparency, inclusivity, and overall effectiveness. The taskforce has been specifically faulted for its limited public outreach and for failing to adequately represent women and youth. This shortcoming goes beyond simple procedural errors because the individuals most vulnerable to AI's impact such as, gig workers, women, youth, and those in the informal sector are excluded from the decision making process.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, the governance structure itself reinforces the very inequalities that AI is liable to worsen.

4.5.3 Enforcement Capacity

Effective enforcement remains a major challenge, even when legal safeguards are in place. Uganda's Labor enforcement authorities lack the adequate resources to address the scale and complexity of the modern labour market. While the Industrial Court exists to resolve employment conflicts, the high cost of legal representation often makes it inaccessible to gig and informal workers. Simultaneously, the Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO), under the DPPA, is still in the process of building its institutional strength. The technical complexity of AI adds another barrier, neither the Labor inspectorate nor the PDPO currently has the specialized expertise required to audit algorithms, analyse training datasets, or evaluate AI generated outputs. This enforcement deficit is particularly critical in Uganda due to restricted public funding, a massive informal economy, and the swift pace of AI integration.¹⁷⁷ Reform of legislation must focus on strong investment in enforcement systems to make new legal duties effective and meaningful.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹⁷⁷ A. Biswa, "International Human Rights Law: Enforcement Mechanisms and Challenges in a Globalized World," *International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar* 15, no. 2 (2024): 157–63, <https://doi.org/10.36676/jrps.v15.i2.20>.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Conclusion

5.3 Recommendations

“By far, the greatest danger of AI is that people conclude too early that they understand it”

Eliezer Yudkowsky

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter brings together the main findings of the paper. It concludes that Uganda’s current Labor laws and institutions are simply not built for an economy run by AI and digital platforms. To fix this gap, this chapter offers a set of clear, practical recommendations. Ultimately, the goal is to make sure that as technology advances, it does not destroy the basic workers' rights guaranteed by Uganda's Constitution.

5.2 Conclusion

This study explores whether Uganda's current employment regulations are capable of enduring future transformations like AI. Through a comprehensive analysis of domestic legislation with insights from European and Kenyan legal precedents and AI scholarship, the research reveals that the existing framework is insufficient. Even so, the paper argues that Uganda can achieve regulatory maturity provided that policy updates are pursued with the urgency necessitated by the swift pace of technological change.

While the Employment Act of 2006 stands as the cornerstone of Uganda’s Labor jurisprudence, its foundation frame work remains captive to a legacy era characterized by physical workspaces, human oversight, and clear supervisory hierarchies. Since the statutory regime relies on a rigid, rigid definition of the employment relationship, it structurally denies legal protection to the expanding category of gig and platform workers. Also, despite the recent enactment of the Employment (Amendment) Act of 2025 which successfully modernized redundancy severance structures and expanded protections for casual labourers, the legislature clearly bypassed the challenges of the digital space. The amended framework offers no

statutory protection against algorithmic bias or the arbitrary, automated deactivation of digital workers. By not requiring transition support or upskilling for workers displaced by automation, the current statutory framework remains inconsistent with the realities of an AI driven economy.

The Data Protection and Privacy Act of 2019 provide a basic framework for data governance, but it does not address the specific risks facing the modern workforce. It does not include key employment safeguards, such as a worker's right to an explanation for automated hiring outcomes, requirements for human oversight in AI driven recruitment, or for employers to carry out thorough bias audits. Also, the Computer Misuse Act and the NITA-U Act are unprepared for this task, since they focus on cybersecurity and infrastructure regulation rather than the socio economic interruptions caused by AI in the Labor market. This regulatory gap is further intensified by an institutional landscape that is deeply fragmented and under funded. Current bodies like the Personal Data Protection Office and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development work in isolation, lacking both the resources and the comprehensive coordination necessary to manage the complex intersection of technology and Labor rights.

The comparative analysis reveals that Uganda can leverage more advanced global frameworks to modernize its own legal landscape. For instance, the EU AI Act assigns AI usage in employment as a high-risk activity requiring strict human oversight requiring, transparency, and conformity assessments. Similarly, the EU Platform Work Directive establishes a legal assumption that a working relationship is employment, unless the employer proves otherwise. for gig workers while requiring platforms to disclose the mechanics of their automated management systems. Regionally, Kenya's Employment and Labour Relations Court have used case law to include consultation obligations during redundancies, a standard that Ugandan courts have recognised but which still does not have statutory recognition in Uganda. These models provide practical frameworks for domestic reform. However, Uganda must also pay attention to the common critique of these frameworks. For instance, a leaning to prioritize technical compliance over meaningful worker empowerment. By drawing on these examples, Uganda can develop a framework that delivers real protections rather than formal procedural compliance.

Chapter Four reveals four critical legal failures within Uganda's current framework, each carrying significant consequences for the modern workforce. First, automation and the resulting job displacement present a serious threat, especially to young workers. The current

laws offer no rights to advance warning, no mandated consultations, and no transition support beyond basic severance. Second, the expanding gig economy remains entirely unregulated by the Employment Act, leaving platform workers subject to algorithmic management that operates without legal accountability or any mechanism for challenge. Additionally, the integration of AI into hiring and human resources introduces deep seated risks of discrimination and opacity. These issues are difficult to challenge in court because Uganda does not recognize a right to explanation, and its anti discrimination laws are too limited to address algorithmic bias. These weaknesses are compounded by wider governance gaps, including the absence of AI specific legislation and a fragmented institutional framework. Weak enforcement capacity leads to inconsistent application of the limited protections in place, leaving much of the workforce exposed to rapid technological change. As a result, Uganda's legal framework does not sufficiently protect vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and informal or gig workers, at a time when unregulated AI systems increasingly exploit their lack of safeguards. This position is unsustainable, as the rapid growth of the digital economy continues to outpace legal reform, creating a widening gap between technological development and labour rights protection.

Despite these challenges, there are signs of positive progress. Uganda's AI policy landscape is currently picking up speed, as seen by the Ministry of ICT's active development of a national AI strategy and the ILO's focus on the domestic gig economy. Furthermore, the advocacy efforts of organizations like CIPESA and the Centre for Multilateral Affairs, alongside emerging civil society and entrepreneurial initiatives, provide a strong foundation for legal progression. The following recommendations seek to balance practicality with ambition offering solutions that fit within Uganda's resource constraints while effectively addressing the extent of the digital Labor crisis.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Statutory Inclusion of the Platform Workers

The most fundamental reform required is a formal amendment to the Employment Act to establish a third category of worker situated between a traditional employee and an independent contractor that accurately reflects the legal and economic reality of platform mediated work. This recommendation develops from an analysis of the worker classification crisis in section 4.3.2 and draws direct inspiration from the United Kingdom's worker category and the

European Union's Platform Work Directive in section 2.4.1 regarding the rebuttable presumption of employment.

Under this proposed amendment, a platform worker or dependent contractor would be defined as any individual providing services through a digital link where the platform maintains primary control over the terms of engagement. Simply put, this legal status comes into play whenever a tech platform meets at least two of four basic conditions. These conditions are when the platform sets the pay rates on its own without room for negotiation, uses an automated system or algorithm to hand out and approve tasks, tracks and monitors a worker's performance digitally, or holds the sole power to suspend and block a worker from the app. By using this straightforward rule, the law looks past whatever formal title the company puts on a contract and focuses instead on how much real control the platform handles over the worker.

Workers falling within this definition must be granted a distinct set of minimum protections designed to mitigate the risks of the gig economy. These include apportioned Guaranteed minimum income adjusted to hours worked, statutory protection against arbitrary deactivation without an opportunity for human review, and the right to seek redress through the Industrial Court's dispute resolution procedures. Furthermore, the reform must explicitly guarantee the right to collective bargaining and provide access to the same occupational safety and health protections enjoyed by traditional employees. The reform shifts the burden of proof to address the strong information imbalance between global platforms and individual contractors. When a worker claims platform worker status, the platform must prove the worker operates as a genuinely independent business entity. This presumption of employment removes the barrier created by the difficulty of proving economic dependence in digital work settings, and aligns national policy with international standards for fair digital labour.

5.3.2 Codifying Algorithmic Transparency, Consultation, and Retraining Obligations

The Employment Act should be amended to establish clear rules on employer duties during technological change. This framework should regulate algorithmic transparency, consultation, and retraining obligations. The reform aligns national policy with the EU Collective Redundancies Directive in section 2.4.1, ensuring that automation driven growth does not undermine worker dignity.

The main obligation requires statutory advance disclosure. Employers introducing automation expected to displace five or more employees within a 12-month period must issue at least three

months' notice. The notice must be given to affected employees and their representatives. It must explain the nature of the automation, the expected level of job loss, the criteria used to identify affected roles, and the mitigation measures planned by the employer. This transparency reduces the information imbalance that often leaves workers unprepared for algorithm driven restructuring as shown in section 4.3.3.

Beyond notification, the law should require meaningful consultation. Employers must engage worker representatives or employees directly to assess alternatives to redundancy. These discussions should prioritise internal redeployment, subsidised retraining, reduced working hours, and phased introduction of technology. To prevent superficial compliance, employers must provide written responses to worker proposals and explain why each option was accepted or rejected.

The Employment Regulations of 2011 should be revised to reduce the collective redundancy threshold from ten employees as shown in section 2.2.3 to five, in line with Uganda's small and medium enterprise structure. The revisions should expressly recognise AI driven displacement as a trigger for notification. They should also extend the notification duty beyond the Commissioner of Labour to include affected workers, strengthening procedural protections for the modern workforce

5.3.3 Statutory Regulation of Algorithmic Management and Artificial Intelligence in Employment.

To protect workers' rights in an increasingly automated economy, Uganda should introduce specific legislation governing the use of AI in employment decisions. The framework should extend the Data Protection and Privacy Act of 2019 and reflect the EU AI Act's classification of employment systems as high risk in section 2.41. Whether through amendments to existing data protection laws or a dedicated Employment and AI Act, the reform should set clear safeguards against opacity and automated decision making

A key requirement should be a mandatory disclosure duty for employers using AI systems to screen, rank, or evaluate applicants and employees. Employers should inform individuals when AI is used in recruitment or workplace management. They should also explain the main criteria used by the system and the extent to which automated recommendations influence final human decisions. This transparency ensures that digital control over job access remains open to legal and public oversight.

Alongside transparency, the law should recognise a statutory right to explanation for individuals negatively affected by AI decisions. Any person rejected for employment, denied promotion, or dismissed following an automated assessment should be entitled to a written explanation within 30 days. The explanation must use clear language and set out the main factors considered by the system and how they shaped the employer's final decision. This reduces opacity in AI processes and enables workers to contest unfair or inaccurate outcomes.

The law should also require meaningful human oversight for all major employment decisions. Actions that significantly affect a worker's status, including termination, demotion, or major pay changes, should not rely solely on automated outputs. Employers must show that a human decision maker conducted a substantive review of the AI recommendation, with records of this process kept for at least three years for audit purposes. This ensures that managerial responsibility is not delegated to unmonitored systems.

To address systemic discrimination, the reform should impose mandatory periodic bias audits. Employers using AI in recruitment or performance management should undergo independent certified audits at least every two years. Audit findings should be reported to the relevant regulator, and where disproportionate impacts on protected groups are identified, employers must implement corrective measures within a defined timeframe. Enforcement should fall under the Personal Data Protection Office, supported by technical specialists capable of assessing high risk systems, while employment-related disputes should be handled by the Industrial Court.

5.3.4 Establishing a Comprehensive National Framework for AI and Labor Governance

To support ethical and fair integration of emerging technologies, Uganda should introduce a dedicated AI governance law or significantly reform existing ICT and labour legislation as shown in section 4.5. This would replace fragmented rules with a unified institutional system to address AI-related labour market challenges. The framework should establish a National AI Regulatory Authority or expand the mandate of NITA-U to supervise automated systems across the economy as highlighted in section 4.5.2. Its governance structure should include representation from labour unions, civil society, academia, private sector actors, and women and youth organisations to ensure inclusive and gender responsive oversight.

Under this governance model, all AI systems used for recruitment, performance monitoring, wage setting, or termination must be registered with the Regulatory Authority before workplace

use. High risk systems, defined as those capable of materially affecting a worker's employment status or income, should undergo mandatory pre deployment conformity assessments. These assessments must include detailed data protection impact evaluations consistent with the Data Protection and Privacy Act, ensuring no algorithmic system compromises workers' fundamental rights or privacy in Uganda.

The Industrial Court should also be strengthened to manage disputes arising from digital technologies section 4.2.2. It should have authority to appoint AI expert assessors or form formal technical partnerships with the Personal Data Protection Office to interpret algorithmic evidence. Because automated systems can quickly affect a worker's financial stability, disputes involving algorithmic management or AI driven dismissals should receive expedited hearings. This ensures timely legal remedies for workers facing immediate economic harm from automated decisions and aligns judicial processes with recent Employment Act reforms.

5.3.5 Establishing a Coordinated Inter Agency AI Governance Framework

To resolve the detachment between technological regulation and labor protection identified in Section 1.5.2, Uganda should create a joint oversight mechanism that links the gap between NITA-U, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), and the Industrial Court. Instead of creating isolated tech policies, this body must combine labor law expertise with technical capabilities to monitor workplace AI and evaluate automated decision making. Additionally, to address the lack of inclusivity in existing setups like the UCC, National AI Taskforce, this governance framework must legally mandate the active, transparent representation of women, youth, and informal gig workers in all upcoming policymaking processes.

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