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THEIR IMPACT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE
AT PETROZIM LINE (PVT) LTD

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Declaration

AN INVESTIGATION OF FUEL SHORTAGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF PETROZIM LINE (PRIVATE) LIMITED

By Patience Aisha Hove B221722B

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Accountancy Honors Degree

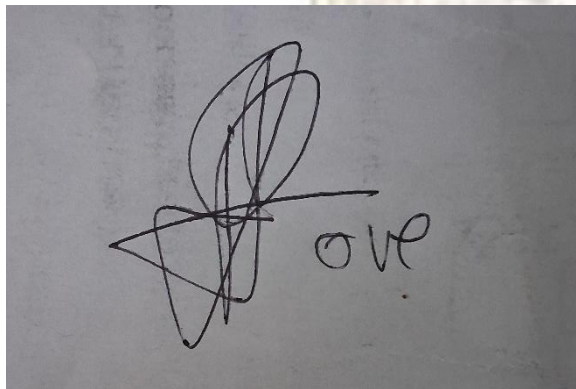
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Supervisor: RICHARD MASINIRE

June 2026

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Release Form

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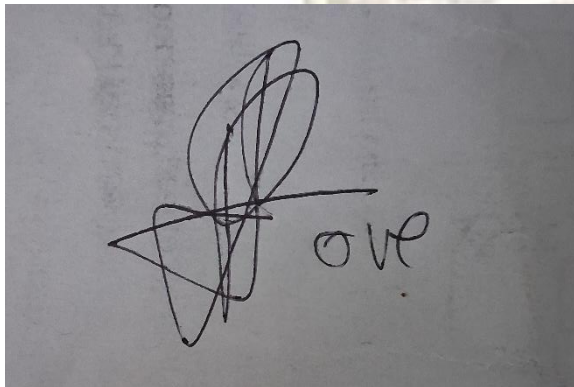
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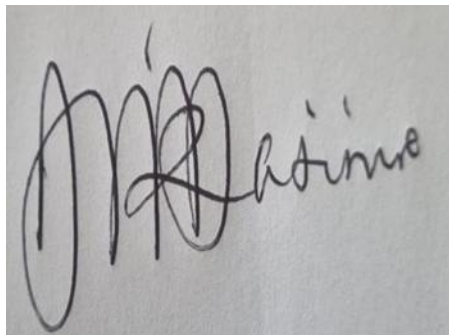
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The above undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation entitled '**An investigation of Fuel shortages and the effects on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd**' submitted by Patience Aisha Hove (B221722B) and recommend the faculty of Commerce to approve this work for the purpose of award of Bachelor of Accountancy. I confirm that this dissertation is adequate in scope and quality and is ready for submission for examination.

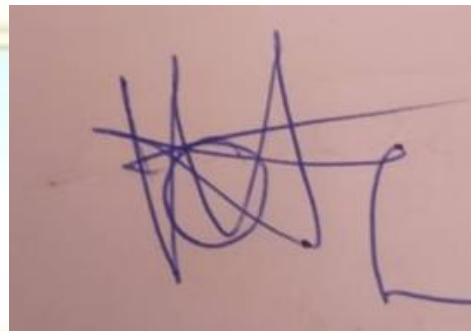
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Dedication

To my dearest parents this dissertation is a humble offering of appreciation for all your boundless, inspiring, sacrificial and constant efforts to see me complete my education. You did believe in me even when I doubted myself, always encouraged me to persevere and with your unending love, dedicated yourself to me study and I do feel your endeavors, character, and guidance are reflections in my achievements. I do owe you all the best they have given to bring me here.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of fuel shortages on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. Zimbabwe has continued to face the persistent problem of fuel shortages, thereby impacting on the operations of various organization's dependent on a stable fuel supply. The study was aimed at identifying the reasons for fuel shortages, identifying the impact of these fuel shortages on operations and then to investigate the measures put in place by Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd to tackle these shortages as well as proposing solutions to overcome their impact. A mixed methodology research approach was adopted whereby qualitative and quantitative methods were combined. The data was collected from a total of 50 respondents comprising employees and managers working for various departments within the organization. Questionnaires and interviews were used as methods for data collection. The quantitative data was analyzed by use of frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs while the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that fuel shortages had a significant impact on operational performance of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd by causing service delays, increased operating costs and reduced efficiency as well as affecting the productivity of its employees and work flow management. It was also established that causes of fuel shortage were foreign currency shortages, delays in fuel import, inefficient supply chain and reliance on imports of fuel. While steps such as establishing fuel management systems and developing alternative sourcing strategies have been taken by the company there still appear to be gaps in the system and operational efficiency is continually affected by the shortages. In conclusion fuel shortages had a major impact on the operational performance of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd and that strategic reserves, diversifying fuel sources, improving fuel planning and forecasting and an efficient supply chain were essential in ensuring that organizations maintained business continuity in this challenging environment. Investing in alternative energy and the development of contingency plans will improve organizational resilience.

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First and foremost I would like to thank Mr R Masinire for the invaluable assistance he has rendered during this research. I cannot express in words his feedback at the draft stages of this research and his encouragement has sustained me when the research appeared to be too immense a project for me to complete. My thanks goes to the management of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd for their assistance by providing me access to the data used and their patience in entertaining my queries.

Thanks goes to my lecturers, classmates, friends and my family for their support and constant encouragement throughout my studies.

And finally I give thanks to God Almighty for providing me with the strength, courage and the resilience needed to see this dissertation through to completion.

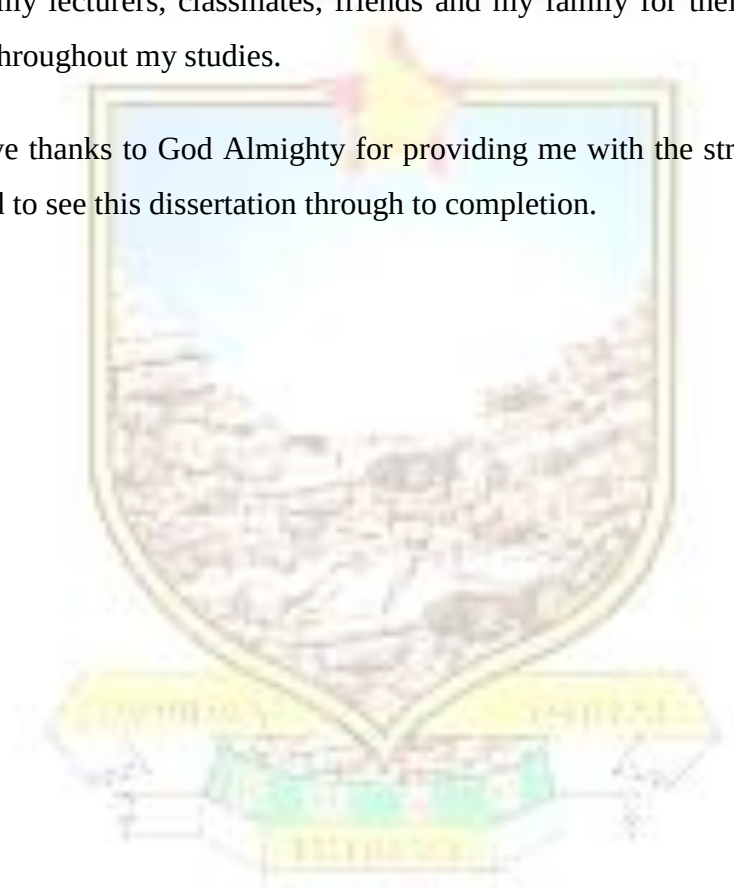


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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been noted that fuel scarcity, which now has become a pervasive problem in many developing countries (African Development Bank, 2023) impacts the operating efficiency of businesses which rely heavily on constant energy. The inconsistency in fuel availability in Zimbabwe has placed a substantial burden on businesses across several factors, causing disruptions in the areas of production, logistics and transportation.

Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd is a company in the petroleum and logistics sector that is extremely vulnerable to these disruptions. Interruptions in fuel availability can result in the deterioration of service delivery, increases in operational costs and a reduction in operational efficiency (Slack, Brandon-Jones and Johnston, 2019). It is the researcher's contention that it will likely influence operational efficiency ultimately a company's competitiveness. This study seeks to investigate the impact of fuel shortages on Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd's operational efficiency. Specifically it examines the impact fuel shortages have on key operational indicators, highlights challenges posed by these shortages and explores ways of minimizing negative consequences.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the operational performance of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd with regard to impact that it has on the operational performance. It looks at how fuel scarcity affects important operational metrics, pinpoints, solves problems; explores options to reduce adverse effect.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Global context

Fuel is an indispensable aspect of worldwide economic transportations. It forms the basis for critical sectors such as logistics, transportation, manufacturing and energy (International Energy Agency, 2023), which rely on efficient supply chains to enable functionality and ensure high levels of productivity. However, fuel systems are especially susceptible to geopolitical disruptions, economic disturbances and interruption of supply. Incidences like the 1973 Oil Crisis have

historically demonstrated the economic disruption a short supply can bring, thereby contributing to price hikes and diminished industrial inputs. The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the fragility in the distribution networks of fuels. Later, the Russian-Ukraine war created significant fluctuations in fuel markets and caused a steep rise in fuel prices. Moreover, the current conflict between Iran and America in 2026 has resulted in further restriction of supply due to the obstruction of critical oil transport networks like the Strait of Hormuz, leading to an increase in operational costs and a general decrease in operational efficiencies and global supply chains.

1.2.2 Regional Context

At regional level, the African countries most vulnerable to fuel shortages include especially those countries in Southern African Development Community (SADC) region as most of them are reliant on external supply of refined products of petroleum to satisfy domestic demand (African Development Bank, 2023). Most of them do not have large enough refinery capacity, rely on external suppliers as well as transport corridors for external supplies. Fuel shortages in global supply, hence directly spill over to SADC region. High price for fuel supplies, fuel shortage, operational and logistics systems in SADC countries inefficiencies among others immediately transmitted to regional level. The effect on transport African economies, in particular those in Southern African Development Community, are of concern first at the regional level. An important strategic consideration is the vulnerability of community (SADC) to fuel shortages on account of its high dependence on imported petroleum products (African Development Bank, 2023). Most countries in the region lack sufficient refining facilities and are dependent on imports of fuel from outside and transport corridors for external supplies. Fuel shortages in global supply, hence directly spill over to SADC region. High among others immediately transmitted to regional level. The effect on transport and logistics systems in SADC countries is serious, fuel shortage directly leads to service delivery delay and high logistics costs. Other factors worsen situation include limitations in infrastructure, foreign exchange scarcity and fragile supply chain networks. Key economic sectors such as mining, manufacturing and agriculture are most dependent on the use of fuel in their production and delivery, thus fuel shortages will immediately cause reduction in productivity, increasing operational costs, and limit the scope of growth.

1.2.3 National Context

In Zimbabwe, fuel shortages have been a persistent challenge, largely driven by foreign currency constraints economic instability (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2023) and supply chain inefficiencies. The country relies heavily on imported fuel, making it highly susceptible to global and regional fuel supply disruptions. Fuel is primarily transported into Zimbabwe through the Feruka – Harare pipeline, making this route critical to national fuel supply. However, periodic fuel shortages have led to long queues, price volatility, and disruptions to business operations across various sectors. Industries such as mining, agriculture and manufacturing, and transport have experienced reduced productivity (ZIMSTAT, 2022) and increased operational costs due to inconsistent fuel availability.

Within this context, Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd plays a vital role in Zimbabwe's fuel supply chain. The company is responsible for transporting fuel from Beira in Mozambique to inland depots in Zimbabwe. Its operational performance is therefore directly influenced by fuel availability and supply chain efficiency. Fuel shortages pose significant challenges to the company including reduced pipeline throughput, delays in fuel delivery, increased operational costs, and inefficiencies in distribution systems. Furthermore, global events such as the Iran-United States Conflict (2026) exacerbate local fuel shortages by increasing import costs and limiting supply.

In conclusion, the combined effects of global, regional and national factors create a complex environment in which fuel shortages significantly impact operational performance. Understanding these dynamics is essential for assessing the challenges faced by Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd and identifying strategies to improve efficiency and resilience in Zimbabwe's fuel supply chain.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite Petrozim Line's strategic importance in Zimbabwe's fuel distribution network, the organization continues to experience operational inefficiencies that appear linked to periodic fuel shortages. These shortages often result in delayed deliveries, underutilization of infrastructure,

increased operational costs, and reduced productivity. While personal accounts suggest a close link between fuel availability and operational performance, there has not been much research into the extent and nature of this issue at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. This study aims to explore how fuel shortages impact the operational performance of Petrozim Line. It will look at the main operational areas that are most affected and suggest possible solutions.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objectives

To investigate the impact of fuel shortages on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the causes and nature of fuel shortages experienced by Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd.
2. To examine the effects of fuel shortages on key operational performance indicators such as efficiency, productivity, and service delivery.
3. To assess how Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd manages and responds to fuel shortages.
4. To recommend strategies to mitigate the impact of fuel shortages on operational performance.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the main causes of fuel shortages affecting Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd?
2. How do fuel shortages impact the company's operational performance?
3. What measures has Petrozim Line implemented to manage fuel shortages?
4. What strategies can be adopted to minimize the effects of fuel shortages on operations?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is significant in several ways. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into how fuel shortages influence the operational performance of a key player in Zimbabwe's petroleum sector.

Secondly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on supply chain disruptions and operational management in energy-related industries. Thirdly, the findings may guide management at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd in formulating effective strategies to ensure operational continuity during fuel crises. Finally, policymakers and other stakeholders in the energy sector may use the findings to develop policies that promote energy security and operational efficiency

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focuses on examining the impact of fuel supply disruptions on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. It will assess how fuel shortages, price fluctuations, and supply inconsistencies affect key operational areas such as transportation, service delivery and cost efficiency. The study is limited to Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd and will consider internal operations and supply chain dynamics within a defined study period (2020-2026). It will also explore the strategies currently used by the company to manage fuel related challenges and evaluate their effectiveness. However, the study will not cover other companies or broader national fuel policies, except where necessary for contextual understanding.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The results of this study may not be as thorough as they may be due to a number of constraints. First of all, it is restricted to Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd, which may limit the results' applicability to other businesses or industries. Second, the company's confidentiality restrictions or inadequate records may limit access to accurate and complete data. Thirdly, the study's 2020 – 2026 timeframe may not adequately reflect long term patterns in fuel supply interruptions. Employee answers could also contain bias or errors. Last but not least, outside variables that are outside the study's control but could affect results include the state of the economy and changes in regulations.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

- **Fuel Shortage:** A situation where the demand for fuel exceeds the available supply, leading to disruptions in normal operations.

- **Operational Performance:** The effectiveness and efficiency of an organization's operations in achieving its objectives, including productivity, service delivery, and cost control.
- **Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd:** A petroleum transportation company in Zimbabwe responsible for managing the fuel pipeline between Mutare and Harare in Zimbabwe.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

- The research is organized into five chapters namely:
- Chapter One: Introduction – Background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study and significance of the study.
- Chapter Two: Literature Review – A critical review of previous research, theories and empirical studies carried out on fuel scarcity and its effect on firms' operating performance.
- Chapter Three: Research Methodology – Described the research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis used.
- Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis – Details the process of analyzing and presenting the results and findings.
- Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations - Provides a synopsis of the research and offers feasible recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature on fuel shortages and their impact on operational performance. The purpose of the chapter is to provide deeper understanding of the major concepts, theories and empirical studies related to research topic. The chapter discusses the concept of fuel shortages, operational performance, theoretical framework, causes of fuel shortages, effects of fuel shortages on organizational operations, and strategies that organizations can adopt to minimize the negative impacts of fuel shortages. The chapter also reviews previous studies conducted by other researchers and identifies the research gap that this study seeks to address at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd.

2.1 Concept of Fuel shortages

Fuel shortages occur when the amount of fuel available is not enough to satisfy the demand (International Energy Agency, 2023) from consumers and business during a specific timeframe. Such shortages pose significant issues in numerous developing nations, especially those that depend largely on imported petroleum products. Fuel plays a crucial role in business activities as it facilitates transportation, production, distribution, and communication tasks. Scarcity in fuel supply leads organizations to face interruptions in their daily operations, which adversely impacts their efficiency and productivity.

In Zimbabwe, shortages have become a recurring problem due to several economic and structural challenges. These include shortages of foreign currency, inflation, poor economic performance, and fluctuations in international oil prices. Fuel is essential in business operations and is used in transport, manufacturing, distribution and communication. An increase in fuel scarcity will eventually cause interruption in daily business operations resulting in a loss of productivity and efficiency. In Zimbabwe the problem of shortages has become very prevalent as a result of various economic and structural issues such as scarcity of foreign currency, inflation, negative growth of the economy and volatile international oil prices. Shortages of fuel are manifested in long queues, a rise in prices, transportation in bottlenecks and delayed operations. Business organizations have a lot to gain from available fuel as operations require fuel. Fuel shortages can be short-term or long-term depending on the causes. Short-term causes include delays in distribution, supply chain

disruption and transport problems. Long-term causes can be caused by an inadequate reserve of foreign currency in the economy and instability. For organizations such as Petrozim Line (Pvt), fuel shortages can affect the movement of goods, increase operational costs, reduce profitability, and negatively impact customer satisfaction.

2.2 Operational Performance

Operational performance refers to the ability of an organization to efficiently and effectively utilize its available resources in order to achieve organizational objectives. It measures how well an organization performs its daily activities while maintaining quality, productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction (Slack et al, 2019). Operational performance is important because it determines whether an organization can remain competitive and sustainable in a dynamic business environment.

Several factors are commonly used to measure operational performance. These include productivity levels, service delivery efficiency, cost management, employee performance are usually able to meet customer demands on time, minimize waste, reduce costs, and improve service quality. On the other hand, poor operational performance may lead to customer complaints, reduced revenue, operational delays, and loss of market share.

Fuel availability plays a critical role in improving operational, especially in transport and logistics companies. In fuel distribution companies such as Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd, fuel shortages can interrupt transportation schedules, delay deliveries, increase operational costs, and reduce efficiency. As a result, organizations may fail to meet customer expectations and business targets. Therefore, fuel shortages have a direct relationship with operational performance.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study is supported by the theoretical framework, which also explains how fuel shortages and operational performance are related. Systems theory and supply chain management theory serve as the foundation for this investigation.

2.3.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory suggests that an organization is a system with varied yet mutually dependent and interrelated components that are designed to contribute to common purposes (Armstrong, 2014). In system theory the alteration of part of the system will directly impact on other parts of the system

is influenced. Organizational systems rely on factors such as workforce, fuel, machinery and information as input, in order to generate product and services as output. This theory is relevant to the study in that fuel is an input that an organization is dependent on. An organization's dependence on fuel as input has implications in transportation systems, supply chain and production when fuel shortages occur. For example, at Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd, fuel shortages may lead to delays in transporting fuel products, reduced efficiency, and failure to meet customer demands.

The implication for organizational system of shortages of the fuel supply is that such shortages would impacts on all parts of the system of an organization. For instance, in the case of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd shortages of fuel supply might bring about delays in the delivery of the fuel product, loss of operational efficiency and inability to serve the customers. A strong point of the systems Theory is its contribution to the understanding of relationship among the parts of the system of an organization and the significance of effective inter-organization coordination and resource management in an organization. There are certain weak points of the systems theory because this theory is a very general and it is possible to underestimate the complexity of issues that may arise within organizational system and could hardly explain some factors in the external environment.

2.3.2 Supply Chain Management Theory

The theory is based on managing and controlling flow of goods, services, information and resources from suppliers to customers. Importance is given to co-operation of suppliers, manufacturers, distribution and customers to increase efficiency of the operation. Reducing costs, increasing efficiency and customer satisfaction are goals of supply chain management. The theory is relevant to the case study as fuel shortages directly affect activities of supply chain. When there is no fuel available then the whole operation becomes inefficient and costly. Even suppliers cannot get their materials to manufacture products and manufacturers may face difficulties to supply products to customers. For transport and logistics companies, like Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd, if there is an issue with fuel supply the movement of goods and services are affected. Through Supply Management theory importance of planning, relations with suppliers, inventory management and distribution process in mitigating disruptions due to shortage of fuel can be explained This theory relevant theory relevant to study because fuel shortages directly affect supply chain activities. When fuel is unavailable, transportation systems become disrupted, resulting in delayed deliveries,

increased costs, and reduced operational efficiency. Organizations may also struggle to obtain raw materials and distribute products to customers. In transport and logistics companies such as Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd, disruptions in fuel supply negatively affect the movement of goods and the ability to provide reliable services.

2.4 Causes of Fuel Shortages

There are many reasons for a shortage of fuel to occur. Economic, political, and operational reasons are among the reasons that can lead to a fuel shortage. One of the most prominent reason why there is fuel shortage in some developing nations is that there is a lack of foreign currency to import fuel. A number of nations use petroleum as a fuel that has to be imported, thus when there are less reserves of foreign currency available it becomes a problem for governments and companies to purchase sufficient quantities of fuel.

Economic instability, the inability of governments and companies to finance the importation of fuel can occur when inflation rates are high, economic growth is slow, and economic systems are unstable. In Zimbabwe, economic problems can account for fuel shortages experienced in recent years. In turn, economic instability is likely to impact on the fuel pricing and supply channels.

Supply chain disruption. Transportation delays, infrastructure, machinery breakdowns and poor logistics could have interruptions of the fuel supply chain. Supply chain interruption could occur due to political instability, strike action, border delays and various other factors that hinder fuel flow through the supply chain. International fluctuations in oil prices may play a role in determining the price and hence affordability of fuel in the international market.

Fuel shortages could be influenced by a government's policies on taxation of fuel imports and exports, fuel price controls and import quotas or restrictions, as they could negatively impact on a fuel supplier's decision to import fuel sufficient to meet demand. Corruption within fuel supply chain systems also contributes to fuel shortages in some countries.

2.5 Effects of Fuel Shortages on Operational Performance

Reduced productivity is a major issue organizations face when experiencing fuel shortages. Many business activities depend on equipment and vehicles that use fuel. Workers are, therefore unable to meet targets if they lack the required resources, leading to lower output levels and production delays. Increased operational costs is another major issue associated with fuel shortages. Organizations can experience increased operating costs when seeking alternative, more expensive suppliers to fuel sources and incurring transport costs during the search. The rise in operational costs leads to lower profitability, consequently threatening an organization's viability. Additionally, organizations may incur increased costs by maintaining alternative infrastructure as well as the administrative costs of operational disruption.

Delays in service delivery are a prominent impact of fuel shortages. Disruptions to delivery systems due to lack of fuel result in delayed deliveries of goods and services, compromising service quality to customers and the organizations' image. In competitive markets, clients may choose service providers that demonstrate reliability.

Financial loss and profitability decreases can result from fuel shortages. Organizations with lower output levels and market shares suffer a drop in revenue, lower sales volumes, and potentially, an inability to meet their obligations. This could even result in organizations being unable to operate and halting their activities altogether. Employee productivity can suffer too when operations are less reliable and stressful. Fuel shortages at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd will potentially impact transportation schedules, supply chain efficiency, customer relations and business performance. Fuel shortages also increase operational costs. Organizations may be forced to purchase fuel from alternative suppliers at higher or incur additional transportation expenses while searching for fuel. Increased operational costs reduce profitability and may affect the financial sustainability of organizations. Companies may also spend more money maintaining backup systems and managing operational disruptions.

Another major effect of fuel shortages is delays in service delivery. Transportation disruptions caused by fuel shortages may result in late deliveries of goods and services to customers. This negatively affects customer satisfaction and organizational reputation. In highly competitive industries, customers may shift to competitors who provide more reliable services.

Fuel shortages may also lead to loss of revenue and reduced profitability. Organizations that fail to operate efficiently may lose customers, reduce production levels, and experience lower sales volume. In some cases, businesses may temporarily suspend operations due to lack of fuel. Employee morale and motivation may also decline when operations become unstable and stressful. At Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd, fuel shortages may negatively affect transportation schedules, supply chain efficiency, customer relationships, and overall business performance.

2.6 Strategies to Mitigate Fuel Shortages

Businesses can employ a variety of strategies to minimize the negative effect of fuel shortages on their performance of operation. One approach is to properly manage the fuel stocks. Firms should keep enough supply of fuel to facilitate operations when fuel is short. A robust inventory management system will assist companies in monitoring fuel consumptions and planning for future shortage.

2.7 Empirical review

Fuel shortages and performance of operations have been studied by several researchers. Moyo, T. (2020) researched on the impact of fuel shortages on transport companies in Zimbabwe. The researcher discovered that the shortages resulted in an increase of operational costs and low efficiency, leading to delayed operations, which eventually reduced business profits and satisfaction. Ndlovu, S. (2021) researched on the impact of fuel shortages on logistics companies, established that they cause supply chain disruptions and lower overall company productivity. The researcher suggested that better fuel management systems and having varied fuel suppliers would greatly minimize disruptions in operations. Another study on the impact of fuel shortages by Chigora, P. (2019) found out that production costs escalated, production levels declined among manufacturing companies. Effective supply chain management and government intervention were among the issues emphasized by this study to ensure stability of the fuel supply. While these studies are informative regarding the general impact of fuel shortages on operations, there is a paucity of studies related to Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd specifically. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that research gap by investigating how shortages affect operational performance within the organization.

2.8 Research Gap

Most previous studies focused on the general effects of fuel shortages on national economies, transport sectors, and manufacturing industries. However, limited studies have specifically examined the impact of fuel shortages on operational performance at Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd. This study seeks to bridge this gap by focusing on the experiences, challenges and operational impacts of fuel shortages within the company.

2.9 Summary

This chapter reviewed literature related to fuel shortages and operational performance. The chapter discussed the concepts of fuel shortages and operational performance, theoretical frameworks, causes and effects of fuel shortages, mitigation strategies, and empirical studies conducted by previous researchers. The literature reviewed showed that fuel shortages negatively affect organizational efficiency, productivity, service delivery, and profitability. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology that will be used in conducting the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an exposition of the research methodology which the investigator employed in the research, under the topic: “**An Investigation Of Fuel Shortages and Their impact on Operational performance At Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd,**” and to present the information on the chosen sampling design; target population; Sample size and sampling technique; Data collection methods and tools; Data representation and analysis techniques; validity and Reliability of the instrument as well as Ethical issues and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the overall design or strategy that the researcher will use in conducting the study. It lays out the framework of data collection and analysis that will help the investigator answer the research questions. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect detailed information about fuel shortages and the effects on operational performance at Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd.

Given that the research would be descriptive in nature, a descriptive research design was deemed appropriate as this design was able to document how the operational problems were encountered by the employees of management at Petrozim Line due to fuel shortage and also their perceived effects. This design supported the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, providing a fuller picture of the issues under investigation.

Using a descriptive strategy was appropriate because it relied on first hand, accurate data gathered directly from staff within the organization. It also appeared to be efficient and suitable as it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large number of respondents within a relatively short time.

3.2 Research Approach

A mixed methods study was used: Quantitative data collection through the use of questionnaires to collect numerical data that can be statistically analyzed on the impact of operational disruption, while qualitative methods captured detailed opinions and experiences from respondents to explain the reasons behind those disruptions. This mixed method approach was selected to allow for a wider understanding of fuel shortage effects on operational performance. The quantitative part provided the scale of operational disturbance and qualitative part gave insight into reasons for operational disturbances.

3.3 Target Population

Target population is the total collection of persons about whom the researcher wants to be able to draw some conclusion. For this research, the target population included all employees and management staff at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd who were affected by fuel shortages.

The population included employees from different departments such as:

- Operations department
- Transport and logistics department
- Finance Department
- Human Resources Department
- Procurement
- Management Team

These departments were selected because they are directly affected by fuel shortages and operational performance within the organization.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample refers to the portion of the population selected to provide data for the research. Surveying every employee at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd was not feasible due to time and budget constraints, so 50 respondents were chosen to represent the wider staff. The sample included managers,

supervisors, and general employees across departments. This number was considered adequate to generate reliable data for analysis.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

In this study sample selection was carried out using two methods namely Purposive Sampling and Simple Random Sampling.

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select managers and department supervisors because their roles gave them direct insight into how fuel shortages affected operations and staff performance. Participants were chosen based on their position and relevance to the research focus.

3.5.2 Simple Random Sampling

General employees from different departments were selected through simple random sampling. This method gave every eligible employee an equal chance of participation, which helped reduce bias and improve the validity of the findings.

3.6 Sources of Data

The research drew on both primary and secondary data.

3.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data consists of firsthand information directly from participants. For this study, questionnaires and interviews with Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd employees and managers were used to gather original data.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data consist of information already gathered and recorded by another researcher or organization. Secondary data for this study was obtained from:

- Textbooks
- Journals
- Company reports
- Internet sources

- Previous research studies
- Newspapers and articles related to fuel shortages

Secondary data helped provide background information and supported the findings of the study.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Data methods are the procedures by which the relevant information is collected from participants.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

The data collection method that was adopted was questionnaires, these involved a variety of closed and open-ended questions, the closed questions to allow for precise answers, and open-ended to let respondents express themselves as they wished. The questionnaire was appropriate to use, as data can be collected from a large number of participants over relatively short space of time, also maintaining respondent anonymity, and minimizing interview bias.

The questionnaires focused on:

- Causes of fuel shortages
- Effects of fuel shortages on operations
- Challenges faced by employees
- Impact on service delivery
- Strategies used to reduce operational disruptions

3.7.2 Interviews

Interview of the managers and supervisors of Petrozim Line (Pvt) were also conducted. Interviews were performed so that the researcher could gain in-depth information and answers would give the researcher clarification about problems associated with fuel shortage and working efficiency. Interviews were useful as researchers can obtain answers in the required details. The researcher could ask some follow-up questions if they were needed

3.8 Research Instruments

Research instruments are devices used in gathering data from subjects or respondents. The study employed two primary instruments namely questionnaires and interview guide. The questionnaire provided structured questions, which were easily understood and answered by respondents. Interview guide provided a framework on the questions for interviewing management personnel. These instruments were chosen because they helped gather both quantitative and qualitative data appropriate for the research purposes.

3.9 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity measures what we say we're measuring. It is whether the measures and tests we use to evaluate a behavior are truly measuring what they are purported to measure.. To ensure validity, the researcher consulted academic supervisors and research experts during the development of questionnaires and interview guides. The researcher also conducted a pilot study using a small number of respondents to test whether the questions were clear, relevant and understandable. Corrections and adjustments were made based on feedback received from the pilot study.

3.10 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability has to do with the consistency of instruments to be used in the research. To ensure reliability, the researcher used standardized questions for all respondents. Clear instructions were also provided to respondents to minimize misunderstandings. The pilot study also helped assess the consistency of responses obtained from the research instruments. This improved reliability and credibility of the study findings.

3.11 Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher's interpretation of the assembled data so as to answer the questions derived from the research objectives is called data analysis. Quantitative data was collected from the questionnaires was represented graphically using tables, bar charts and pie charts. Statistical measures of percentage and frequencies were used for data analysis. Qualitative data which was collected through the use of interviews and free answers to questionnaire items was analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses were grouped and categorized into the various themes so as to present the same in line with the objectives of the study. A combination of qualitative and quantitative

analysis methods permitted the researcher to present a holistic interpretation of the effects of fuel shortages on Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd.

3.12 Ethical Consideration

Being conscious of ethical concerns is important while undertaking research as this demonstrates commitment and integrity. Ethical considerations were taken from management at Petrozim Line Pvt Ltd before proceeding with the research project.

Participation for participants was voluntary, and participants knew they had signed up to this task. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Respondents were assured that information collected would only be used for academic purposes. The researcher also avoided plagiarism by acknowledging all sources of information used in the study.

3.13 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced several limitations during the study. Some respondents were unwilling to provide information due to fear of disclosing company information. In addition, time was a factor that restricted the amount of data gathered.

Financial constraints affected travel and printing costs during data collection. In addition, some respondents had busy work schedules, which delayed the completion of questionnaires and interviews. Despite these limitations, the researcher managed to collect sufficient data necessary for the successful completion of the study.

3.14 Summary

This chapter is concerned with the methodology used in the conducted research study. It addresses the research design, research approach, the study population, the study size, methods of sampling, data collection techniques applied in the study, research instruments to be employed, validity and reliability, analysis of data, study considerations to ethics and study limitations. The upcoming chapter will involve data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of collected study information.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets data collected from respondents at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd regarding the impact of fuel shortages on operational performance. The data was collected using questionnaires distributed to employees and management personnel within the organization. The findings are presented using tables, pie charts, frequencies, percentages and descriptive explanations in line with the research objectives outlined in Chapter One. The chapter on demographic information of respondents, causes of fuel shortages, effects of fuel shortages on operational performance, management responses to fuel shortages, and recommendations provided by respondents.

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed and all 50 were successfully completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. This response rate was considered adequate for reliable analysis and interpretation of findings. The high response rate improved the reliability and validity of findings because all targeted respondents participated in the research.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

4.2.1 Gender Distribution

The study sought to determine the gender distribution of respondents in order to understand the representation of employees who participated in the research.

TABLE 1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	26	52%
Male	24	48%

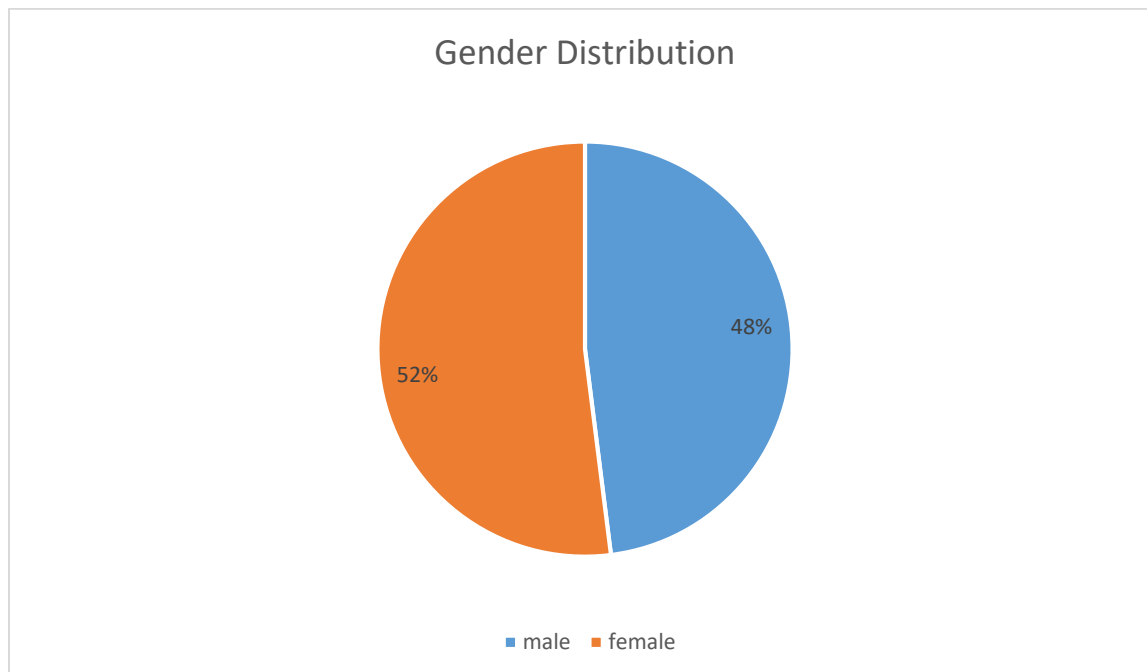


FIGURE 1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 4.1 shows that both male and female employees participated in the study .This indicates balanced participation and improves the reliability of the findings because different perspectives were captured.

4.2.2 Department Distribution

Respondents were chosen from a variety of departments throughout the organization so as to give various opinions on fuel shortages and how it affected performance.

TABLE 2: DEPARTMENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Department	Frequency
Operations	17
Finance	10
Procurement	10
Management	8
Human Resource	5

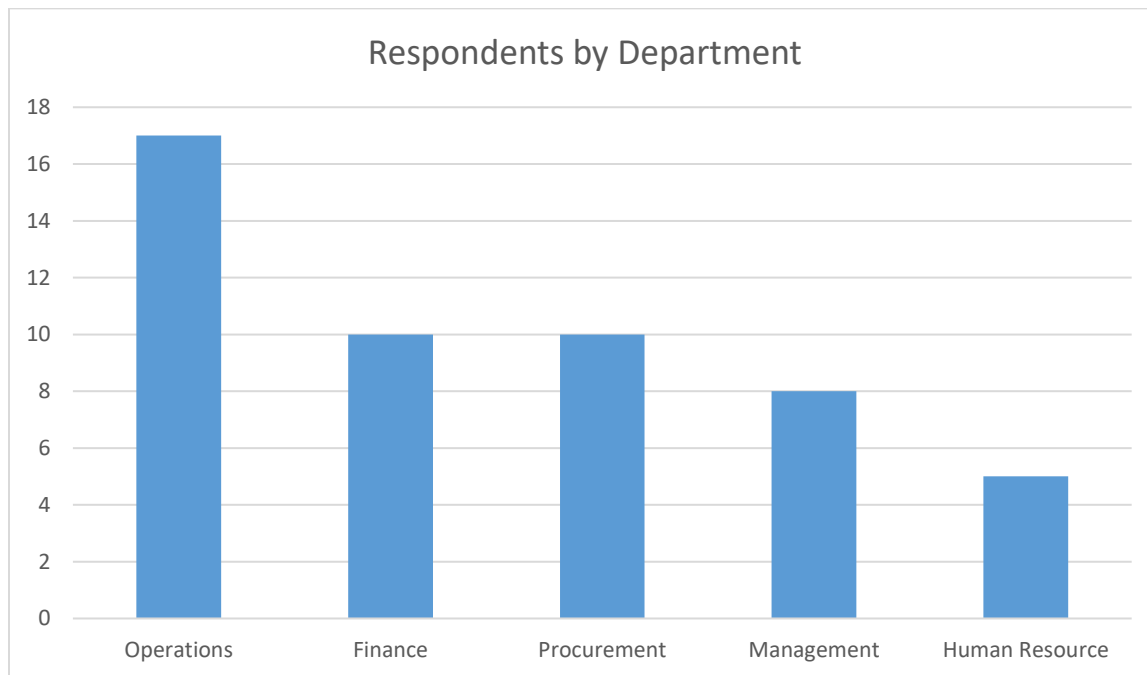


FIGURE 2 DEPARTMENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

The graph above is a bar graph showing that employees from Finance, Operations, Management and Procurement were surveyed. Having respondents from various departments strengthens the information gained regarding problems stemming from operational impacts due to fuel shortages.

4.2.3 Interview findings

The Human Resources Manager says the impact of the shortage is experienced differently in each department. "Operations is the most challenging, as the most essential part of this unit requires a certain amount of fuel as transportation is vital. Finance department also experiences the fuel shortage as emergency fuel has been bought more frequently thus increasing cost." Which also explains why Operations had the most responses.

4.3 Effects of Fuel Shortages on Operational Performance

4.3.1 Fuel Shortages and Operational Disruptions

The respondents were asked whether fuel shortages disrupt the smooth flow of company operations.

TABLE 3: FUEL SHORTAGES DISRUPT COMPANY OPERATIONS

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	34
Agree	15
Neutral	1

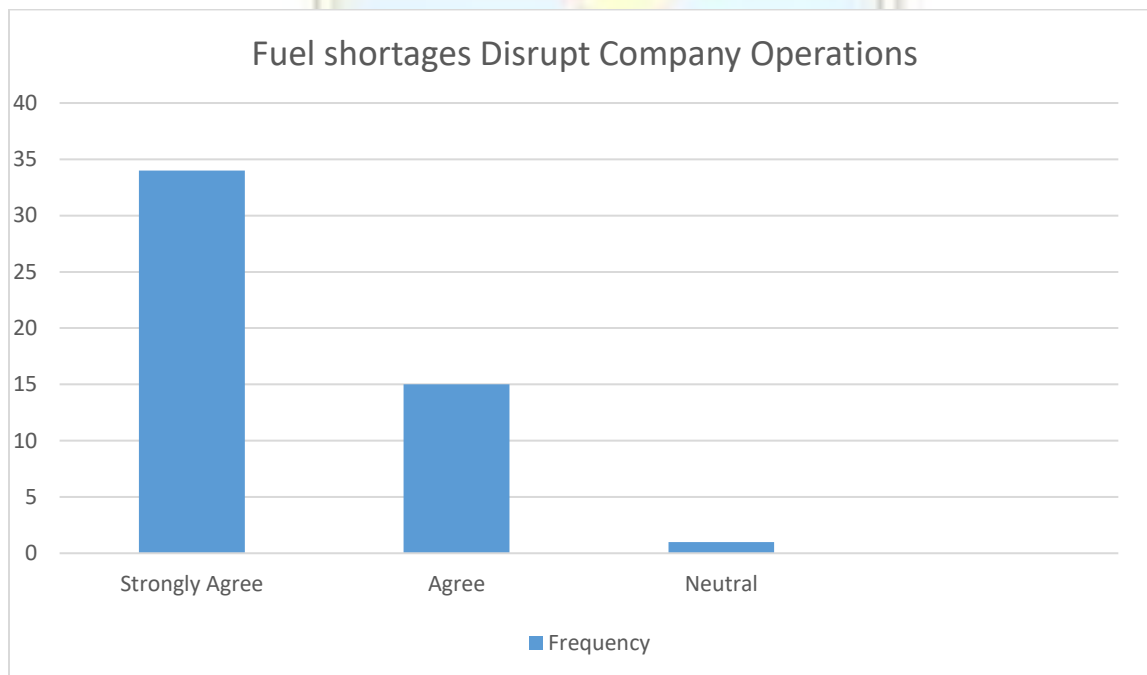


FIGURE 3 FUEL SHORTAGES DISRUPT COMPANY OPERATIONS BAR CHART

These findings indicate that the majority of respondents agreed that fuel shortages disrupt company operations. This suggests that fuel shortages negatively affect workflow, transportation activities, and service delivery within the organization.

4.3.2 Fuel Shortages Increase Operational Costs

TABLE 4: FUEL SHORTAGES INCREASE FUEL SUPPLY

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	30	60%
Agree	16	32%
Neutral	2	4%
Disagree	2	4%

The results show that 92% strongly agrees or agree that a shortage of fuel greatly leads to increase the operational cost of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. Whereas the results indicate that only 4% respondents disagreed with this question and also 4% remained neutral. Therefore this implies that the company suffered from increase in operating cost due to frequent fuel shortages.

This is supported by the studies that were identified in Chapter two. In line with this, Moyo (2020) reported that due to shortage in fuel supply, transport companies tend to buy the fuel at a higher cost thus leading to high cost of operation. In a similar study by Chigora (2019), shortage in supply resulted in high transportation cost, decreased profitability, loss of organizational competitive advantage and, operational costs due to delays caused by logistics disruptions at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd can possibly be as a result of overtime for additional labor to source fuel urgently, costs associated with delayed deliveries and increased costs of operations of the vehicles.

Such results also support Systems Theory a theory which postulates that an input disruption results in system-wide organizational effects. It can be deduced that as fuel is an operational, not supporting resource, shortages will impact on operational activities within transport, as well as procurement, financial services and customer services

4.3.3 Interview Findings

The finance manager responded by saying: 'Whenever fuel runs out at the cheapest supplier the firm will be forced to pay an awful lot more for the same fuel, buying in on an emergency footing which will put us way over budget.' The Procurement Officer further commented; "We notice that

we face higher prices when we have to buy at a scarcity, making our procurement budget unpredictable."

According to one supervisor, "Delays in transporting goods may slow work as the employees cannot do certain tasks until fuel becomes available. Some jobs are thus to be moved to another day" According to a respondent, "When delivery of goods is postponed workers may be forced to overtime to clear backlog."

4.4 Interpretation of Findings

The findings of the study indicate the operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd is highly affected by fuel shortages. It was found that most of the respondents felt that delays in fuel imports, insufficient amounts of foreign currency, ineffective distribution systems, over reliance on imported fuels were major causes of fuel shortages. Fuel shortages were seen to bring delays to operational processes, reduced employee performance, increased costs of operation and a drop in customer service. The study concluded that fuel shortages bring about workflow planning problems and pressure for employees and the operational efficiency of a company is entirely linked to a steady flow of fuel. Where fuel shortages occur frequently organizations face increased downtime, reduced profitability, and lower customer confidence.

The findings also indicated that management has attempted to address fuel shortages through fuel management systems and alternative supply strategies. However, respondents suggested the need for stronger planning systems, strategic fuel reserves, supplier diversification, and improves forecasting mechanisms.

4.5 Summary of key findings

- Fuel shortages significantly disrupt operational activities.
- Operational costs increase during periods of fuel shortages.
- Fuel shortages reduce employee productivity and service delivery.
- Poor planning and supply chain challenges contribute to fuel shortages.
- The organization requires stronger fuel risk management strategies.
- Alternative fuel supply systems can improve operational efficiency.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have represented and analyzed the data obtained from the employees of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd, regarding fuel shortages and organizational performance. The chapter concluded that fuel shortages have severe impact on organization's performance, by increasing lead-times, costs, and by lowering productivity, also the chapter concluded that strategic planning , effective supply chain management, and well managed fuel systems are indispensable in mitigating the impact of fuel shortages on organizations' performance.

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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Chapter five has presented the summary of study findings, research conclusions and recommendation emanating from research study findings. It focuses the study carried out with particular to the problem being addressed under fuel shortages effect on operational performance of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd, and includes possible areas of future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

It was investigated in this study why there is a shortage of fuel and the impact on the operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. Data was collected from staff and management employees at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd by questionnaires. Fuel shortage at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd was found to be caused mainly by the scarcity of foreign currency, fuel import lead times, lack of robust fuel distribution systems, economic and political instability, transportation difficulties and dependency on imported fuel. The respondents felt that all these contributed to the shortage of fuel and thus disturbed operations in the organization. The study found that Petrozim Line (Pvt) has adopted various approaches in tackling fuel shortage such as management of fuel, prediction of fuel demand, use of various sources for fuel supply and reliable communication network between all the parties involved in fuel supply. The respondents however felt that the system could be improved further to effectively handle shortages of fuel for efficient operations.

Several strategies for mitigation of the impacts of fuel shortages on operational performance were recommended by respondents. These include holding of large stocks of fuel, ensuring multiple sources of fuel supply, more reliable management and co-ordination between all involved , efficient of transportation scheduling and improving communication flows.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that fuel shortages have a significant impact on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd. Fuel shortages disrupt operational activities, increase operational costs, reduce service delivery efficiency, and negatively affect productivity and profitability.

This study finally concluded that causes of fuel shortage are driven by; economic instabilities, shortage of foreign currency, supply chain problems and dependency on imported fuels. Due to all this the business' operations are always at stake. It also concluded that despite having various measures to curb fuel shortages, further effort should be done to ensure that planning for fuel, the number of suppliers and the operational coordination are better implemented to improve during fuel shortage.

5.3 Recommendations

Here are a number of recommendations from the findings and conclusion of this research:

5.3.1 Maintain Strategic Fuel Reserves

The firm should ensure adequate stock of fuel reserves for smooth operation during fuel crisis. Strategic fuel reserves help minimize interruption and delay of operation.

5.3.2 Diversify Fuel Suppliers

Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd should identify alternative fuel suppliers to not become overly reliant on one supplier. This can increase the chances of acquiring fuel and also minimize risks in the supply chain.

5.3.3 Improve Fuel Forecasting and Planning

Fuel forecasting and inventory management system should be employed by the organization to better forecast and monitor fuel usage. Precise forecast may help avoid unplanned shortages.

5.3.4 Strengthen Supply Chain Coordination

The company needs to coordinate with departments and suppliers so that fuel distribution and the day-to-day running is maintained during fuel shortages.

5.3.5 Invest in Alternative Energy Solutions

Managers need to look for alternative fuel sources and energy efficient technology so as to be able to rely less on traditional fuel sources and be operationally more sustainable.

5.3.6 Improve Vehicle Equipment Maintenance

The vehicles and equipment used should be maintained in a good operational condition on a routine basis to maximize efficiency in fuel consumption and minimize the chances of failure during a period of fuel scarcity.

5.3.7 Develop Contingency Plans

The organization needs to have contingency plans for business continuity during the fuel crisis. This would prevent operational disruption and improve service delivery.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

Future researchers may conduct studies on:

- The impact of fuel price fluctuations on organizational profitability.
- The effectiveness of fuel management systems in transport and logistics companies.
- The role of alternative energy solutions in reducing operational disruptions caused by fuel shortages.
- The impact of economic instability on fuel supply chains in Zimbabwe

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an overview of findings, discussion and recommendation. The study concluded that shortages of fuel impacted operational performance negatively in Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd with resulting higher operational costs, delay in service delivery and low productivity. Recommendations were made that could be put in place to improve fuel management and operating performance during the fuel shortages.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Employees of Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd

Dear Respondent

I am Patience Aisha Hove, a student carrying out research on the “An Investigation of Fuel Shortages and Their Impact on Operational Performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd.” The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information for academic purposes. Your responses will be held confidential and all answers will be kept anonymous. You are requested to answer the questions by ticking () your appropriate response or writing your answer where required.

Thank you for your co-operation

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. Department

☐ Operations

☐ Finance

☐ Procurement

☐ Human Resources

☐ Management

☐ Other (Specify):

3. Position: _

4. Years of Service

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

SECTION B: FUEL SHORTAGES

5. What do you think are the major causes of fuel shortages at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd?

- ☐ Foreign currency shortages
- ☐ Delays in fuel imports
- ☐ Poor supply chain management
- ☐ Government policies
- ☐ Other (Specify):

6. How often does your department experience operational disruptions due to fuel shortages?

- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

SECTION C: IMPACT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Kindly indicate your level of agreement with the statements below:

SA – Strongly Agree A- Agree N – Neutral D – Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

STATEMENT SA A N D SD

Fuel	shortages	disrupt	company	operations.
Fuel	shortages	increase	operational	costs.
Fuel	shortages	reduce	employee	productivity.
Fuel	shortages	delay	service	delivery.

Fuel shortages affect customer satisfaction.

SECTION D: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

7. What measures have the company taken in an effort to mitigate the impact of fuel shortages?

8. In your opinion, are these measures effective?

☐ Yes

☐ No

(Please explain why): _

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS

9. What would be your recommendations to mitigate the impact of fuel shortages in order to enhance operational performance?

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview Questions for Management

1. What are the major causes of fuel shortages impacting on Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd?

2. How do fuel shortages affect the company's operational performance?

3. Which departments are most affected by fuel shortages?

4. What strategies have management adopted to reduce the impact of fuel shortages?

5. How effective have these strategies been?
6. What challenges is the company facing in ensuring availability of fuel?
7. What other measures would you suggest in order to improve operational performance?

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Private Bag 1020

BINDURA, Zimbabwe

Tel: 0271 – 7531-6, 7615

Mr O.Manyani:0772357174

26 June 2026

RE: REQUEST FOR DATA COLLECTION.

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH- Patience Aisha Hove B221722B

The department of Accountancy at Bindura University of Science Education we acknowledge receipt for **Patience Aisha Hove B221722B** to carry out academic research in fulfilment of her studies. Her research topic is “**An investigation of fuel shortages and their impact on operational performance at Petrozim Line (Pvt) Ltd.**”

We undertake to assist her in every way possible. Through our assistance all information provided shall be used solely for purposes of academic research. Should you require any clarification please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned?

Yours faithfully

.....

O. Manyani (Mr), Chairperson

Bindura University of Science Education

