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Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University

By

Anicetus Adaku

2021/HD04/2805U

A Dissertation Submitted to the Directorate of Graduate Training in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Higher Education (Leadership and Management) of Makerere University

December 2025

Declaration

I, Adaku Anicetus, hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation titled: "Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University" is my original work and has never been submitted for any award to any university or higher education institution.


Signature:  Date: 19/01/2026

Adaku Anicetus

2021/HD04/2805U

Approval

This dissertation titled “Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University” has been developed under my supervision, and submitted with my approval.

Signature:  Date: 19/01/2026

Dr. Etomaru Irene

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Erema Alphonsus (RIP) and Mrs. Ovo'doa Mercena (RIP), my wife Mrs. Gloria Letayo and children, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends. Above all to the Comboni family. You have been physically, morally, spiritually and financially supportive in the course of pursuing my Masters degree.

Acknowledgement

Work of this nature is a result of great efforts of assistance from many people to whom I am reverently indebted. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Dr. Etomaru Irene for tirelessly guiding, encouraging, supporting and advising me at every stage of this work up to its successful completion. I extend my gratitude to the entire staff of the East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development (EASHESD) for their academic and moral guidance. I recognize the generous contribution of all my participants, the Principals, Bursars, and Deans for their openness and willingness to provide information I needed amidst their tight schedules. I thank my course mates for encouraging me in the tough and competitive academic environment, that I needed to work harder in order to be an achiever. My employer deserves an appreciation especially my Head teacher of St. Andrew Kaggwa's S.S.S – Kasaala, Mrs. Nabachwa Gorett Mubiru and the entire staff for encouraging me to advance in my teaching and leadership career and providing me with an enabling environment to work while studying.

I am greatly indebted to my entire family. I thank my wife, Mrs. Gloria Letayo for the moral and material support extended to me during this course of study and above all for sacrificing to take care of our children while I was out, studying. I credit my children; Gerard Mungufeni, Joan Hope Awania, Jerome Aitaa and Judith Osutaa, for the enabling moral environment to me in my studies. I am also greatly indebted to my dear brothers, especially Mr. Okuyo Modest and the family, sisters, relatives and friends who all granted me their due support in different forms to see that the ultimate goal is finally achieved. Finally, dear contributor, at whatever level/status, you are a masterpiece to this work, without your contribution, this work would not have been the way it is. Thank you very much.

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Abstract

This study examined financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University. Guided by the resource dependency theory, I examined how academic units generate funds internally and externally. I adopted a qualitative research approach, case study research design. I collected data from 12 purposively selected participants: College Principals, Bursars and Deans of Schools through interviews. I analysed the data thematically. Findings revealed that academic units in Makerere University rely on university allocations, and income-generating activities for internal financial resource mobilization. Internal financial resource mobilization in the academic units was narrow-based, university allocations were the dominant source of internal financial resources for the academic units. The academic units mobilized financial resources externally through sourcing research grants, government subventions and grants, donations, and partnerships. The academic units relied more on externally mobilized financial resources. I conclude that while both internal and external financial resource mobilization practices exist at Makerere University, they are inadequately exploited and inconsistent in supporting sustainable revenue generation across the academic units. I recommend that academic units in the University should mitigate overreliance on external financial resource mobilization by actively engaging in capacity building for internal financial resource mobilization to ensure financial autonomy and sustainability.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This study examined the financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University. This chapter presents the study background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

The background to the study is presented in four perspectives namely, historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspectives.

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Government financial subventions have traditionally been the cornerstone of public higher education institutions worldwide, underscoring the state's responsibility to ensure that higher education is adequately funded as a public good (Amutuhaire, 2022a). This principle has been central to the financing of universities, with state support manifesting in various forms such as capitation grants, development grants, and both recurrent and non-recurrent allocations (Tilak, 2012). Despite the historical reliance on state funding, this support has often been insufficient to meet the growing demands of higher education institutions.

In the European context, state funding remains the primary source of revenue for higher education institutions, accounting for a significant portion of university income (Jongbloed, 2010). For decades, roughly three-quarters of European higher education institutions' income came from public sources, including core, competitive, and international

funding (Pruvot et al., 2025). Nonetheless, the increasing demand for universities to operate with greater financial autonomy led to a shift towards models incorporating private sector involvement. This transition reflects a broader trend in which the state reduced its direct role in favor of market-driven approaches, thereby transferring some financial burdens to students and their families. Proponents of this model argue that education should function within a state-regulated market framework, although they acknowledge that the state has not always been effective in fulfilling this role (Spiel et al., 2018).

The neoliberal reforms in higher education delivery, primarily initiated by Western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have had a profound impact on African higher education systems (Gyamera & Burke, 2018). These reforms, often imposed by international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund during the 1980s, emphasized reduced government subsidies in exchange for development loans (Bird, 1996; Reinhart & Trebesch, 2016). Such policies were deemed necessary due to the financial constraints faced by sub-Saharan African universities. Consequently, public funds were increasingly redirected from higher education to primary education, leading to the privatization of public institutions and the encouragement of private ones (Muganga et al., 2024; Mundy & Verger, 2016). This shift resulted in deepening of the financial challenges faced by public higher education institutions in Africa.

At the national level, Uganda's higher education system has historically been predominantly funded by the government. However, the liberalization of higher education has significantly influenced Uganda's higher education funding landscape. In 1992, cost-sharing policies were implemented, and private universities were permitted to operate from 1998 onwards (Ssempebwa & Ssegawa, 2013a). Makerere University, as the oldest and largest public university in Uganda, was directly impacted by these policies. The University faced financial pressures due to rising enrollment numbers and limited resources, prompting

the Makerere University Council to explore alternative revenue generation strategies (Muganga et al., 2024). These included establishing commercial units such as the University Bookshop, a printing business, and a guest house, among others. These initiatives aimed to supplement government funding and ensure the sustainability of the University's operations (Ssempebwa & Ssegawa, 2013b).

The evolving financial landscape of higher education in Uganda necessitates a comprehensive examination of the financial resource mobilization practices within academic units. Understanding these practices is crucial for developing strategies that enhance financial sustainability and ensure the continued delivery of quality education (Kisige & Neema-Abooki, 2017; Kobugabe & Rwakihembo, 2022). Based on this backdrop, I examined the financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study adopted the resource dependency theory (RDT) as the theoretical framework, following the foundational work of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). RDT posits that organizations are inherently dependent on resources from their external environment to survive and achieve their objectives. No institution, regardless of its size or prestige, can sustain itself without securing critical financial, human, and material resources. Consequently, institutional managers must strategically acquire, manage, and protect these resources to ensure organizational continuity and effectiveness. Pfeffer and Salancik emphasized that an organization's survival is closely linked to its external environment, where interorganizational relationships serve as mechanisms for securing essential resources and mitigating uncertainties associated with resource availability. RDT offers significant analytical value, providing insights into how institutions navigate resource constraints, manage interorganizational dependencies, and strategically secure essential resources to

maintain sustainability and long-term effectiveness. As universities face increasing pressures to diversify funding sources due to declining government support and rising operational costs, public universities such as Makerere University rely on both internal and external resources to maintain operational and academic sustainability. Therefore, the RDT provides a lens to understand how academic units mobilize financial resources from external and internal sources.

1.1.3 Conceptual Perspective

Financial resources encompass the monetary contributions allocated to various programmatic activities within higher education institutions, including staff development, research, teaching, and learning. Financial resource mobilization practices refer to strategic efforts aimed at identifying and securing potential funding sources—such as government grants, tuition fees, donor support, investments, alumni contributions, and consultancy services—and actively pursuing these funds to support university activities, including infrastructure development, staff capacity building, teaching, learning, and research (Seltzer, 2020)). Rubareme (2021) describes financial resource mobilization practices as deliberate attempts to generate income through grants, government allocations, tax revenues, and non-tax revenues to support university programs. Building on this conceptualization, I define financial resource mobilization practices as the systematic efforts undertaken by academic units at Makerere University to secure monetary contributions for their programs. Academic units are defined as any constituent component of the university's academic structure, including colleges, schools, and departments (Makerere University, 2024). For the purpose of this study, the focus bases on how these academic units mobilize financial resources from both internal and external environments.

1.1.4 Contextual Perspective

Makerere University was founded in 1922 as a technical school (Muhangi, 2020). It grew over time, and in 1935 it was designated as a publicly funded center for higher education in East Africa. Students were provided with free education, housing, meals, and pocket money during this time by the government (Mayanja et al., 2001). It changed its status to University College in 1949 and was associated with the University College London until 1963, when the University of East Africa was founded. Makerere became a separate national university of the Republic of Uganda on July 1, 1970, offering public funded undergraduate and graduate programs that resulted in degrees of its own (Musisi & Muwanga, 2003). In July 2014, the University moved from a faculty-based to a collegiate system with ten constituent colleges that function as independent departments within the University with their own financial autonomy (Kibuuka, 2017, Makerere University, 2017).

The academic units' functions and programs serve as Makerere University's main financial resource mobilization cost centers. The Ugandan Government reduced funding on social services, the university sector inclusive (Amutuhaire, 2022). As such, the University began to explore alternative avenues of funding its operations, for example, the University shifted its focus to raising money from fee-paying students, privatization grew as a survival strategy (Mamdani, 2007). Hence, I examined how academic units mobilize financial resources from both their internal and external environments, guided by the main beliefs of the resource dependence theory.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Adequate and sustainable financing is central to the ability of universities to fulfil their mandate of teaching, research, and community engagement. As public universities continue to expand in size, scope, and societal responsibility, reliance on government funding

alone is increasingly insufficient. This places growing importance on effective financial resource mobilization at the level of academic units, where innovation, partnerships, and internal revenue generation can significantly strengthen institutional sustainability. At Makerere University, government subventions remain the primary source of funding, yet they have not consistently matched the University's financial needs. Although the University's annual budget increased from UGX 114.11 billion in FY 2015/16 to UGX 322.551 billion in FY 2019/20, the institution has continued to experience financial strain. This is reflected in persistent uncleared arrears between FY 2017/2018 and FY 2019/2020, the receipt of only 57.9 percent of the approved budget in FY 2018/2019, and reliance on supplementary funding amounting to UGX 14.455 billion in FY 2017/2018 (Makerere University, 2020). These indicators suggest that existing financial resource mobilization practices within academic units are insufficient to offset funding shortfalls. Limited financial resources affect the quality of teaching and learning, restrict research output, slow infrastructure development, and weaken staff motivation and community engagement. Over time, these challenges threaten the achievement of Makerere University's strategic objectives and undermine its contribution to national development priorities articulated in Uganda Vision 2040. Continued financial vulnerability also has consequences that extend beyond the institution to the country and the wider region. In this context, a critical examination of financial resource mobilization practices within academic units at Makerere University is necessary to establish how resources are currently mobilized, identify existing gaps and constraints, and generate evidence to inform strategies for strengthening sustainable financing at the unit level.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To examine the internal financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University.
2. To examine the external financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University.

1.5 Research Questions

I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do academic units in Makerere University mobilize internal financial resources?
2. How do academic units in Makerere University mobilize external financial resources?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was carried out in Makerere University main campus, covering the College of Health Sciences (CHS), College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), College of Education and External Studies (CEES) and College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS). The selection was based on the annual reports that indicated that CHS and CAES mobilized more financial resources for research, innovations and projects than CEES and CHUSS (CAES, 2019; CEES, 2019, CHS, 2019; CHUSS, 2019). In terms of content, I examined the internal and external financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University. With respect to the time period, this study examined the financial resource mobilization practices employed by academic units at Makerere University between 2018 and 2025. This period corresponds to the implementation of the

University Strategic Plan (2020–2030) during which the University aspires to diversify sources of its financial resources.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study can inform Makerere University management, particularly, the Planning and Development unit to develop policies to support financial resource mobilization in the academic units, and guide third-stream financial resource mobilization practices for financial sustainability in the academic units. In addition, the findings will form useful literature to enhance further research into the field of financing of higher education by the future researchers.

1.8 Justification of the Study

The success of higher education institutions in the provision of required educational services highly depends on their ability to mobilize adequate and sustainable financial resources (National Council for Higher Education, 2019). This study contributes to in-depth understanding on financial mobilization practices in academic units, by illustrating how academic units navigate interdependencies within the internal and external environment to diversify their funding sources. Practically, the findings provide actionable insights for university administrators and policymakers at Makerere University and similar institutions on effective strategies for mobilizing financial resources to improve their financial sustainability and capacity to support their core functions of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement; and infrastructural development to create the enabling environment.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical review and the conceptual framework on which the study is anchored and the related literature review, guided by the research objectives.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was underpinned by the resource dependence theory (RDT), developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). The resource dependence theory assumes that institutions cannot succeed or survive without resources. Institutions require a constant flow of resources, institutional managers must therefore make the best use and preserve important resource sources if they are to endure. The proponents further contend that an organization's sustainability is threatened by unstable environments, whether internal or external and they must therefore look for funding from a variety of alternative sources from the environment. I used RDT to examine how academic units in Makerere University mobilized financial resources from their internal and external environment.

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) emphasized that an organization's survival is closely linked to its external environment. Inter-organizational relationships serve as mechanisms for securing essential resources and mitigating uncertainties associated with resource availability in the environment (Arvidson & Linde, 2021). While RDT provides a robust framework for understanding organizational behavior, it has been subject to critique. Scholars note that the theory tends to overemphasize external dependencies and the power dynamics that arise from them, often overlooking internal factors such as organizational culture, leadership, and internal decision-making processes (Kumari & Tiwari, 2025). Additionally, Resource

dependence theory assumes a relatively static view of the organizational environment, which may inadequately reflect the rapid and unpredictable changes characteristic of contemporary contexts. Critics argue that RDT's emphasis on external dependencies and power dynamics often overlooks internal factors such as organizational culture, leadership, and internal decision-making processes, which are crucial in understanding how organizations manage their resources and navigate challenges (Kumari & Tiwari, 2025). Despite these limitations, RDT continues to offer significant analytical value, providing insights into how institutions navigate resource constraints, manage interorganizational dependencies, and strategically secure essential resources to maintain sustainability and long-term effectiveness.

In the context of higher education, RDT has gained renewed relevance as universities face increasing pressures to diversify funding sources due to declining government support and rising operational costs. Public universities, such as Makerere University, rely on both internal and external resources to maintain operational and academic sustainability (Bennett & Law, 2021). The theory provides a lens to understand how academic units mobilize resources through grants, partnerships, donations, and other alternative income streams. Studies have shown that universities supplement dwindling public funding through entrepreneurial activities and industry partnerships, illustrating how resource dependency informs sustainable development strategies in higher education institutions (Bennett & Law, 2021).

Universities increasingly form strategic alliances with other educational institutions, government agencies, and private sector entities to access additional resources and enhance their institutional capabilities. Resource dependency theory offers insight into the power dynamics and interdependencies inherent in these partnerships, emphasizing the role of negotiation and strategic engagement in resource acquisition (Arvidson & Linde, 2021; Barreto, 2010). The theory also highlights how external policies, governance structures, and

stakeholder expectations influence decision-making, resource allocation, and institutional priorities, reinforcing the importance of actively managing resource dependencies (Trinh et al., 2025).

Applying RDT to Makerere University, I examined how academic units navigate their internal and external resource dependencies to sustain operations and achieve academic objectives. Given the University’s over reliance on external funding sources, including government allocations, research grants, and industry partnerships, understanding these dynamics is critical. Resource dependency theory provides a conceptual framework to analyze how academic units strategically manage relationships with stakeholders to ensure resource availability, institutional resilience, and long-term sustainability. This study used the Resource Dependency Theory as a lens to examine the internal and external resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Table 1

Internal and External Financial Resource Mobilization

| Financial Resource Mobilization in the Internal Environment | Financial Resource Mobilization in the External Environment |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition / Fees • Dual-track system • Market model • Endowments • Business income • Foundations support fund • Cost-sharing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government grants/subventions • Donor grants • Student-Loans Scheme • Performance-based funding • Research-performance-based • Development bank • Diaspora – bonds funding • Philanthropic funding |

Source: Derived from Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), and extant literature.

Table1 shows possible internal and external sources of financial resources for a university. Based on the resource dependency theory, I assumed that academic units can

mobilize financial resources from the external environment through government grants and subventions, donor funding, student-loans scheme, performance-based funding, development banks, diaspora – bonds funding, and philanthropic funding; and the internal environment through tuition and fees, market model, endowments, business income, foundations support fund and cost-sharing, among others. I sought to understand how the academic units in Makerere University mobilize financial resources from their internal and external environment.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

This section reviews related literature on internal and external financial resource mobilization practices relevant to the study.

2.3.1 Internal Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Universities

Internal financial resource mobilization refers to the process of generating funds or resources from within an organization itself, rather than relying on external sources like loans or donations, by optimizing existing assets, improving operational efficiency, and finding new revenue streams within the organization's current structure (Seltzer, 2020). As such Robinson and Sensoy (2013) posit that universities charge fees expenses associated with a university education as tuition fees, functional fees, and living expenses for the services they offer including teaching, research and community outreach. Rationally, the authors postulated that the fees charged to students and other service beneficiaries by universities should be commensurate with the cost of the services. However, evidence has proved that higher education institutions are presently charging higher fees as compared to the last few decades in an effort to sustain their study (Amutuhaire, 2022). To supplement the revenue from the fees charged, universities began to admit fee-paying students and government-sponsored students. This is termed as the *dual-track* tuition-fee policy (Marcucci et al., 2008). Dual-

track system of financial resource mobilization is proposed and practiced in some universities where there is addition of a special tuition –paying track while maintaining free higher education for the regularly admitted, state sponsored students (Wabwiire, 2011). In this model, a university is allowed to attract private funds by operating a private student entry scheme (PSES) and the model is dominant in East African universities. The study aimed to examine whether the aforementioned financial resource mobilization strategies existed within academic units at Makerere University.

The market model by Lamphey (1994) is another source of financial resource mobilization to the universities. It assumes that various market segments, such as stakeholders or consumers/beneficiaries of higher education products make up the higher education sector, and are willing to pay for higher education if encouraged by effective marketing strategies and discourse. The market model emphasizes incorporating marketing principles of product, price, place, and promotion (the 4 Ps) and market-driven approaches into the financing process of higher education institutions. Nevertheless Okech (2003) argues and views the market model of financing higher education in terms of financial diversification and partial privatization of public universities. As such Wabwiire (2011) introduces endowment source as one of diversification strategies where financial assets donated to universities are invested so that only a portion of the interest that accrues to the investment is spent. Universities such as Harvard and Yale have hefty endowment funds which Makerere University can learn from.

Business income is another contributor to the financial revenue of a university in form of incomes that accrue to investments in viable commercial ventures such as real estate, hotels, printing press, petrol stations, and bookshops (Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA, n.d). However, engagements of universities in commercial ventures if not well managed could compromise teaching and research. It is,

therefore, imperative to lay down conditions for success to avoid tension between engagement in these ventures and mission of higher education institutions. Consequently, some universities have used philanthropic funding strategy where higher education institutions raise funds from different sources such as the alumni, national and international funding agencies, private corporates and foreign governments (Wabwiire, 2011). These funds are normally allocated to individual researchers, research projects and programs through competition on the basis of peer review. This model is prevalent in many research universities world-wide, hence a possible source of financial resource mobilization practice to universities. The study therefore aimed to examine whether the models mentioned above existed in the academic units at Makerere University.

Credit/Unit – based tuition funding further offers another opportunity where Universities can raise financial resources for their sustainability (Ishengoma, 2019). This is where tuition fees are charged on credit or unit basis instead of the whole degree program. Such a modality of funding higher education has been successful in Vietnam since 2005, which is essentially pro-poor and hence Makerere University academic units can take advantage of it in order to finance their academic programs. Likewise, the academic units can also raise finances from the foundations which have become a more significant source of funding for higher education in Africa in addition to bilateral donors (World Bank, 2010). For instance, the Aga Khan Foundation helped Kenya and Tanzania establish the Advanced Nursing Studies Program in 2001 to give nurses and midwives training programs that were pertinent, affordable, accessible, and needs-based. Could this be another successful method for academic units in Makerere University to raise funds? Documentary evidence have also shown that education bonds have proven to be an effective and long-term means of funding public and private universities in Chile, the US, Australia, and the UK (Perkinson, 2006). Under this modality, reputable, well-established African public university with sound

governance practices, steady and sustainable tuition cash flows, and the ability to issue bonds in the market can use the proceeds to fund important institutional development initiatives, like building up infrastructure. According to Katsomitros (2018), many international higher education institutions increasingly turned to the bond market to bridge funding gaps, as reliance on public funding became insufficient for growth.

2.3.2 External Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Universities

External financial resource mobilization in universities refers to the process of acquiring funds from sources outside the university itself, such as government grants, corporate donations, international funding agencies, or alumni contributions to support research projects, academic programs, infrastructure development, and other operational needs that cannot be fully covered by regular university budgets (Rubareme, 2021).

Government fund mobilization is one of the major external sources of finances to universities which assumes that higher education is a public good and that governments will fully fund it for capital, development, and recurrent expenses (Kasozi, 2009). This implies that higher education has greater social returns for society than it does for individual graduates and their families. Recent research has cast doubt on the idea that higher education is a public good since it demonstrates that the benefits to society outweigh the private returns on investment (Ishengoma & Ishengoma, 2019). Nevertheless, employment of donor fund mobilization has proved that universities require other sources of finance for funding core university activities like infrastructure, teaching, and the development of academic and non-academic staff, as a result of the loss of government funding for these activities (Ayele & Wiold, 2005). Examples of such donor funding strategies in universities include the German Academic Development Fund (DAAD), the Japanese Agency for International Development (JAICA), among others

Amutuhaire (2022) has also posited that cost-sharing revenue mobilization is another strategy of financial resource lobby for the universities. This refers to the amount of money a student must pay to receive education from an educational institution like Makerere University. This makes it possible for the Academic Units raise funds in order to pay for the costs they incur while offering the services to the beneficiaries of higher education. He added that cost sharing has a great potentiality of significantly generating much needed extra income in public universities like Makerere University if carefully implemented.

Supplementary to the above, Wabwiire (2011) posited that student-loans scheme is another strategy of financial resource mobilization in universities where the state sets up a system to provide low-interest loans to students in order to cover the costs of higher education, both pedagogical and non-pedagogical. The fees paid through loans are typically determined by a reasonable cost per unit, hence promoting the financial sustainability of the academic units in a university. The study aimed to examine the extent to which cost-sharing and student-loan schemes had been employed at Makerere University.

A university's financial resource mobilization can also be achieved through performance-based funding as determined by universities' historical performance on predetermined learning and research outputs (Ishengoma & Ishengoma, 2019). The number of research papers published in indexed journals, the number of postgraduate students admitted and graduating, the completion rates of students, among others are all indicators of performance-based funding. As a component of new public management (NPM), performance-based funding increases efficiency and transparency in public spending while fostering institutional accountability in public higher education systems. Similarly, Koen and Thomas (2016) have proposed research performance-based funding system as another alternative strategy for financial resource mobilization in universities. According to the proponents, the strategy focuses on productivity or research performance in public research

organizations and universities in order to improve research performance in terms of output quantity and quality. As such, the top-performing universities and public research organizations receive financial resources to make them financially efficient and sustaining. Under this funding system, Makerere University academic units can surely take advantage and raise financial resources from these financial resource mobilization practices.

According to Ishengoma (2019), higher education development bank is also a lucrative suggestion for financial resource mobilization to replace student-loan programs through establishment of a public-private partnership. For instance, the Nigerian Education Bank (EDUBANK), which was established in 1993 and is fully subscribed to by the Federal Government of Nigeria, offers loans to students at a commercial, market value interest rate to cover tuition fees and other related costs; to academic staff to cover professional conferences and workshops abroad; to cover the costs of book publishing and sabbatical leave; among others. To supplement on this source of financial resource mobilization, Ketkar and Ratha (2011) have further recommended diaspora – bonds funding as alternative source of financial resources in universities. They believe that the diasporas communities can be mobilized by their respective governments to raise large-scale funding to support national budgets for higher education through bonds. For example, Israel has since 1951 raised over US \$34 billion from diaspora bonds.

In a nutshell, the different scholars reviewed above revealed practical gaps of persistent inadequate funding in higher education institutions, studies were not theory (s) based, most of the studies were done outside Uganda, among others. Nevertheless, most scholars reviewed above clearly revealed that there are many opportunities of financial resource mobilization practices available from both internal and external environment of academic units in Makerere University. The study therefore aimed to examine the extent to

which internal and external financial resource mobilization practices were being employed in the academic units at Makerere University.

2.4 Summary of Literature

Financial resource mobilization is a cornerstone of institutional sustainability in higher education, enabling universities to maintain quality teaching, research, and service delivery despite declining public funding and increasing operational demands. Scholars emphasize that a balanced approach—combining both internal and external strategies—is crucial for enhancing institutional resilience and competitiveness (Kobugabe & Rwakihembo, 2022a). Internal strategies focus on optimizing institutional assets, tuition management, consultancies, and research commercialization, while external practices rely on partnerships, donor funding, alumni engagement, and government grants. Effective financial resource mobilization requires strategic planning, transparency, and engagement of multiple stakeholders. However, there remains limited empirical evidence on how academic units at Makerere University mobilize financial resource, which this study addressed.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, study population, sample size, sampling strategy, data collection methods, quality control, data management and analysis and the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted using a qualitative single case study design. I sought to generate deeper, contextual and holistic understanding of financial resource mobilization practices in the academic units in Makerere University. Case study design enabled an in-depth examination of how academic units at Makerere University employed various financial resource mobilization practices, consistent with Yin's (2018) recommendations for qualitative inquiry in complex institutional environments.

3.2 Study Population

The target population for this study was College Principals, Deans of Schools, and College Bursars. I chose four Colleges in Makerere University: College of Health Sciences (CHS), College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), College of Education and External Studies (CEES) and College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS), based on College annual reports that show that College of Health Sciences (CoNAS, 2019) and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES, 2019) stand out in mobilizing more financial resources for research, innovations and projects, compared to the College of Education and External Studies (CEES, 2019) and College of Humanities and

Social Sciences (CHUSS, 2019), which were shown to be weaker in mobilization of financial resources.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size comprised 12 participants: three participants from each of the four participating Colleges, based on key roles and responsibilities they held in relation to financial resource mobilization within their respective academic units. This ensured the inclusion of knowledgeable and experienced individuals capable of providing rich, relevant, and credible information for the study.

3.4. Sampling Strategy

I employed purposive sampling to select participants, specifically College Principals, Deans of Schools, and College Bursars. These categories of participants were chosen because they hold key decision-making responsibilities in financial planning, budgeting, and resource mobilization processes. Their positions enabled them to provide informed perspectives on the financial resource mobilization practices within their units.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

I used interviewing and documents review to gain a comprehensive understanding of financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University. Interviewing facilitated in-depth, face-to-face interactions with participants, allowing for the exploration of their experiences, perspectives, and insights regarding financial resource mobilization strategies. This approach enabled me to probe and clarify ambiguities, thereby enhancing the richness of the data collected, as suggested by Kallio et al. (2016).

In addition to interviews, I used documents review to examine existing institutional records, reports, and other relevant documents. This method provided corroborative evidence to the information I gathered through interviews, allowing for a more robust analysis of financial resource mobilization practices in the academic units, as suggested by Bowen (2019). Together, these methods ensured a thorough examination of financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University.

3.6 Research Instruments

I used a structured interview guide to collect information from College Principals, Deans, and Bursars, with similar questions posed to each participant to ensure consistency and comparability of responses. In addition, I used a structured documents review guide to examine relevant records and reports maintained by the academic units concerning financial resource mobilization. This dual approach allowed for data triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

3.7 Data Quality Control

I used four strategies to establish the authenticity and trustworthiness of the findings. I ensured the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the study. I used triangulation of data sources and peer debriefing to ensure credibility and dependability. Additionally, I collected in-depth, thick data collection through prolonged engagement in the field to ensure transferability and conformability in line with Korstjens and Moser (2018). These measures ensured that the study's findings were accurate, reliable, and transferable in similar contexts.

3.8 Data Management and Analysis

I used thematic analysis technique to analyze the data. Thematic analysis involved transcribing, organizing and preparing raw data, thoroughly reading through all data, and coding the data manually. The coding process was then used to generate descriptions, which were subsequently grouped into categories and themes for in-depth analysis. The themes were represented in a qualitative narrative, allowing for comprehensive interpretation of the findings, in line with the suggestion of Alam (2020) and Creswell (2013). This approach facilitated deeper understanding of financial resource mobilization practices in the academic units at Makerere University.

3.9 Research Procedure

I obtained a letter of introduction from the Dean of the East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development, Makerere University, to facilitate access to the study participants. I sought informed consent of the participants by requesting each participant to fill a consent form which explained the objectives of the research and emphasized that information provided was purely for academic purposes and would be treated confidentially. Participants were informed of their right to voluntarily participate and to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

To uphold ethical standards, I ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants. Each participant received a clear and detailed explanation of the study's purpose, highlighting that the research was purely academic and that all information shared would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Participants were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage

without any repercussions. This approach reinforced ethical integrity while fostering trust and openness in the data collection process. I ensured protection of interviewees' privacy by not disclosing their identities by assigning pseudonyms.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings on the internal and external financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University. I start by explaining the profile of the participants in the first part. In the second and third sections, I present the findings on internal and external financial resources mobilization practices respectively.

4.1. Profile of the Participants

The findings I present in this section are based on interviews with College Principals, College Bursars, and Deans of Schools. Principals manage college-wide financial mobilization, Bursars oversee internal financial management, reporting and accountability; and Deans lead school-level financial planning. I assigned pseudonyms to the participants according to their position, gender and disciplines. BMA1 represents Bursar, male from Arts 1; BMA2 symbolizes Bursar, male from Arts 2; BFS1 represents Bursar, female from sciences 1; BFS2 stands for Bursar, female from sciences 2; DMA1 stands for Dean, male from Arts 1; DFA2 represents Dean, female from Arts 2; DMS1 stands for Dean, male from sciences 1; DMS2 represents Dean, male from sciences 2; PMA1 stands for Principal, male from Arts 1; PFA2 represents principal, female from Arts 2; PFS1 stands for Principal, female from sciences 1; and PMS2 represents Principal, male from science 2. I supplemented information from interviews with documentary evidence, I reviewed financial reports, research grant agreements, and policy documents. In the first part (Section 4.2), I present findings on internal financial resource mobilization practices, followed by findings on external financial resource mobilization practices (Section 4.3).

4.2 Internal Financial Resource Mobilization Practices

This section presents the findings on internal financial resource mobilization practices at Makerere University, based on interviews with Principals, Bursars, Deans, and documentary evidence from annual reports, grant records and policy documents. The major themes that emerged were internal financial resource mobilization from university budget allocations, tuition-based revenues, and income-generating activities.

4.2.1 University Budget Allocations

University budget allocation emerged as a major source of internal financial resource mobilization in the academic units. Participant BFS1 highlighted the role of internal allocations in supporting academic unit operations, explaining that:

Makerere University allocates about 1 percent of its income, drawn from internally generated funds, towards supporting research. Graduate and undergraduate student fees also contribute to research funding. As such, I do develop strategic plans for the academic units by preparing financial forecasts and projections (budget estimates) for proposed initiatives through budgeting and provide inputs into resource mobilization strategies to the academic units by assessing the financial viability of the new projects or funding dissertations initiated in the academic units. At the end, the academic unit is capable of requesting for its internal allocations from the university.

In the same line, participant BMA2 noted that, “I ensure that budget proposals align with institutional priorities and available resources. This guarantees that the academic unit receives adequate allocations for its core functions”. From review of documents, I found that internal resource allocations at the University are structured according to the annual budgetary

frameworks (Makerere University, 2020). Bursars noted that these frameworks provide clear guidance on how funds are distributed across academic units, ensuring consistency and accountability in financial management.

University financial management guidelines support these practices in regard to the distribution process, the criteria used, and the implications for departmental operations.

DMS1 for instance explained that:

Makerere University allocates about 1 percent of its income, drawn from internally generated funds, toward supporting research. Graduate and undergraduate student fees also contribute to research funding. As a Dean, I do forecast financial needs for academic programs, research, facilities, staffing and request for the financial resources / estimates from the University allocations for my school or department. Thereafter, I finally give accountability for use of finances in the academic unit.

In the same line, DMA1 noted that, “I work closely with the bursar to ensure that budget requests are evidence-based and aligned with strategic goals”.

4.2.2 Income-Generating Activities

In addition to internal allocations, bursars noted that income-generating activities play a crucial role in supplementing the university’s financial resources. BMA2 and BFS2 highlighted:

“At Makerere University, academic units (colleges, schools and departments) are encouraged to run income-generating activities (IGAs) to supplement government funding and external grants. These activities vary depending on the nature of the discipline and many units run specialized certificate and diploma programs e.g., ICT certifications, project management, language courses, public

health training. Specifically, Agriculture-based Units (CAES) have generated income from demonstration farms, sale of seed varieties, dairy products, poultry and crop produce. As a bursar, I ensure proper pricing models, cost recovery, and risk assessment for the short courses in the academic units, facility rentals or hires to the public for seminars, workshops, commercial products like MOSKILL, among others. And thereafter, I provide financial analysis and reporting on the performance of these ventures.”

Emphasizing the need for accountability, bursars highlighted the importance of transparent reporting. BMA2 for instance remarked:

For my part, as a bursar, I must support transparency and accountability in the colleges and academic units which are critical to building trust with funders and encouraging future contributions towards academic unit programs and activities. Academic units have continued receiving grants and donations due to the firm documentary evidences of transparency and accountability produced by the bursar’s office.

Tuition-based programs and entrepreneurship activities emerged as important strategies for enhancing the financial sustainability of academic units. DFA2 stated that;

to supplement the revenue from the fees charged, the University began to facilitate cost recovery initiatives by admitting fee-paying students alongside government-sponsored students or continuing education units. This is termed as the dual-track tuition-fee policy where there is addition of a special tuition –paying track while maintaining free higher education for the regularly admitted, state sponsored students. In this model, a university is allowed to attract private funds by operating a private student

entry scheme and the model is dominant in most East African universities including Makerere University.

Similarly, DMS2 noted that:

Academic staff and departments offer consultancy services to government, NGOs, and private companies. For example, school of law in legal advisory, policy drafting or school of business in entrepreneurship, market research or certificate and diploma programs like ICT certifications, project management, language courses, public health training. So, it is my responsibility, as a dean, to encourage and oversee commercialization of research inform of patent rights protection and spin-offs for commercial purposes, promote income-generating activities such as consulting, certification programs, or executive education, among others and leverage intellectual property as a resource, for instance the case of MOSKILL royalty sale offs for money in the department of pharmacy in the college of health sciences.

Internal financial resources are mobilized and managed across the university's academic units.

4.3 External Financial Resource Mobilization Practices

External financial resource mobilization is vital for supporting the growth and sustainability of academic units. Bursars, Deans and Principals, play a crucial role in this process, contributing to the identification, coordination and management of funds from a variety of external sources to supplement the University's internal allocations. Key themes that emerged as practices for sourcing external financial resources were: Government subvention and grants, application for research grants, and donor funding.

4.3.1 Government Subvention and Grants

Central government grants constitute a significant portion of financial resources for academic units, catering for staff salaries, infrastructure and operational costs. Deans highlighted the role of these government grants in sustaining departmental activities, while also pointing out challenges related to timeliness, adequacy and accountability. Participants revealed that academic leaders work with University management to get these government funds for their units. For instance, DMA1 noted:

I, as a Dean, advocate for my unit's needs through working with university leadership and finance officers and ensure that the financial resources needed for my academic unit or school is adequately met through the budget estimates submitted to the college finance committee.

These allocations from government subventions form a larger portion of financial resources for academic units. Participants highlighted the need to engage with government and policy frameworks, focusing on how such interactions influence financial and operational decision-making at the units. PMA1 had this to say: "I do participate in forums or committees on behalf of my college that influence higher education funding frameworks and lead efforts to respond to calls for funding from government and international bodies". PMA1 further noted that;

Makerere University collaborates with government ministries, local governments and agencies like URA, NITA-U, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture to shape policy and implement research findings. These partnerships help translate research into national development impact. In the end, finances are raised by the partners towards programs' implementation.

Participants explained the mechanisms for governments financial oversight, highlighting how public funds are allocated and monitored. PMS1 explained that;

College Principals are answerable and representative in influencing policy and funding frameworks that benefit their academic units. I, the principal, work in close collaboration with university leaders to lobby for legislative or grant support from the internal allocations of the University. This increases financial resource availability for the academic units in the college.

Relatedly, PFS2 explained the important role College Principals play in capacity building for mobilizing financial resources from the government, noting that:

I do capacity building for resource mobilization by building or empowering internal capacity through training staff and departments in grant writing, fundraising and financial planning. I, as a principal do encourage cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations that can attract larger funding pools for academic units in my college. For example, training and capacity building grants for scholarships in Masters, PhD; staff exchanges and mentorship, among others.

Commenting on capacity building initiatives and their role in strengthening financial oversight within academic units, participant PFA2 expressed that; “as a Principal, I ensure fiscal discipline and transparency in the use of resources; provide leadership in financial audits, reporting and compliance; and implementing strong financial governance structures to build donor and stakeholder confidence.” Evidence from internal audit reports (MakeEF, 2021) further support the findings on capacity building initiatives for external financial resource mobilization in the academic units.

4.3.2 Research Grants

Sourcing competitive research grants emerged as a major external financial resource mobilization practice in the academic units. All the Bursars I interviewed emphasized the importance of competing for external research grants. BMA2 noted:

Academic units secure funding from the Ugandan government (e.g., UGX 30 billion under the Research and Innovations Fund in FY 2019/20), as well as from bilateral and multilateral development partners such as SIDA, Carnegie Corporation, NORAD, USAID, Rockefeller Foundation, etc. As a bursar, I do ensure that the financial aspects of fundraising papers like cost estimates, financial sustainability in research grant papers are sound, well-presented and adhered to by the Deans and/or Lecturers in the academic units hence winning research grant for the intended research project.

In the same line, BMA1 noted;

since FY 2019/20, government allocates UGX 30 billion to Makerere University to support high-impact research and innovation addressing national priorities. These grants usually fund applied research and innovations, development of local solutions to social and economic challenges, scale-up of community-impact projects through Uganda Government funded Makerere University Research & Innovation Fund (Mak-RIF).

Participants identified sourcing grants from donors and development partners as a key external financial resource mobilization practice in the academic units. They emphasized the need for technical support in developing competitive research grant proposals. For instance, BMA1 expressed that, “I provide advisory support to Principals and Deans on financial strategies, ensuring research grant proposals meet grant requirements and demonstrate

sustainability.” Alongside advisory support and budgetary guidance, Bursars highlighted the importance of proper financial management in ensuring effective use of external resources.

One participant, BFS2 emphasized:

I ensure proper tracking of restricted and unrestricted funds, especially those from donors or research grants, monitor compliance with donor conditions, grant requirements, and financial reporting standards. The proper management of the mobilized funds will lead to adequacy of available financial resources on one side while supporting evident transparency and accountability to the donors hence hope in increased donor funds for future academic programs in the academic units.

Participants highlighted the importance of risk management and internal controls in mobilizing these resources. BFS2 explained that:

I carry out implementation and monitoring of internal controls in academic units in form of documentary evidence for effective funds use i.e., value for money so as to promote good financial discipline. I execute this responsibility diligently in order to prevent or address issues that could jeopardize future donor confidence in extending financial support to the academic units.

In a similar way BMA2 elaborated that:

I do train academic and administrative staff in basic financial management skills; particularly where academic units (schools and department) are managing their own grants or income-generating units. For example, Makerere University’s College of Health Sciences (School of Public Health) has engaged in training with George Washington University (GWU) and NIAID to strengthen NIH/NIAID grant administration

capacity. These initiatives have led to improved standard operating practices, grants tracking, grant proposal success, and researcher training programs hence building a financially literate culture that supports long-term external resource mobilization.

Participant highlighted the importance of monitoring to maintain donor confidence in mobilization of external financial resources. BMA1 noted that, “monitoring fund utilization and adherence to financial policies protects the academic unit from risks that may affect donor confidence.” Monitoring was therefore seen essential for sustainability.

Developing well-structured project proposals was identified as a key in securing external resources for the colleges. In light of this, BMA1 explained that:

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences often runs specialized competitive programs such as the competitive mentorship-oriented research grant and the CERTL two-year research grants, each with defined objectives, eligibility criteria, deliverables and budgets structured through calls and administered at the college level. I do assist researchers and department heads in preparing the financial sections of grant submissions. In this way, many researchers have ended up being successful in their search for research grants.

Participants highlighted various approaches to obtaining research grants in the academic units. In particular, PFA2 explained that:

Makerere University receives large-scale institutional funding from international development partners. For example, Swedish international development agency (SIDA)-long-term support for postgraduate training, capacity building, and infrastructure, Carnegie corporation of New York-research capacity strengthening, library support, academic leadership and

Norwegian agency for development cooperation (NORAD) -institutional strengthening and partnerships. These grants often support multi-year research programs, academic mobility and/or infrastructure. As a principal of the college, I develop and communicate a vision for growth that requires new financial resources to expand programs, infrastructure development and champion long-term financial sustainability. Hence, I have to direct Deans and other responsible officers in my respective Schools and Departments to collaborate in raising the necessary financial resource through budgeting, grant proposal writing, and commercial activities, among others, to implement the strategic plan successfully.

Strategic engagement with donors, partners and other funding agencies was highlighted by the participants as a key to securing to research grants to support academic unit initiatives.

4.3.3 Donations and Fundraising Initiatives

Donations were identified as a key source of external funding, helping to supplement the financial resources of the academic units. One participant, BMA1 explained that:

Makerere University receives different forms of donations coming from individuals, alumni, corporates, development partners and communities. These donations support scholarships, infrastructure, research and welfare. As a bursar, I ensure compliance and audit readiness in line with the institutional policies, government regulations and donor conditions. This process facilitates both internal and external audits exercise, a key factor in maintaining credibility and continued donor funding to academic units externally.

Fundraising activities were emphasized by Deans as key strategies for securing external financial support for their academic units. One of the participants, DMS2 noted that:

The collaboration between the office of the Dean/Head of Department and USAID helped them to receive donation “In-Kind” in form of a building infrastructure to expand teaching and learning capacity of the academic unit. The American government further promises to install solar panels on the same building in order to stabilize power supply to the building. This is then considered as an achievement on the part of the leadership of the academic unit.

In the same line, DMS2 further highlighted that:

Through my fundraising drive as a Dean, the unit has ever received In-Kind donation inform of equipment and reagents from United Kingdom (UK), Denmark, Spain and Netherlands; human resource technical support from Egypt to work in the academic unit freely while the entire School of Public Health received infrastructural development support from donors to elevate the administration block at the main campus of the University.

Acquiring donations was seen as a key strategy for strengthening the financial and academic capacity of academic units. Deans played a central role in identifying opportunities, preparing proposals and coordinating the management of these donations to support research and development activities. One of the participants, DMA1 explained that:

Deans lead research funding and grant acquisition campaigns by supporting academic units i.e. academic unit leaders and lecturers in applying for external research grants from the government, private sector, NGOs; as the lecturers are encouraged to write research grant applications in order to fund academic programs in the academic units. For instance, School of Medicine grants office

handles pre- and post-award support, grant proposal development and submission, award negotiation, project implementation support, financial monitoring and reporting, sub award management and capacity building for both researchers and administrators.

Fundraising and donor engagement were identified as key mechanisms through which College Principals supplement the financial resources of their units. Principals emphasized proactive relationship-building with donors and partners to secure support for academic and developmental initiatives. PMA1 noted:

I, as a principal, do fundraise and donor engagement by leading fundraising efforts for the College, working closely with the University's Planning and Development office. It is my responsibility, as a principal to build relationships with alumni, philanthropists and corporate donors to secure financial support for the academic units. I act as a spokesperson and representative of the College in fundraising events and donor meetings while identifying and naming opportunities for buildings, scholarships, research chairs, among others. For example, Makerere University endowment fund established in the 1930s. This fund invests donated capital to generate earnings that support scholarships, research, infrastructure, and more.

Participants emphasized the role of external and strategic partnerships in external financial resources mobilization. PMS expressed that:

I initiate and foster partnerships with government agencies, NGOs and the private sector on behalf of my College while seeking out collaborative projects that bring in funding and align with the college's academic strengths. At Makerere University, industry and community partnerships

are a big part of teaching, research and outreach. They connect the University's academic work to real-world needs, while also mobilizing resources. Industry partnerships are built around internships, joint research, consultancy and corporate sponsorship, while community partnerships focus on service learning, extension, innovation hubs and NGO collaborations. Together, they strengthen the University's 'third mission' of community engagement alongside teaching and research.

All Deans I interviewed emphasized the importance of external partnerships as shown in this representative extract:

It is the mandate and responsibility of the Dean to undertake the industry and community partnerships by building relationships with industry partners for sponsorships, research collaborations and internship programs. It is worthwhile for the Dean to explore public-private partnerships for infrastructural developments, innovation hubs, or training programs that bring in financial contributions in the academic unit.

(DMS2)

The findings indicated that academic units at Makerere University valued partnerships to mobilize financial resource externally.

Overall, the findings revealed that academic units in Makerere University rely heavily on government subventions and grants, research grants from donors and development partners. As such, the academic units value external partnerships. Internal financial resources mobilization was comparatively weak, academic units relied heavily on University allocations and tuition.

Chapter Five

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

This chapter starts with discussion of the findings on internal and external financial resource mobilization practices in academic units at Makerere University, contextualizing them within the framework of resource dependence theory and existing literature. The discussion is organized into two main sections: internal financial resource mobilization (Section 5.1) and external financial resource mobilization (Section 5.2). The chapter ends with the conclusions and recommendation respectively.

5.1 Internal Financial Resource Mobilization Practices

The findings revealed that university allocations serve as a foundational source of internal funding, supporting core functions such as teaching, research and infrastructure development. Bursars and Deans emphasized the importance of strategic financial planning, accurate forecasting and evidence-based budgeting to ensure that allocations meet departmental needs. This proactive approach aligns with Seltzer et al's. (2022) assertion that internally generated resources are central to sustaining operational effectiveness in higher education institutions.

However, participants noted that university allocations alone are insufficient to meet the growing operational demands. Rising costs, ambitious research agendas and infrastructure expansion necessitate supplementary revenue streams. This observation echoes the findings of Kobugabe and Rwakihembo (2022), who argue that universities in East Africa increasingly rely on diversified internal income sources to maintain sustainability. The study

suggests that while allocations provide a reliable financial base, they function most effectively when integrated into a broader set of strategies, including tuition, income-generating activities and research grants.

Tuition-based programs and income-generating activities emerged as vital avenues for supplementing internal resources. Deans emphasized the dual-track tuition system, which allows fee-paying students to generate revenue alongside government-sponsored students. This strategy aligns with practices in other East African universities, which use market-driven approaches to enhance financial sustainability as noted by Amutuhaire (2022), and Marcucci et al. (2008). Income generating activities, including short courses, certification programs, and commercial ventures such as demonstration farms and patent royalties, provide flexible, demand-driven revenue streams. These initiatives reflect Lamptey's (1994) market model of higher education financing, emphasizing responsiveness to societal needs while supporting internal revenue generation. Bursars and deans reported that careful financial oversight, including pricing models, cost recovery, and risk assessment, ensures these activities complement rather than compromise academic priorities.

The findings indicate that entrepreneurial activities strengthen financial resilience and foster innovation. Academic units leverage internal expertise to identify viable commercial opportunities, aligning with global best practices (Summit, 2010). Importantly, income generating activities and tuition programs demonstrate how internal resource mobilization can be both strategic and adaptive, reducing vulnerability to fluctuations in government allocations.

Transparent financial management emerged as a cornerstone of internal resource mobilization. Participants emphasized monitoring restricted and unrestricted funds, ensuring compliance with donor and institutional requirements and producing comprehensive reports. These findings reinforce Robinson and Sensoy's (2013) argument that accountability

enhances institutional credibility and fosters stakeholder confidence. Documentary evidence, including audits and financial statements, corroborate Bursars' accounts, illustrating that strong governance underpins resource mobilization. Furthermore, accountability mechanisms allow academic units to leverage internal credibility for external funding, demonstrating a link between internal governance and resource sustainability.

The findings reveal that financial management is not merely procedural but strategically instrumental, enabling units to align resources with institutional goals while reinforcing trust among internal and external stakeholders. This aligns with RDT (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), suggesting that effective oversight mitigates dependence risks and enhances financial autonomy and sustainability.

5.2 External Financial Resource Mobilization Practices

Mobilization of research grants emerged as a strategic tool for institutional capacity-building. Bursars reported actively supporting the preparation of budget sections for grant proposals, ensuring compliance with donor requirements and sustainability criteria. This practice resonates with literature on research administration and financial oversight, which highlights that structured management enhances the probability of funding success (Ishengoma, 2019; Johnson et al., 2021). The findings further indicate that research grants mitigate resource dependency risks, aligning with RDT. The findings showed that academic units in Makerere University leverage these external funds while ensuring alignment with institutional priorities, thereby balancing autonomy and external accountability, in line with the RDT (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

External research grants and partnerships play a crucial role in bolstering academic and financial capacity. Deans and Principals reported coordinating grant applications, liaising with international donors and fostering partnerships to secure multi-year funding. This aligns

with literature emphasizing the importance of diversified, multi-source funding for institutional sustainability (Ayele & Wield, 2005; Koen & Thomas, 2016). RDT provides a lens to explain how academic units manage interdependence with external actors to reduce financial vulnerability while advancing research agendas (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The findings indicate that effective grant administration, capacity-building initiatives and cross-departmental collaboration facilitate access to larger funding pools. Such strategies exemplify the integration of internal capability and external engagement, demonstrating a sophisticated approach to resource mobilization.

The findings revealed that Bursars' advisory support to Deans and Lecturers fosters financial discipline, increasing both credibility and the likelihood of future funding. This finding corroborates Amutuhaire's assertion that effective research fund management strengthens institutional reputation and facilitates subsequent grant acquisition (Amutuhaire, 2022). Moreover, research grants are linked to capacity development within units. Participation in grant writing, project monitoring and reporting equips academic staff with critical financial and administrative skills, enhancing the internal capability to manage complex projects. The synthesis of these findings with literature underscores the dual role of grants: they are a resource and a mechanism for capacity enhancement and institutional resilience.

Donations were identified as critical external resources for supporting scholarships, research, infrastructure and welfare programs. Principals, Deans and Bursars highlighted the importance of compliance with donor requirements, audit readiness and internal controls in maintaining donor confidence. These findings resonate with Shikongo (2023), who emphasized structured fundraising and stewardship as central to sustaining higher education institutions in Africa. Resource dependence theory explains why academic units actively cultivate donor relationships: interdependencies must be strategically managed to secure

resources while safeguarding institutional autonomy (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Therefore, training staff in financial management, monitoring funds and documenting expenditures enhances credibility and increases continued donor support (Mankambila & Marwa, 2024). Additionally, donations enable strategic expansion and innovation. In-kind contributions for infrastructure, equipment and human resource support strengthen the capacity of academic units to achieve their educational and research mandates. This finding illustrates the dual role of donations as both a financial resource and a strategic enabler of institutional growth.

Strategic engagement with industry, community and government was shown to be essential to resource mobilization. Partnerships with private sector actors, NGOs, and government agencies provide funding, internships, consultancy opportunities, and infrastructural support. These practices align with the literature on the "third mission" of universities, whereby community engagement serves both developmental and financial objectives (Dube & Hendricks, 2023). Government engagement, including lobbying for policy support and participating in funding frameworks, reflects the strategic application of RDT. By navigating external environments and cultivating partnerships, academic units enhance resource inflows while contributing to national development priorities. This dual benefit underscores the necessity of integrating external engagement into strategic financial planning.

The findings showed that capacity building strengthens external resource mobilization by equipping staff with skills in grant writing, financial management, and cross-departmental collaboration. Principals reported that these initiatives enhance institutional credibility, support compliance with donor requirements, and foster long-term partnerships. RDT highlights the strategic value of internal competencies in managing external dependencies (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The study shows that investing in capacity building not only facilitates effective resource management but also enhances donor confidence, creating a

positive feedback loop for sustained mobilization. Financial oversight, therefore, is both a governance and strategic instrument that supports institutional resilience and growth.

Overall, the findings showed that academic units in Makerere University employ a narrow array of internal and external financial resource mobilization strategies. The findings demonstrate that financial resource mobilization is not merely procedural but strategically central to the sustainability, credibility, and development of higher education institutions, particularly in resource-constrained contexts.

5.3 Conclusions

In this section, I provide conclusions of the study according to the objectives in the following sections.

5.3.1 Internal Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University

Internally, university allocations, tuition-based programs, and income generating activities emerged as key financial resource mobilization practices in the academic units. I conclude that internal financial mobilization in the academic units is narrow-based. Reliance on narrow internally generated funding sources creates conditions of financial vulnerability in the academic units in the University, and limits the ability of the academic units to leverage opportunities to bolster financial autonomy and sustainability.

5.3.2 External Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University

The findings showed that sourcing research grants, donations, partnerships and engagement were key financial resource mobilization practices at the academic units. The

academic units relied heavily on externally generated financial resources. I conclude that over-reliance on externally generated financial resources is likely to erode the financial autonomy of the academic units. Academic units that integrate robust internal management with proactive external engagement in sourcing financial resources externally are more likely to build financial autonomy and resilience.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, I propose a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening financial resource mobilization across academic units in Makerere University.

5.4.1 Recommendations on Internal Financial Resource Mobilization

Findings of this study showed that effectiveness of internal financial resource mobilization hinges on rigorous oversight and accountability. I recommend that College Principals together with College Bursars, and Deans of Schools should establish meticulous financial resources mobilization strategies that strategically align budgets to academic units' priorities. To attain this, the University should institutionalize continuous professional development in internal financial resource mobilization for academic leaders. This could be in the form of training workshops, mentorship programs and cross-departmental collaborations aimed at strengthening financial resource mobilization.

Secondly, I recommend diversification of internal revenue streams in the academic units. The findings showed that internal financial resource mobilization in the academic units was narrow-based, relying tuition-based programs, and narrow income generating activities. Academic units could strategically engage in consultancy services, intellectual property commercialization, among others, to strengthen their financial sustainability.

5.4.2 Recommendations on External Financial Resource Mobilization

The study highlights that the academic units in Makerere University relied heavily on externally generated financial resources which can erode the financial autonomy and sustainability of the academic units. I recommend that academic units in Makerere University should strategically diversify their sources of financial resources. This requires building institutional capacity for financial resource mobilization. By enhancing internal capabilities, academic units will be better positioned to secure larger and more diverse funding pools.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study on financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University has methodological limitations that call for further research. First, this was a qualitative study, using a small sample size, future studies could use mixed methods approach to undertake University wide study on financial resource mobilization strategies and practices. Secondly, further research could investigate the perspectives of faculty members, students, and other key stakeholders on how financial resources are mobilized and utilized in the academic units. Incorporating these perspectives would help assess the effectiveness of internal and external financial resource mobilization strategies in supporting teaching and learning, research, and community engagement outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide for College Principals, Deans of Schools, and College Bursars

Dear Sir/Madam/Dr./Professor,

I am ANICETUS ADAKU, a student of Masters of Higher Education in Leadership and Management at the East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development, College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University. I am conducting research on the topic “Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University” as a course requirement.

You have been selected to participate in this study which is purely for academic purpose. Kindly, feel free to participate, maximum confidentiality will be ensured. Thank you for your favorable Cooperation.

Internal Financial Resource Mobilization

- i. How would you describe the financial status of your unit?
- ii. How does your academic unit mobilize financial resources internally?

External Financial Resource Mobilization

- i. How does your academic unit mobilize financial resources externally?
- ii. How would you describe the state of external financial resource mobilization in your unit?

Appendix B: Document Review Guide

| Document Name | | Internal | External | Remarks/Interpretation |
|--------------------------------------|------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| Title | Year | | | |
| i. Quarterly reports of the Colleges | | | | |
| ii. Annual reports of the Colleges | | | | |

Appendix C: Consent Form

I am ANICETUS ADAKU, a student of Masters of Higher Education in Leadership and Management at the East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development, College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University. I am carrying out research on the topic “Financial Resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere University” as a course requirement.

I would like to request for your consent to participate in an interview on financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University. The interview will be conducted face-to-face at a time and location that is convenient for you. The interview may last approximately 30 minutes and will be recorded with an audio recording device. You have been purposively chosen as a participant in this study because of your key role you play within the University as a Principal/Dean/Bursar. You will be asked to share your experiences on financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University. The results of this study may help individuals and the University to develop more effective ways of enhancing financial resource mobilization practices in academic units in Makerere University. Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Any information you would have provided will be removed from the study unless you authorize it.

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of consent form and you are fully aware of the conditions explained above.

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information, understood the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in the interview. I give consent to be audio-recorded during the interview.

Name.....
Title of Participant.....
Date.....
Signature.....

Appendix D: Letter of Introduction

MAKERERE

P. O. Box 7062 Kampala-Uganda
www.eashesd.mak.ac.ug
Tel: 256 - 41 -532992



UNIVERSITY

Cell: +256 - 782 - 464691
E-mail: eashesd.cees@mak.ac.ug
Twitter: @eashighered

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL STUDIES
EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT
Office of the Dean**

23rd June 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Adaku Anicetus – Reg. No.2021/HDO4/2805U is our masters student who is collecting data for his dissertation titled: "*Financial resource Mobilization Practices in Academic Units in Makerere university*".

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to him in collecting the necessary data for his dissertation.

The East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development thanks you in advance for your assistance.


Prof. Anthony Muwagga Mugagga

Caretaker



