

The Acquisition of Projects Resources in the University of Bamenda

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Abstract

This study investigates the process of project resource acquisition under the University of Bamenda. Acquiring resources is the process of securing team members, equipment, materials or other resources required to deliver the project. Resources are people, equipment, materials, money, or anything else that the University of Bamenda needs in order to carry out all of the activities that have been planned. The University of Bamenda is public entity and therefore it follows the procurement code of Cameroon, which can bring in delays in the process due to administrative procedures. In this study we used the primary data collection technique particularly the use of interview though with limitations in the sample size. The study used descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, bar charts and pie charts in presenting the data. The study concluded that the University of Bamenda uses the public contracts procurement code to acquire material resources which are financed either by the MINESUP or by the University funds. Resources such as human are acquired by recruitment and financial resources acquired through the payment of fees (tuition and medical).

Keywords: project, resources and resource acquisition

1. Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

According to Imed Bouchrika (2022), acquiring resources is the process of securing team members, equipment, materials or other resources required to deliver the project. The key input to acquiring resources is the project plan. This will detail what resources are expected to be needed in order to fulfill the delivery of products or for the management of the project. This should provide a reasonable estimate of the resources required for the project and also provide a schedule for when the resources are required and for how long. The “Acquire Resources” process is repeated at several stages throughout the project as the need arises. In the early stages of the project, a high-level requirement of resources will be available, but as the plan is refined, further detail is added which leads to more accurate specifications for the resources.

Selection criteria for resources may include: Skills and experience relevant to the assignment, cost when considered against the project budget, Availability at the required time of the project plan, Attitude of the resource with respect to the project objectives. Using a scoring matrix to assess potential resources will provide a tool to ensure the resources with the best fit for the project are selected. Each time the Acquire Resources process is carried out, the budget for the project needs to be updated to reflect the expected costs for the resources to ensure the budget remains accurate. A Resource Management Plan is an essential part of this process to ensure that resources are planned, procured and assigned at the optimum time in the project schedule. This is especially relevant where one resource may be assigned to more than one task in the project. Once the resources have been acquired, they need to be assigned to the appropriate project tasks and given the information needed to undertake their role effectively. With human resources, the building of the role into the project team and the management of

that resource is key to using them efficiently.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Resources are people, equipment, place, money, or anything else that you need in order to do all of the activities that you planned for. Every activity in your activity list needs to have resources assigned to your project; you need to know their availability and conditions for their availability. Resources management is difficult to condense to bullet points especially when the process is not clearly defined. Some establishments use unconventional methods to acquire resources which do not achieve the best value for money. Therefore, this study seeks to determine how project resource acquisition is done under The University of Bamenda and to provide answers to these questions.

How are resources acquired in the University of Bamenda?

What is the procedure used in acquiring resources in the university of Bamenda.

What is the cost of acquiring resources in the University of Bamenda?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Literature Review

2.1.1 Resource Acquisition

In The University of Bamenda, project resources are acquired through the Tender board for all projects of more than 5million francs CFA. The University is a public entity and therefore it follows the procurement code of Cameroon. According to Article 9 of section 3 of the public contract's codes, Tenders board shall be technical bodies set up under project owners, delegated project owners, regional governors and senior divisional officers to award public contract projects worth above 5 000 000 (five million) CFA francs. As such they shall:

- examine and give a technical opinion on draft tender files and requests for quotation prepared by project owner or delegated project owner.
- examine and, where necessary, adopt rating grids before the opening of bids.
- open bids.
- set up bid evaluation sub- committee.
- prepare, where necessary document to be submitted to the central contracts control boards for consideration.
- make contract award proposal to project owner or delegated project owner.
- Examine and give a technical opinion on draft contract amendments and so draft contracts awarded by mutual agreement.

The tender board of the University of Bamenda is made up of 6 members as follows;

- A president appointed by the Minster of Public Contract
- A representative of the Vice Chancellor.
- A representative of the MINFI appointed by the Minister of Finance.
- A representative of MINMAP appointed the minster of Public Contract.
- A representative of MINESUP appointed by the Minister of Higher education.
- A secretary of the board appointed by the VC.

The directorate of Development, Physical Plant and Infrastructure is in charge with forecasting how the University development will look like, identifying key needs of the University do feasibility studies and send proposal to the tenders Board who examine if it necessary they approve it, and publish for contractors to apply, the best contractor will be awarded the contract.

The contractor who is selected will use his own resources like HRM; material etc. the directorate only makes sure that the resources are of the best quality.

Some projects are funded by the Ministry of Higher Education while some are funded by the University internal resources. Below are some projects ongoing in the University of Bamenda funded by MINESUP and UBa internal resources.

- a) Projects funded by MINESUP currently under the University of Bamenda
 - ❖ HTTTC Administrative block
 - ❖ FHS Block

- ❖ HICM Block
- ❖ NAHPI Block
- b) Project funded by the University internal resources
 - ❖ UBaDEF
 - ❖ Extension of the health Unit
 - ❖ To-be service vehicles for the registrar and DVC ICE

Sources:

- Interview with the Director of the Development, physical plant and infrastructure of University of Bamenda.
- The public contract code
- The decree organizing the University of Bamenda

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1 The Effectuation Theory

The Effectuation theory was first developed by Saras Sarasvathy in early 2000s and it is a broad concept describing entrepreneurial decision-making process that in contrary to predominant goal driven logic, traditional management theories begin with general aspiration and then attempts to satisfy that aspiration using the resources at entrepreneur's immediate disposal. Another research concept that is useful for our purpose is bricolage and it is defined as resourceful recombination of available means particularly in situations where the environments are resource-scarce. Bricolage is also a rather broad approach to decision making that is action oriented and explains how entrepreneurs may efficiently act in uncertain or resource constraint environments (Tanya Kolyaka, 2000).

In entrepreneurship literature bricolage has been used as a concept closely related to improvisation. Bricoler, or the individual engaged in bricolage, does not plan or design the optimal path to set aspiration, but instead looks around to find available means that could be recombined to achieve the purpose.

The concept of bricolage, or in other words making do with what is at hand, explains in many ways the behavior that may be observed of small firms that are able to create something from nothing, by exploiting resources that other firms rejected.

Finally, perhaps the most well-known entrepreneurial resource concept is financial bootstrapping. Bootstrapping is often theorized as a set of techniques directed at attaining the external resources and describes the process of satisfying the need for resources by some effort with no or minimum external support. (Saras Sarasvathy, 2000)

2.2.2 Empirical Review

According to Tanya 2000, Obtaining and managing the resources in new and small firms is highly complex. Firstly, resources that new and small firms may need are rather low-scaled which makes it less attractive for traditional resource providers such as banks and venture capitalists to get involved. This means that the entrepreneurial firms often need to get creative with identifying and acquiring their resources. Secondly new and small firms often face organizational challenges in handling their resources is sophisticated and systematic manner as they might lack skills, manpower and most crucially—time. Therefore, it makes sense to differentiate between resource acquisition in small entrepreneurial firms from that in larger- more established resources.

According to him, while there is no single established definition, resources are commonly understood as wide range of tangible and intangible assets that firms may require to perform their activities. It's customary to speak about following resource categories: financial resources like money on bank; physical resources such as for example premises, equipment; human resources including both the physical staff but also the individuals background and experiences, and social resources that include the personal, professional networks and reputational resources such as good will. You may also hear speaking about institutional resources, which are all the human, financial, technical and other resources necessary to achieve the organization's missions and goals.

2.2.3 Research Gap

A research gap is a question or problem on which existing research is not done or it is outdated and needs to be updated. In other words, a research gap is a topic or question in which missing or insufficient information limits the ability to conclude. Many studies conducted on project resource acquisition have mostly dueled on the acquisition of materials, they have failed to address how other types of resources such as financial, human, technology amongst others are acquired.

3. Methodology

3.1 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the University of Bamenda.

3.2 Research Design

The main objective of this study to determine how resources are acquired in The University of Bamenda, based on this objective the study will use descriptive research design.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is one of the most important aspects to be considered if a study has to be carried out and presented. The sampling techniques used in the study were pre-determined in order to produce true to life results. In this study we use the probability sampling technique, specifically the census sampling. The total population is five and the sample size is three due to accessibility constraints.

3.4 Data Collection Technique

In this study we used the primary data collection technique particularly the use of interview, which consist of interview and also the use of existing data sources like the Cameroon Public Contract Code.

3.5 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the data which was gathered from personal interviews. According to Moore & McCabe (2005), this is the type of research whereby data gathered is categorized in themes and sub-themes, so as to be able to be comparable. It helps in data collected being reduced and simplified and produce results that can be measured using descriptive tools such as frequency tables, bar charts, pie charts, histograms.

3.6 Limitations

The study faced the following limitations:

- The size of the sample was relatively small. A bigger sample size would enhance the reliability of the research.
- Some participants were not available to take the interview making the data collection very challenging.

4. Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

This part contains detailed presentation and discussion of data analysis and the results of this study. The findings are presented under the following major headings: Demographic characteristics, level of knowledge of resource acquisition, resources acquired and various methods of resource acquisition in the University of Bamenda and the procurement process, it also contains the results of the methodology used to answer the research question.

RQ: What is the procedure used in acquiring resources in the university of Bamenda?

4.1 Socio Demographic Characteristics

4.1.1 Sex of Respondents

Respondents were above 18 years old. Three respondents were interviewed.

Table 1.

S/N	Gender	Number of respondents
1	Males	2
2	Females	1
Total number of respondents		3

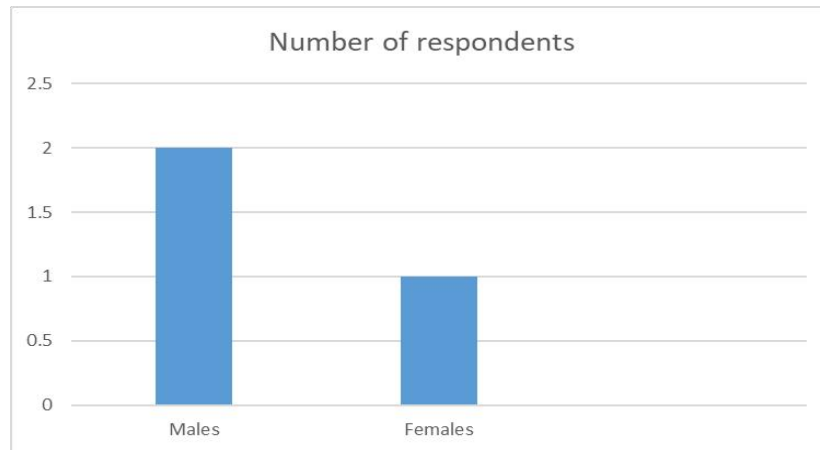


Figure 1.

Source: Interview with respondents

4.1.2 Marital Status of Respondents

The findings of this study showed that all the respondents were married and living with their spouses. The marital status distribution is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2.

S/N	Marital status	Number
1	Married	3
2	Divorced	0
3	Separated	0
4	Widowed	0
5	Single	0
	TOTAL	3

Source: Interview with respondents

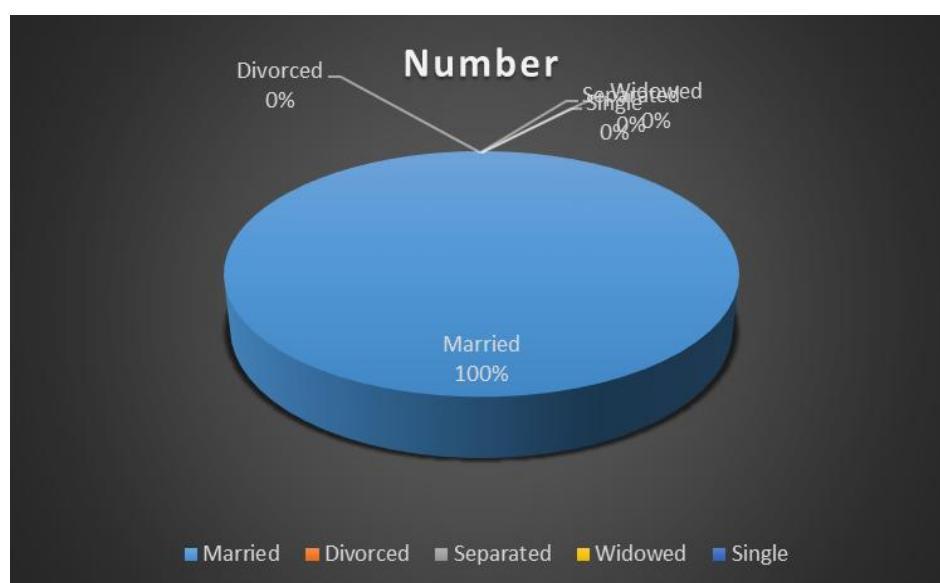


Figure 2.

Figure 2 above show that all the respondents were married.

4.1.3 Knowledge of Resource Acquisition

This section seeks to understand the level of knowledge of the process of resource acquisition in the University of Bamenda. This was classified into three categories namely, expert, moderate knowledge and shallow knowledge.

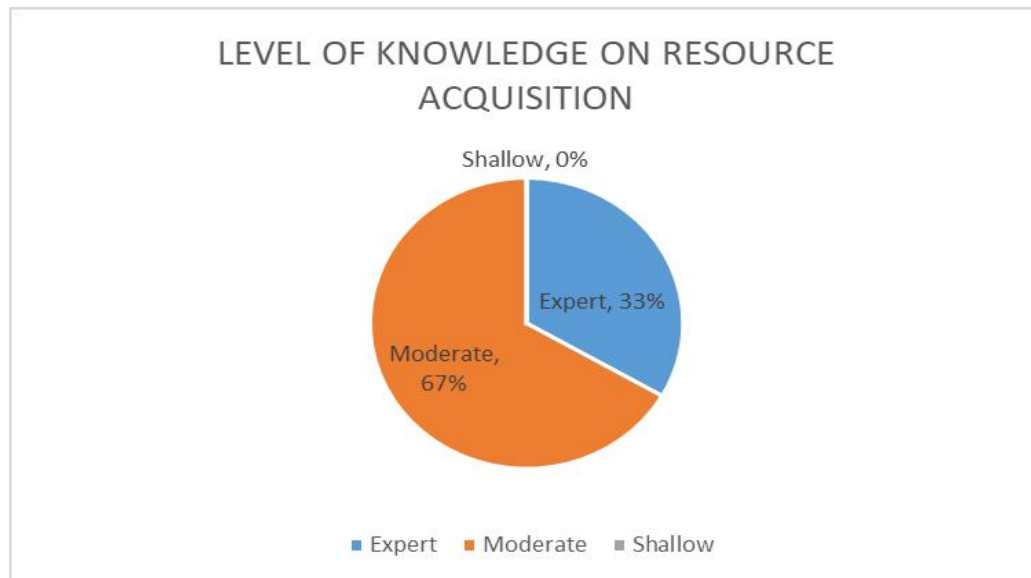


Figure 3.

Source: Interview with respondents

From figure 3 above, it can be seen that 33% of the respondents are an expert in resource acquisition especially the procurement process. Also, 67% of the respondents have a modest knowledge in resource acquisition in general while no respondent has a shallow knowledge.

4.1.4 Resources Acquired in the University of Bamenda and Method Used

Table 3.

Type of Resource	Example(s)	Method of acquisition
Materials	Stationaries, office supplies	Procurement or direct purchase depending on the value
Human (labour)	staff (both teaching and auxillary)	Recruitment
Financial	School fees, medical fees	Payment by students
Equipment	Heavy equipments such as printers	Procurement process
Infrastructure	Buildings	Procurement process

From the table above, there are various resources acquired in the University of Bamenda. These resources are mainly obtained through the following methods; procurement process, direct purchase, recruitment in the case of labour, and payment of fees by students in the case of financial resources. I will take a deeper look at the procurement process.

5. The Procurement Setup in the University of Bamenda

The University is a public entity and therefore it follows the public procurement code of the republic of Cameroon. The University of Bamenda has the Tender Board and is through this board that contracts under the University are awarded. The Tender Board is made up of 6 members as follows.

- A president appointed by the Minister of public contract

- A representative of the vice chancellor
 - A representative of the ministry of Finance appointed by the Minister of Finance
 - A representative of the ministry of public contracts appointed the minster of Public Contract
 - A representative of the ministry of higher education appointed by the Minister of Higher education
 - A secretary of the board appointed by the vice chancellor.
- 1) All projects of the University of Bamenda which are above five million are awarded by the tender board while project less than five million can be executed with the use of a purchase order (mostly with supplies).
 - 2) The directorate of development, physical plant and infrastructure is charge with forecasting how the University development will look like, identifying key needs of the University do feasibility study and send the files to the tenders Board who examine if it necessary they approve it, and publish for contractors to apply, the best contractor will be awarded the contract.

The contactor which is selected will use it own resources like human resources, material etc. The directorate only makes sure that the resources are of the best quality.

- 3) Some projects are funded by the Ministry of higher education while some are funded by the University internal resources
 - a. Projects funded by MINSUP
 - ❖ HTTTC Administrative block
 - ❖ FHS Building
 - ❖ HICM building
 - ❖ NAHPI Building
 - b. Projects funded by the University internal resources
 - ❖ UBaDEF
 - ❖ Extension of the health Unit
 - ❖ To be service vehicles for the registrar and DVCICE
- 4) Directors/Deans has some powers to also purchase or execute some minor projects, this is so because the VC has delegated her signature to them to sign some certain Funds and use most especially to the day to day running of their establishments

Source:

- Interview with the Director of the Development, physical plant and infrastructure of UBa
- The public contract code
- The decree organizing the University of Bamenda

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Demographic and Social Characteristics

From the findings of the study, 67% of respondents were males while 33% were females. Also, all the respondents were married.

5.1.2 Knowledge of the Process of Resource Acquisition

Results of the study demonstrated that one-third (33%) of the respondents were an expert in resource acquisition especially the procurement process used in the University of Bamenda. Also, two-thirds (67%) showed a lesser or moderate knowledge of the resource acquisition in the University of Bamenda. This can be explained by the fact that the resource acquisition process and particularly the procurement process is not very open as very few persons are usually involved in the process.

5.1.3 Resources Acquired and Respective Methods Used

The findings of the study demonstrated that there are five main resources acquired in the University of Bamenda namely, Materials, human resources, financial resources, equipment and infrastructure. These resources are acquired using different methods ranging from direct purchase, recruitment, payment of school fees/medical fees and the use of the procurement process.

5.1.4 The Procurement Process Used in the University of Bamenda

From the findings of the study, the University of Bamenda follows the public procurement code of the Republic of Cameroon. There is a tender board that awards contracts and comprises of six persons represented by different Ministries.

The procurement process used can be summarized as follows:

- Expression of need by the Directorate of Development, physical plant and infrastructure. This expression of need has to be approved by the tender board.
- Request for quotations or bill of quantities (BOQs) for constructions. The call for tender mentions the composition of the bidding document to be submitted by each contractor such as Administrative offer (bank attestation, tax payer card, certificate of non-indebtedness, certificate of incorporation, localization plan etc.), Technical offer (Planning – Gantt chart, equipments, labour force) and Financial offer (The bid letter and bill of quantities)
- Tender board meeting to evaluate the BOQs received. Minutes of the meeting are written and signed by all participants and clearly stating the chosen contractor and reasons for the decision.
- Award of contract.

5.2 Conclusion

From the above summary, the following can be concluded from the study

- 1) The University of Bamenda uses the public contract/procurement code to acquire resources such as materials, equipment and infrastructure.
- 2) Resources are acquired through procurement, recruitment (labour), direct purchase and financial resources through payment of school fees/medical fees by students.
- 3) Major projects are financed by the public budget through the ministry of Higher Education and minor projects are funded from internal sources.
- 4) Directors and Deans have some powers to execute some minor projects in their various establishments. In this case, they do not follow the public contract/procurement code especially for procurements less than five million FCFA.

5.3 Recommendations

- 1) The University of Bamenda should draw up an internal procurement procedural manual to be used for internal projects. This will ensure more accountability and more value for money.
- 2) An expert in the field of what is being procured should be represented in the tender board. This expert will give technical knowledge to ensure an informed decision is made. To this effect, the tender board should have seven members instead of six.

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