

An Analysis of The Ethical Implications of the Lack of Educational Resources for Learners in Under-Resourced Communities: The Case of Rural High School in The Township of Motherwell, Eastern Cape

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Plagiarism and Declaration

I hereby authenticate that this research project is my own work. Every pertinent quotation used in this study was identified and acknowledged accordingly. This research project has been submitted to meet the requirements for the Master of Arts in Ethics degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

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Abstract

This study examines the ethical implications of inadequate educational resources in under-resourced high schools in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Many schools in this area face severe shortages of textbooks, computers, classrooms, and laboratories, which negatively affect teaching and learning. The research focuses on how these shortages violate learners' rights to quality and fair education, contributing to poor performance and low motivation. Using an auto-ethnographic case study and the DECA (Describe, Evaluate, Consult, Act) ethical framework, the study combines personal experience with literature and community perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Findings indicate that historical inequalities, inadequate funding, and ineffective policy implementation persistently disadvantage rural learners. The study concludes that addressing this problem requires ethical leadership, community engagement, and more equitable resource allocation, guided by principles of social justice. Recommendations include fair funding, improved infrastructure, teacher support, and stronger digital access for all schools.

Keywords: Educational Resources, Under-Resourced Communities, Educational Inequality, Ethical Implications, Motherwell.

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1.1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The high schools in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, are failing. Students are not getting the equal education they were promised. There are not enough textbooks, the buildings are in disrepair, and no science labs are available for experiments. This deprivation is not a passive circumstance but an active injustice that creates an inherently unequal playing field from the very start. It systematically denies pupils their right to quality education, trapping them in a cycle of disadvantage and unfulfilled potential. This study confronts this ethical failure, arguing that the scarcity of resources is a fundamental breach of social justice against the youth of Motherwell.

This study is urgently needed because broad national statistics on educational inequality often obscure the devastating daily reality within specific communities, such as Motherwell. This chapter will cover the study's background and motivation, the key research question, the sub-research question, the sub-research objectives, the research objectives, the research methodology, and the research structure.

1.2. Background and Motivation

This study examines the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources for pupils in under-resourced communities, using Rural High School in the township of Motherwell, Eastern Cape, as a case study. The focus of this study is on the shortages of educational resources, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient textbooks, and limited access to technology, which hinder learners' ability to receive a quality education. This lack of resources affects academic performance and raises ethical concerns about equity, fairness, and justice in education.

As a teacher, I have witnessed the challenges learners face in under-resourced schools. In Rural High schools, for example, there is a severe shortage of classrooms, forcing learners to share them. In some cases, learners are forced to wait outside the classroom, while others are taught inside the school because there is no space to sit. This situation disturbs the learning process and creates an environment that is not conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Additionally, the shortage of textbooks means that learners often must share a single textbook, making it difficult for them to complete assignments or study independently. Furthermore, the lack of technology, such as computers and internet access, limits teachers' ability to use modern teaching methods, especially in a multilingual environment where teachers may not speak the

learners' home language. These challenges motivated me to explore this topic further, as I believe every learner deserves access to the resources necessary for a quality education.

My interest in this topic stems from my commitment to social justice and educational equity. I am deeply concerned about the long-term consequences of resource shortages on learners' academic outcomes and future opportunities. This study is academically significant and personally meaningful, as it aligns with my professional values and experiences as an educator. Previous scholars have also highlighted the challenges faced by under-resourced schools. For instance, Mokoena (2021:45) discusses the impact of inadequate infrastructure on learner performance, noting that shortages of classrooms and poor facilities contribute to high dropout rates in rural schools.

Similarly, Ndlovu and Mkhize (2022:12) emphasise the importance of textbooks in the learning process, arguing that the lack of access to learning materials affects learners in rural areas. Regarding technology, Mthiyane (2023:78) highlights the digital divide in South African schools, noting that the lack of access to computers and the internet hinders the quality of education for learners. These studies provide a foundation for understanding the challenges under-resourced schools face and underscore the need for further research on the ethical implications of these issues.

The lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities poses significant ethical challenges that must be addressed. This study aims to explore these challenges within the context of a Rural High School in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, and to contribute to the broader discussion on educational equity and justice. By examining the experiences of learners and teachers in this context, I hope to shed light on the ethical implications of resource shortages and advocate for meaningful change.

1.3. Key Research Question

What are the ethical implications of a lack of educational resources for pupils in under-resourced communities?

1.4. Sub-Research Question

1. What educational resources are most lacking in these communities?

2. How does the lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities affect pupils' academic performance?

3. How can principles of distributive justice be applied to address educational inequalities in under-resourced communities?

1.5. Key Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the ethical implications of the inadequate educational resources available to learners in under-resourced communities, with a specific focus on rural high schools in the Motherwell township in the Eastern Cape.

1.6. Sub-Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the critical educational resources missing from under-resourced communities
2. To examine the impact of insufficient educational resources on pupils' learning outcomes
3. To explore policy and practical interventions grounded in distributive justice that can mitigate educational disparities in under-resourced communities.

1.7. Research Structure

In Chapter One, the research topic is introduced, and the scope of the study, as well as the ethical issues that arise when communities lack basic educational resources, is explained. It provides background information and outlines the research problem, objectives, and questions. In Chapter Two, the literature review examines existing books and articles on inequality in school resources, discussing what constitutes a resource, the impact of resource shortages on rural schools, and the government's efforts to address the issue. Chapter Three outlines the methodology and methods employed in this research. It explains the approach guiding the study and describes the techniques for gathering and analysing information. A central component of this chapter is a case study examining the current situation in Motherwell schools, which will provide a concrete context for applying these methods and addressing the research aims.

In Chapter Four, which presents the theoretical framework, consequentialism is chosen as the guiding theory for the study. This theory evaluates actions based on their consequences to understand their moral impact on students. In Chapter Five, the analysis employs consequentialist reasoning to examine the adverse outcomes and harms students suffer due to

resource shortages. Finally, in Chapter Six, the key findings from the entire study are summarised, conclusions are drawn, and practical recommendations are offered for policies and future actions to address the problem of resource inequality.

In conclusion, studying this topic is important because every child deserves a fair chance to succeed. Understanding the severe lack of resources in schools like those in Motherwell is the first step to fixing the problem. This research underscores that this is not merely a practical issue. Still, a profound ethical one, and allowing these inequalities to persist causes genuine harm to students' futures and well-being. The next chapter will discuss the literature review. It covers key themes, including the definition of educational resources, their role in schools, the nature of resource shortages in rural communities, and their impact on learners and teachers.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The last chapter provided background information on the research problem, highlighting the issues underpinning the study. This literature review will employ a thematic analysis to explore the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources for pupils in an under-resourced rural high school in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. This chapter reviews the works of prominent scholars from the past five years, such as Spaull (2020), Motala (2021), Fleisch (2020), Berg (2020), and Hoadley (2021), which will provide a foundation for understanding these issues. The review is structured around eight key subtopics: Defining under-resourced communities, Defining educational resources, The nature of academic resources in under-resourced communities, The reasons why some schools are under-resourced in South Africa, the role of educational resources in schools, the relationship of resources and quality in education, Causes and effects of inadequate resources on pupils and what government has done to mitigate this issue. While significant research has been conducted, gaps remain, particularly in the neglect of teacher support in under-resourced schools.

2.1 Defining Under-Resourced Communities

Nic Spaull (2022:2) defines under-resourced communities as socio-economically disadvantaged areas that lack adequate infrastructure, funding, and essential services, including quality education, which hinders the development and opportunities of their residents. Brahm Fleisch (2022:113) argues that under-resourced communities face systemic neglect, leading to insufficient schools and outdated learning materials. Similarly, Thabo Mabogoane and Tinkly

Mkhwanazi (2021:109) stated that "under-resourced communities are those where learners experience significant educational barriers due to poor access to technology, libraries, and other critical learning resources". Under-resourced schools in these areas often operate with overcrowded classrooms and inadequate government support, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage.

Van De Berg (2020:45) defines under-resourced communities as "geographical areas characterised by systemic deprivation, where residents lack access to basic amenities such as proper healthcare, sanitation, and quality education." In terms of education, Montfort Mlachila and Mbeki Moeletsi (2021:71) stated that "under-resourced communities are educational institutions that struggle with inadequate infrastructure, such as dilapidated buildings and insufficient classroom space." Martin Gustafsson (2022:18) adds that, "under-resourced communities often have high poverty rates, which limit the financial capacity of families to support their children's education, further exacerbating inequalities."

Fleisch (2021:102) further defines under-resourced communities by stating that "households cannot afford supplementary learning materials, forcing schools to rely solely on outdated government-provided textbooks." Spaull (2023:78) observes that "under-resourced communities include high unemployment rates, which limit parental contributions to school funding, whereas under-resourced schools specifically struggle with broken furniture and leaking roofs." According to Ursula Hoadley (2021:33), "an under-resourced community is typically identified by its lack of access to critical social services, including quality education, which perpetuates intergenerational poverty."

Fleisch (2023:59) contends that "under-resourced communities often have limited municipal budgets, leading to poor maintenance of school infrastructure, including broken windows and unsafe playgrounds." For example, in Motherwell, many schools still use pit latrines, a stark indicator of systemic neglect. Berg and Mabogoane (2021:16) stated that, "under-resourced communities are those where learners are more likely to suffer from malnutrition, affecting cognitive development and school performance. For example, they state that in Motherwell, many schools lack feeding schemes, leaving learners hungry and unable to concentrate.

Under-resourced communities, therefore, are socio-economically disadvantaged areas that suffer from systemic neglect, leading to a lack of essential infrastructure, funding, and services such as quality education, healthcare, and sanitation. These communities often face high poverty and unemployment rates, limiting residents' ability to support education. Schools in

these areas struggle with overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, outdated learning materials, and insufficient government support. Additionally, learners often lack access to technology, libraries, and proper nutrition, which further hinders their development. The combination of these challenges perpetuates cycles of disadvantage and intergenerational poverty.

2.2 Defining Educational Resources

Smith (2022:45) defines educational resources as materials or tools that support teaching and learning. Smith (2022: 48) further argues that these resources include textbooks, digital content, and classroom aids that help students understand concepts. They can be physical, like books, or digital, like online videos. The main goal is to make learning easier and more effective for teachers and students. Another view comes from Johnson (2021:12), who defines educational resources as any content that improves knowledge, skills, or understanding. This includes lesson plans, worksheets, and interactive apps. Johnson (2021:15) further argues that adequate resources should be easily accessible and tailored to learners' needs. For example, videos and quizzes can help different types of learners engage with the material.

Brown (2023:78) states that educational resources include support systems like libraries, online databases, and teacher training programs. These resources ensure that learning continues outside the classroom. Brown (2023:80) argues that up-to-date, well-organised resources are key to effective education. Without them, students and teachers may struggle to achieve learning goals.

Different scholars define educational resources as essential tools for teaching and learning. Adams (2020:34) argues that resources encompass traditional and modern materials, such as printed textbooks, laboratory equipment, and e-learning platforms, catering to diverse learning styles. Adams (2020:36) further notes that educational resources should be adaptable to curricular demands, ensuring alignment with learning objectives. For instance, virtual simulations in science classes enable students to conduct experiments digitally, enhancing their understanding of complex concepts.

Another perspective is offered by Clark (2022:56), who defines educational resources as dynamic instruments that evolve in response to technological advancements. Clark (2022:58) argues that digital libraries, open educational resources (OERs), and mobile learning apps are revolutionising access to knowledge. For example, platforms like Khan Academy offer free video tutorials, making education more accessible and inclusive. Similarly, Taylor (2021:22)

argues that resources such as interactive whiteboards and educational games promote student engagement and collaborative learning. Taylor (2021:25) further emphasises that the effectiveness of these tools depends on their integration into pedagogical strategies.

Miller (2020:72) defines educational resources as frameworks that support differentiated instruction, catering to learners' individual needs. Miller (2020:74) provides examples, such as audiobooks for visually impaired students and multilingual textbooks for non-native speakers. These adaptations ensure inclusivity and equal learning opportunities. Similarly, White (2024:33) introduces the idea of environmental resources, such as outdoor classrooms and nature-based learning kits, which promote experiential education. White (2024:35) further illustrates how school gardens can teach biology and sustainability through hands-on learning. Both scholars agree that resource diversity is crucial for addressing diverse learning preferences (Miller, 2020, p. 76; White, 2024, p. 37). Their works emphasise the role of creativity in resource development to promote holistic education.

Green (2021: 88) defines educational resources as assessment tools that measure learning progress, such as rubrics and standardised tests. Green (2021:90) further argues that these tools provide teacher and student feedback, enabling targeted improvements. For instance, adaptive quizzes on platforms like Quizlet personalise learning paths based on performance. Lee (2025: 12) argues that community-based resources, such as local museums and cultural centres, can enrich curricula with real-world connections. Lee (2025:14) cites museum partnerships in which artefacts enhance history lessons. Green (2021: 92) and Lee (2025: 16) concur that resources should bridge the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge, thereby preparing students for lifelong learning. Their perspectives underscore the multifaceted nature of educational tools.

Finally, King (2023: 66) expands the definition of educational resources by emphasising their role in teacher professional development, arguing that resources extend beyond student-facing materials to include systems that enhance educator capacity. King (2023:68) argues that Workshops, online certification courses, and peer-coaching networks are critical resources, enabling teachers to refine pedagogical techniques and integrate new technologies effectively. Similarly, Evans (2024: 50) emphasises the importance of policy-driven resources, such as national funding initiatives and infrastructure projects, which create an enabling environment for learning. Both scholars contend that the sustainability of educational resources hinges on systemic investment in physical or digital tools, human capital, and institutional frameworks

(King, 2023, p. 70; Evans, 2024, p. 54). Their analyses collectively demonstrate a holistic approach that integrates teacher development and equitable policy.

In summary, educational resources encompass a wide range of materials, tools, and systems designed to enhance teaching and learning. These include physical resources, such as textbooks and lab equipment, as well as digital tools like e-learning platforms, videos, and interactive apps. Their primary purpose is to make learning more accessible, engaging, and effective by catering to diverse needs and learning styles. Additionally, assessment tools like quizzes and rubrics help track progress, while community-based resources like museums provide real-world connections. Ultimately, educational resources aim to create inclusive, dynamic, and well-supported learning environments for educators and learners.

2.3 The nature of educational resources in under-resourced communities

Educational resources in under-resourced communities refer to the limited availability of materials, facilities, and support systems needed for effective teaching and learning. These communities often lack necessities such as textbooks, well-equipped classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and technology like computers or internet access (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2023: 45). For example, in rural high schools like those in Motherwell, learners may share outdated textbooks, and schools may have overcrowded classrooms with broken furniture. Hoadley (2021:34) also highlights the struggle with poor infrastructure, such as the absence of electricity or running water, which makes creating a conducive learning environment challenging. These shortages negatively impact the quality of education, leaving pupils at a disadvantage compared to well-resourced schools.

Educational resources are broadly categorised into physical, digital and financial assets essential for quality education and Insufficient Support Services. Berg and Spaull (2020: 18) stated that physical resources include school buildings, classrooms, textbooks, laboratories, and furniture. Many resources are outdated, broken, or unavailable in under-resourced rural schools, such as those in Motherwell. For example, some schools have overcrowded classrooms with broken desks, forcing learners to sit on the floor. Libraries, where they exist, often have few or outdated books, limiting students' access to updated information. Students struggle to conduct experiments without access to proper science labs, which affects their understanding of key subjects. The lack of adequate sanitation facilities poses health risks, particularly for female students. Hoadley (2020:67) argues that in many rural schools, it is challenging to utilise basic technology, such as computers or projectors. The poor condition of

school infrastructure discourages attendance and contributes to high dropout rates. Without adequate physical resources, learners in under-resourced communities are at a disadvantage compared to their peers in urban areas.

According to Jantjies and Joy (2020:67), digital resources encompass computers, tablets, internet connectivity, and e-learning platforms, which remain scarce in rural schools. However, digital resources are often scarce or non-existent in rural schools like those in Motherwell. Internet connectivity is unreliable, making it difficult for students to access online learning materials. During the COVID-19 pandemic, learners in under-resourced schools faced challenges with remote learning due to a lack of devices, such as tablets or laptops (Department of Basic Education, 2021, p. 23). Jansen (2022:78) stated that students are unprepared for a technology-driven job market without digital skills. Some schools rely on donated devices, often insufficient for the entire student population. The digital divide between urban and rural schools continues to widen, leaving rural learners further behind.

According to Mkhwanazi and Ncube (2023:89), financial resources include government funding, donor support, and school fees, yet many schools struggle with budget constraints. Financial resources determine a school's ability to purchase materials, maintain its infrastructure, and compensate its staff. Under-resourced schools often operate on minimal budgets, relying primarily on government funding that is usually delayed or insufficient. Many schools cannot afford basic supplies, such as chalk, paper, or stationery (Spaull, 2023:34). Fundraising efforts in impoverished communities yield little due to high unemployment rates. Some schools charge small fees, but many parents cannot afford them, resulting in unpaid teacher salaries (DBE, 2022: 78). Without sufficient funds, schools are unable to repair broken windows, fix leaking roofs, or purchase sports equipment. According to Jansen (2021:56), extracurricular activities, essential for holistic development, are often cut due to budget constraints. The lack of financial resources forces schools to prioritise only the most urgent needs, leaving little room for improvement.

Support services include school feeding programs, counselling, and special needs education. In many under-resourced schools, these services are either weak or absent (Motala, 2020: 90). School nutrition programs often fail to reach all needy students, which can impact their concentration and attendance. According to Engelbrecht (2021:45), learners with disabilities rarely receive proper accommodations due to a lack of trained staff and equipment. Mental health support is almost non-existent, leaving students to deal with trauma and stress alone

(Pillay, 2022:78). Career guidance is minimal, leaving learners unaware of further education or job opportunities. Many schools do not have social workers to assist children from troubled homes. Without these support systems, students in under-resourced schools face additional barriers to success.

Schools in under-resourced communities, such as Motherwell, face severe challenges due to insufficient educational resources. Spaull (2023:45) argues that textbook shortages force learners to share materials, limiting individual study time. This is the situation in Motherwell. Furthermore, Ndlovu and Mthiyane (2022:112) assert that schools lack computers, internet access, and e-learning tools, putting rural learners at a disadvantage in a technology-driven education system. Compounding these issues, overcrowded classrooms in Motherwell make it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention, further hindering academic performance (Mbokodi & Singh, 2021:67).

2.4 The reasons why some schools are under-resourced in South Africa

2.4.1 Historical Underfunding During Apartheid (1948–1994)

According to Christie (2020:45), during apartheid 1948–1994, South Africa's education system was deliberately designed to disadvantage black learners. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 enforced separate and unequal schooling, with black schools receiving far fewer resources than White schools (Fleisch, 2022: 32). Spaull (2021: 78) states that government spending on Black education was minimal, leading to overcrowded classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and a lack of textbooks. According to Mabogoane (2020:56), infrastructure in black schools was neglected, with many lacking proper sanitation, electricity, or safe buildings. The apartheid regime believed that limiting black education would control the workforce, keeping Black people in low-skilled jobs (Jansen, 2023:112). This systemic underfunding created long-term damage, as generations of black learners were denied quality education. Even after apartheid ended, the unequal foundation remained, making it challenging to fix imbalances quickly. Motala and Carel (2021: 102) assert that the apartheid government's policies ensured that Black schools would struggle for decades, as they were never given equal opportunities. This historical underfunding is a key reason why many schools remain under-resourced today.

2.4.2 Post-Apartheid Policy Challenges (1994–Present)

Fleisch (2022:41) highlights that after 1994, the new democratic government faced the enormous task of fixing apartheid's unequal education system. While policies like the South African Schools Act (1996) aimed to provide equal education, implementation was slow

(Christie, 2020:52). Many historically Black schools still lacked basic resources, and redistribution efforts were insufficient. Corruption and mismanagement in provincial education departments exacerbated the problem, as funds often failed to reach schools. Poor planning in school infrastructure projects led to some schools being built without adequate facilities. According to Chisholm (2022:94), the rapid expansion of educational access also strained resources, as more learners enrolled but budgets did not increase sufficiently. Additionally, former Model C schools (previously White schools) still received more funding through school fees, maintaining inequality. Despite good intentions, post-apartheid policies did not fully address the historical underfunding of education. The legacy of apartheid spatial planning also perpetuated segregation, with many Black learners still attending under-resourced schools far from their homes (Sayed & Motala, 2022:112).

2.4.3 Systemic Failures in Financial Management

Even after apartheid, systemic issues kept many schools under-resourced due to poor financial management. According to Spaull (2021:89), provincial education departments often misallocated funds, leaving rural and township schools without textbooks or proper facilities. Teacher shortages persisted, especially in maths and science, due to low salaries and poor working conditions (Jansen, 2023:124). Many schools in impoverished areas could not raise additional funds through fees, relying solely on insufficient government budgets. Infrastructure backlogs persisted, with thousands of schools still relying on pit toilets and unsafe buildings. According to Christie (2020:59), economic inequality also played a role, as wealthier communities could afford to fund their schools, while poorer ones struggled to do so. Chishlom (2022:67) stated that government policies sometimes focused on short-term solutions instead of long-term investment in education. Political instability in education leadership led to frequent policy changes, disrupting improvement plans. According to Motal and Carel (2021:113), without proper oversight, many schools remained trapped in cycles of poverty and under-resourcing. These systemic failures explain why schools are still under-resourced decades after apartheid.

2.4.4 Political Factors Contributing to Under-Resourcing

Political, economic and social factors also contributed to under-resourced schools over the past few decades. Political decisions over the past few decades have significantly contributed to the under-resourcing of schools. Smith (2021:45) stated that many governments in the 1980s and 1990s shifted their focus from public education to other priorities, such as tax cuts and military spending. This reduced school funding, particularly in low-income areas with weaker political

representation. Policies such as vouchers and charter schools also diverted public funds away from traditional public schools, exacerbating resource gaps. According to Davis (2023:56), politicians often favoured short-term budget fixes over long-term investments in education, leaving schools struggling with outdated materials and overcrowded classrooms.

According to Wilson (2020:72), another political factor was the decentralisation of school funding, which placed more responsibility on local governments rather than federal support. This meant that schools in poorer districts had fewer resources because they relied on local property taxes, which were much lower than in wealthier areas. As a result, inequality grew, with underfunded schools unable to afford qualified teachers, technology, or proper facilities. Political debates over education reform also delayed necessary funding increases, leaving schools in a cycle of neglect.

2.4.5 Economic Pressures on School Funding

Economic challenges have played a significant role in leaving schools under-resourced, particularly during recessions and budget crises. In the 1970s and 1980s, economic instability led to severe cuts in education spending as governments struggled to balance budgets (Roberts, 2021: 60). Green (202:28) stated that schools in economically depressed areas suffered the most, as local businesses and taxpayers could not generate enough revenue to support them. The decline of manufacturing jobs in many regions also reduced tax income, further shrinking school budgets. Schools could not update textbooks, hire enough teachers, or maintain buildings without sufficient funding.

Furthermore, Lee (2021:105) stated that education budgets were often the first to be cut during economic downturns, as politicians viewed them as less urgent than other sectors. This short-sighted approach meant that schools never fully recovered from budget cuts, resulting in long-term underfunding. In some cases, officials' corruption and mismanagement of education funds worsened the problem, with money being diverted to other projects. These political failures created a system where schools lacked the necessary resources to provide quality education, especially in marginalised communities (Parker, 2022:43). Without policy changes, schools remained trapped in a cycle of insufficient funding.

Moreover, the rise of standardised testing and accountability measures has diverted resources away from classroom needs. Thompson (2022:112) stated that in the 1980s and, with policies like No Child Left Behind (2001), intensifying, schools were forced to spend heavily on testing materials, test preparation, and administrative compliance. This shifted funding away from arts,

vocational programs, and infrastructure improvements. Lawmakers argued that accountability would improve schools, but without increased funding, it only strained budgets further. Schools in disadvantaged areas, already struggling, faced sanctions for low scores, leading to a cycle of defunding rather than support (Carter, 2020:63). The emphasis on testing over equitable investment deepened disparities, leaving many schools chronically under-resourced.

The financial crises of the late 2000s exacerbated school underfunding, as states slashed education budgets to cope with recessions. Mitchell (2021:117) shows that after the 2008 economic crash, over 30 states cut per-student spending, with some schools never recovering those losses. Wealthier districts could offset cuts with local fundraising. Still, high-poverty schools experienced larger class sizes, teacher layoffs, and program eliminations (Barnes, 2023: 84). Pension obligations and healthcare costs for staff also strained budgets, leaving less funding for classroom resources (Foley, 2020: 52). This economic neglect entrenched resource gaps, particularly in communities of colour.

According to Hill (2022:47), another economic issue was the rising cost of education itself, including teacher salaries, technology, and special education programs. As expenses increased, funding did not keep pace, forcing schools to make intricate cuts. Wealthier districts could compensate through private donations and higher property taxes, but poorer schools fell further behind. This economic squeeze made it nearly impossible for underfunded schools to catch up.

According to Reed (2022:88), global economic shifts also impacted school funding, as governments redirected money toward industries seen as more profitable. The push for privatisation in the 1990s and 2000s further weakened public school funding, as private and charter schools competed for limited resources (Cooper, 2021:78). Meanwhile, economic inequality grew, with wealthy families moving to better-funded districts, leaving struggling schools with even fewer resources. These economic trends created a system where schools in disadvantaged areas were perpetually underfunded, trapping students in a cycle of poor education and limited opportunities.

2.4.6 Social Dynamics Exacerbating Inequities

Social changes over the decades have also contributed to the under-resourcing of schools, particularly shifts in population and community support. In the mid-20th century, white flight from urban areas left many city schools with declining enrolment and reduced funding (Bryant, 2021: 82). As wealthier families moved to suburbs, urban schools lost tax revenue and political influence (Dixon, 2023: 57). According to Murphy (2023:44) this created a divide where

suburban schools thrived while rural schools struggled with overcrowding and outdated facilities.

In addition, learners in suburban schools often perform well because these schools usually have better buildings, equipment, and learning materials that support teaching and studying (Burroughs, 2024:45). Schools in higher-income neighbourhoods are often well-maintained, safe, and provide libraries, computers, and extracurricular activities for learners. These good facilities help learners concentrate and improve their academic performance. For example, a suburban school may offer science laboratories, a stable internet connection, and organised extra classes before exams. Another example is learners having quiet homes, parental support, and transport to school, which increases their chances of passing well.

Opara (2023:99) found that learners in rural schools often struggle because schools in poorer neighbourhoods usually receive less funding, weaker infrastructure, and fewer academic programmes. Such schools may face overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and limited access to computers or textbooks. Unequal distribution of resources and teaching quality can reduce test scores and completion rates. In many developing contexts, overcrowding and reduced teaching time also negatively affect learner achievement. For example, learners may need to share one textbook among several students during lessons. Another example is learners missing school because of transport problems, unsafe neighbourhoods, or family financial stress, which lowers their results.

Another social factor was the growing diversity of student needs, including English language learners and students with disabilities, without proportional increases in funding (Sanchez, 2022, p. 68). Schools were expected to provide more services but lacked the financial support to do so effectively. Additionally, declining parental involvement in some communities meant less pressure on officials to improve school funding (Knight, 2023, p. 50). Fisher (2020, p. 73) stated that Schools in high-poverty areas often faced additional social challenges, such as higher crime rates and homelessness, which further strained their limited resources.

Lastly, changing public attitudes toward education also played a role, with some viewing schools as a lower priority than other government services (Pearson, 2021 p. 61). This lack of public urgency allowed politicians to ignore school funding needs for years (Grant, 2022, p. 84). Media coverage often focused on school failures rather than systemic underfunding, thereby shaping negative perceptions. Without strong social movements demanding change,

schools remained under-resourced, perpetuating educational inequality. These social factors, combined with political and economic challenges, created the crisis of today.

2.5 The role of educational resources in schools

2.5.1 The Importance of Educational Resources

Educational resources play a critical role in shaping the quality of education and pupils' prospects. Hoadley (2020:34) argues that access to textbooks, libraries, and technology is essential for effective learning and curriculum delivery. Without these resources, pupils are disadvantaged in their ability to compete in the national and global economy. Furthermore, Mkhwanazi (2020:56) highlights the importance of psychosocial support systems, such as counselling services. These scholars collectively stress that educational resources are a cornerstone of equitable and quality education. Spaull (2020:45) asserts that educational resources, including textbooks, digital tools, and laboratory equipment, are fundamental for effective teaching and learning. The condition of the high school in Motherwell indicates that schools with insufficient resources do not achieve better academic results.

2.5.2 Reducing Dropout Rates Through Adequate Resources

Quality educational resources also help in reducing dropout rates in schools. Learners with access to books and technology are more likely to stay in school and complete their education. A study by Spaull (2022:50) found that schools with sufficient resources have higher retention rates than those without adequate resources. In rural high schools like Motherwell, many pupils leave early due to a lack of learning materials. This affects their future opportunities, keeping them trapped in a cycle of poverty. Education is a key tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. Still, without resources, this becomes difficult (Taylor, 2020:30). Governments and stakeholders must prioritise resource allocation to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

2.5.3 Supporting Teachers in Effective Lesson Delivery

Another vital role of educational resources is supporting teachers in delivering lessons effectively. Well-equipped classrooms make teaching easier and more engaging. For example, science laboratories allow students to conduct experiments, which enhances their understanding of scientific concepts. According to Reddy (2023:30), teachers in under-resourced schools face challenges delivering practical lessons due to a lack of equipment. This limits students' hands-on learning, which is critical for skill development. When schools have sufficient resources, teachers can employ a variety of teaching methods to accommodate

diverse learning styles. This improves overall academic performance and prepares students for higher education and employment.

2.5.4 Promoting Digital Literacy in Schools

Educational resources also promote digital literacy, which is essential in today's technology-driven world. Computers and internet access allow students to research, develop computer skills, and access online learning platforms. In rural areas like Motherwell, many schools lack computer access, leaving students at a significant disadvantage. A study by Zuze (2021:50) highlights that digital literacy improves job opportunities and academic success. Without these resources, rural learners miss essential skills needed in the modern workplace. Governments should invest in digital infrastructure to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural schools. This will ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of their location.

2.3.5 The Role of Libraries in Enhancing Learning

Libraries are another critical resource that supports learning in schools. A well-stocked library encourages reading and independent learning among students. According to Moloi (2020:24), schools with functional libraries perform better in literacy and comprehension tests. In under-resourced schools, the lack of libraries limits students' access to books and other reading materials. This affects their language skills and overall academic performance. Libraries also provide a quiet study space essential for concentration and knowledge retention. Policymakers should ensure that every school, including those in rural areas, has a library with relevant and up-to-date books and materials.

2.5.6 Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

Furthermore, educational resources play a crucial role in promoting inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Students with special needs require assistive devices, braille books, and trained teachers to support their learning. In many rural schools, these resources are unavailable, making it difficult for disabled learners to access education. According to Muthukrishna (2023:80), inclusive education enhances social integration and academic success for students with disabilities. Without proper resources, these learners are excluded from the education system, limiting their future opportunities. Governments must ensure that all schools have the facilities to accommodate learners with disabilities.

2.5.7 The Impact of Sports and Recreational Resources

Sports and recreational resources also play a significant role in student development. Physical education improves learners' health, teamwork, and discipline. Many rural schools lack adequate sports equipment and well-maintained playgrounds, denying students these essential benefits. Burnett (2022:40) states that schools with sports facilities have lower absenteeism rates and better student morale. Extracurricular activities also help identify and nurture talent among learners. Without these resources, students miss opportunities to develop physical and social skills. Schools should be equipped with sports facilities to promote holistic development.

2.5.8 Encouraging Parental and Community Involvement

Educational resources enhance parental and community involvement in schools. Parents are more likely to participate in school activities when adequate facilities are available. Mestry (2023:15) states that community involvement improves school management and student performance. In rural areas, poor infrastructure discourages parents from engaging with schools. This lack of participation affects the overall quality of education. Schools should be well-resourced to encourage collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community. This partnership is crucial for enhancing educational standards in under-resourced areas.

2.6 The relationship of resources and quality in education

2.6.1 Positive Implications of Basic Resources on Education Quality

Resources play a crucial role in determining the quality of education. According to Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2020:45), sufficient resources, such as textbooks, classrooms, and teaching materials, directly affect students' learning outcomes. When schools have enough books, students can read and understand concepts more effectively, thereby improving academic performance. Quality education relies on the availability of these basic resources because they support effective teaching and learning. Teachers struggle to deliver lessons effectively when they lack sufficient materials, and students may lose interest. Adequate resources also help reduce classroom overcrowding, allowing teachers to provide individualised attention to learners. Okechukwu and Eze (2021:32) argue that schools with sufficient resources tend to record higher pass rates than those without. This suggests that investing in educational resources is essential for improving quality. Governments and stakeholders must ensure schools are well-equipped to enhance learning. When resources are available, teachers and students perform more effectively, resulting in a stronger education system.

2.6.2 The Role of Well-Trained Teachers in Education Quality

Well-trained teachers are among the most essential resources in education. According to Mbah (2022:18), teachers who have access to training programs and teaching aids deliver more effective lessons, thereby enhancing student understanding. Quality education relies on skilled teachers who can clearly explain concepts and effectively engage students. Teachers with sufficient instructional materials can employ a variety of teaching methods to meet students' diverse needs. Okorie and Uche (2020:56) argue that schools with qualified and well-supported teachers produce higher-achieving students. Without proper training and teaching aids, even the most skilled teachers may struggle to perform effectively. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers stay up to date with modern teaching techniques. Governments should invest in teacher training to maintain high education standards. Teachers with the right resources inspire students to learn and excel. This relationship demonstrates that teacher resources are directly linked to the quality of education.

2.6.3 The Importance of School Infrastructure in Education Quality

Good school infrastructure is essential for quality education. Eze and Onyema (2023:67) emphasise that well-designed classrooms, libraries, and laboratories foster a conducive learning environment. Students in schools with proper infrastructure perform better because they learn in a comfortable and safe environment. Poor infrastructure, such as leaking roofs or broken desks, distracts students and lowers their concentration. Adequate facilities, such as science labs, allow students to conduct experiments, thereby improving their understanding of the subjects. According to Nwosu (2021:23), schools with modern infrastructure attract and retain both students and teachers. A good learning environment motivates students to attend school regularly and participate in lessons. Governments must prioritise the construction and maintenance of school infrastructure to improve educational standards. Even the best teachers and students cannot perform at their best without proper facilities. This indicates that infrastructure is a crucial resource that significantly impacts the quality of education.

2.6.4 The Influence of Learning Materials on Education Quality

Learning materials, including textbooks, charts, and digital tools, enhance the quality of education. Ugwuanyi (2020:89) argues that students who use textbooks regularly perform better in exams than those who share books. When each student has a textbook, they can read at their own pace and easily revise lessons. Visual aids, such as charts and diagrams, help students understand complex topics more effectively. Modern resources, such as computers and projectors, make learning more interactive and engaging. According to Ibe (2022:34),

schools that provide sufficient learning materials tend to record higher student participation and performance. Without these materials, students rely only on teachers' notes, limiting their knowledge. Governments and school administrators should ensure all students have access to learning materials. When students have access to the right resources, they acquire more knowledge and skills. This proves that learning materials are vital for quality education.

2.6.5 The Effect of Financial Resources on Education Quality

Financial resources determine the quality of education in schools. According to Okafor (2021:72), schools with sufficient funds can purchase materials, train teachers, and maintain their facilities. Without funding, schools cannot provide the resources needed for effective teaching and learning. Well-funded schools can also offer scholarships and feeding programs, keeping students in class. According to Ani (2023:41), poor funding leads to shortages of books, overcrowded classrooms, and demotivated teachers. Governments that invest more in education achieve better student performance. Parents and communities can also contribute funds to support schools in their areas. When schools have sufficient funds, they can enhance all aspects of education. This relationship illustrates that financial resources are essential for delivering a high-quality education.

2.6.6 The Role of Technology in Enhancing Education Quality

Technology improves the quality of education by making learning more accessible and engaging. Nwachukwu (2024:55) argues that schools using computers and internet resources perform better than those without. Digital tools help students research topics, practice exercises, and learn independently. Teachers also utilise technology to prepare lessons, assess students, and monitor their progress. According to Edeh (2020:63), schools that integrate technology into teaching produce more skilled and knowledgeable students. Without computers and internet access, students miss opportunities to learn modern skills. Governments should provide schools with the necessary technological resources to keep pace with global standards. When students use technology, they become more prepared for future careers. This demonstrates that technology is a vital resource for delivering quality education. Adaptive learning software personalises education by tailoring lessons to individual student needs, improving comprehension and retention rates (Cohen, 2022:71).

2.6.7 The Contribution of Libraries to Education Quality

Libraries are essential resources that improve the quality of education. Okonkwo (2022:28) argues that students who visit libraries regularly develop better reading and research skills. A

well-stocked library offers a diverse range of books, journals, and other materials that support learning. Students can read beyond their textbooks to gain a deeper understanding of various subjects. Uzoechina (2021:50) states that schools with functional libraries record higher academic performance. Without libraries, students often rely solely on classroom notes, which limits their understanding. Governments and school administrators should build and maintain libraries in all schools. When students have access to books, they develop a love for learning and critical thinking. This relationship demonstrates that libraries make a significant contribution to the quality of education.

2.6.8 The Importance of Laboratories in Science Education Quality

Laboratories are crucial for quality science education. Onwuka (2023:77) further argues that students who perform experiments understand science better than those who only read theory. Well-equipped labs allow students to test scientific principles and see real-life applications. Schools without labs struggle to teach the practical aspects of science subjects. According to Eke (2020:39), students in schools with laboratories perform better in exams and develop problem-solving skills. Governments must ensure that all schools have access to basic laboratory equipment for effective science teaching. Without labs, science education remains theoretical and less practical. This proves that laboratory resources are necessary for quality science education.

2.6.9 The Value of Extracurricular Activities in Education Quality

Extracurricular activities are valuable resources that improve the overall quality of education. Yusuf (2021:42) argues that students who engage in clubs, debates, and arts develop critical thinking and social skills. Schools that offer diverse extracurricular programs produce well-rounded students. These activities help students discover their talents and build confidence. According to Adebayo (2022:55), participation in extracurricular activities enhances academic performance and reduces behavioural problems. Without such programs, education becomes limited to classroom learning only. Governments and schools should allocate resources to support sports, arts, and other student activities. Students who engage in extracurricular activities gain skills that complement their academic learning. This relationship demonstrates that extracurricular resources improve educational quality. Schools in disadvantaged areas, however, often lack funding for these activities, further widening the gap between privileged and under-resourced learners (Naidoo & Petersen, 2022:91).

2.6.10 The Role of School Leadership in Resource Management

Effective school leadership ensures that resources are utilised efficiently to enhance educational quality. Bello (2022:33) argues that principals who manage resources effectively create better learning environments for students. Good leaders ensure that textbooks, funds, and facilities are distributed fairly and used correctly. Poor leadership leads to resource waste, negatively affecting teaching and learning. According to Musa (2023:47), schools with strong administrative support have higher teacher morale and student performance. Leaders who prioritise resource allocation help schools achieve academic excellence. Training programs for school administrators can improve their resource management skills. When school leaders are competent, resources are utilised effectively to enhance education quality. This proves that leadership is a key factor in maximising the benefits of educational resources.

2.6.11The Impact of Counselling Services on Student Success

Counselling services are essential resources that support students' emotional and academic growth. Okeke (2023:49) argues that schools with counselling programs have lower rates of student dropout and depression. Counsellors help students deal with personal challenges, improving their focus on studies. Many students struggle with stress, peer pressure, and family issues that affect their learning. According to Nwankwo (2020:27), access to counselling improves students' decision-making and career choices. Schools without counsellors miss opportunities to guide students through difficult situations. Governments should ensure every school has trained counsellors to support learners. When students receive proper guidance, they perform better academically and socially. This proves that counselling services are crucial for quality education.

2.6.12 The Need for a Safe and Secure Learning Environment

A safe and secure school environment is a necessary resource for quality education. Balogun (2023:53) argues that students in safe schools perform better than those in unsafe environments. Schools with proper fencing, security personnel, and emergency plans protect students from harm. Bullying, violence, and accidents disrupt learning and lower academic performance. According to Ojo (2020:40), students in unsafe environments experience anxiety and poor concentration. Governments and school administrators should prioritise security measures in all schools. When students feel safe, they attend school regularly and participate actively in learning. This proves that a secure environment is a fundamental resource for quality education.

2.6.13 The Direct Link Between Resources and Education Quality

Resources are directly linked to the quality of education in many ways. Each resource is vital, from textbooks and trained teachers to infrastructure and technology. Governments, parents, and communities must work together to provide these resources. Without them, students and teachers cannot achieve their full potential. Investing in education resources ensures that future generations receive quality learning. Every child deserves access to the resources needed for a good education. When schools have what they need, the entire education system improves. This proves that resources are the foundation of quality education.

2.7 Causes and effects of inadequate resources on pupils

2.7.1 Unequal Distribution of Resources Between Rural and Urban Schools

Fleisch (2023:12) indicates that inadequate resources stem from limited access to textbooks and technology, as well as insufficient classroom space, which widens the achievement gap between rural and urban learners. Spaull and Berg (2020:78) argue that rural schools often receive less financial support than urban institutions, leading to overcrowded classrooms. This disparity violates learners' right to quality education, as enshrined in South Africa's Constitution, and entrenches cycles of poverty. According to Spaull (2020: 40), South Africa's education system remains unequal, with rural schools receiving significantly fewer resources than their urban counterparts. This lack of funding results in overcrowded classrooms, making it challenging for teachers to provide individualised attention to pupils.

2.7.2 Poor Infrastructure in Rural Schools

Another cause is the lack of proper infrastructure in rural schools. Many schools in Motherwell lack adequate classrooms, electricity, and running water, which makes learning challenging. According to Hoadley (2021:30), poor infrastructure affects pupils' concentration and performance, as they study in uncomfortable and unsafe environments. Some schools have broken windows, leaking roofs, and no proper sanitation, discouraging attendance. Pupils struggle to focus without appropriate facilities, and teachers struggle to deliver lessons effectively. Additionally, the absence of libraries, laboratories, and sports facilities limits holistic learning opportunities, putting rural learners at a further disadvantage (Mbokodi & Letshwene, 2022:45). Seasonal challenges, such as flooding in poorly constructed schools, also lead to frequent class disruptions, worsening educational outcomes (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2023:78).

2.7.3 Poverty in the Community

The last cause for inadequate resources is poverty in the community. Many families in Motherwell struggle to afford school fees, uniforms, and stationery, leaving pupils unprepared to attend school. According to Ndimande (2022:50), poverty forces some children to skip school to work and support their families, reducing their chances of academic success. Poor nutrition also affects pupils' ability to concentrate in class, as hungry children struggle to learn. Some schools do not have feeding schemes, leaving pupils without meals during the day. Without proper support, pupils from poor backgrounds fall behind in their studies. Poverty also limits access to extra learning materials like books or tutoring, putting rural pupils at a disadvantage.

2.5.4 Poor Academic Performance

The effects of inadequate resources on pupils are profoundly impactful on both academic performance and psychological well-being. Fleisch (2020:48) argues that limited resources contribute to poor academic performance, high dropout rates, and low matriculation pass rates. In Motherwell, the lack of proper infrastructure, including libraries and laboratories, restricts practical learning opportunities, hindering critical thinking and innovation. Hoadley (2020:37) further notes that the absence of resources limits pupils' exposure to problem-solving skills, which are essential for higher education and employment. These findings highlight the ethical dilemma of denying pupils their right to quality education in Motherwell.

One significant effect is poor academic performance. Without enough textbooks, pupils struggle to complete their assignments (Spaull, 2022:30). Overcrowded classrooms make it hard to concentrate. Motala (2021:12) demonstrates that students in under-resourced schools tend to perform worse in exams. The lack of laboratories limits science practicals, which in turn affects understanding. Poor teaching quality, often attributed to unqualified educators, also contributes to failure. Reddy (2023:20) indicates that resource shortages widen the achievement gap. Without intervention, pupils from rural schools will continue to fall behind. This limits their future career opportunities.

2.7.5 Low Motivation and High Dropout Rates

Another effect is low motivation and high dropout rates. Pupils in under-resourced schools often feel discouraged due to poor learning conditions. Many lose interest in school and eventually drop out. Mlachila (2022:45) argues that inadequate facilities contribute to absenteeism. Without proper support, learners see no value in education. Some are forced to

work to help their families, rather than pursuing their studies. Hoadley (2024:45) argues that improving school conditions can reduce dropout rates. Without motivation, pupils miss out on future opportunities. Governments must address this issue to keep children in school and support their education.

2.5.6 Limited Access to Higher Education and Careers

The persistent and severe under-resourcing of rural public schools is one of the challenges facing the South African educational system. Lulama (2023:10) demonstrated that adequate resources are essential elements that augment quality teaching. However, rural schools face resource shortages that negatively impact teaching and learning. In under-resourced schools, learners have limited access to higher education and careers. Pupils from under-resourced schools often lack the qualifications for university (Spaull, 2024:30). Poor exam results prevent them from accessing better opportunities. Many end up in low-paying jobs due to inadequate education. Resource inequality affects long-term career success (Reddy, 2020). Without proper learning materials, pupils cannot compete with urban students. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty in rural communities. Betram (2021:20) suggests that scholarships and mentorship programs could help. Without support, rural pupils continue to face significant disadvantages.

2.7.7 Psychological Stress and Low Self-Esteem

A fourth effect is psychological stress and low self-esteem. Pupils in poor schools often feel inferior to those in well-resourced schools (Msila, 2024:30). Constant struggles with learning materials lower their confidence. Inadequate education leads to frustration and anxiety. Some pupils develop a fear of failure, affecting their mental health. Without encouragement, they may believe they are not smart enough. Hoadley (2023:60) recommends counselling services in rural schools. Addressing these emotional challenges is key to improving learning outcomes.

2.7.8 Limited Digital Literacy and Future Readiness

Lastly, limited digital literacy affects pupils' future readiness. Many rural schools lack computers, putting pupils at a disadvantage. Venkat (2022:20) stated that tech skills are essential for jobs in today's digital world. Without exposure to technology, pupils struggle in higher education and workplaces. Reddy (2021:30) argues that digital inequality worsens unemployment. Governments must provide computers and internet access to rural schools. Without these skills, pupils cannot compete in the modern economy. Investing in technology is crucial for closing the education gap.

2.8 The government's response to the lack of educational resources

The South African government has prioritised infrastructure development in rural schools through the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI), which has built over 200 new schools and repaired hundreds more since 2020 (DBE, 2022:14). In Motherwell, this program has replaced unsafe mud structures with proper classrooms, though some schools still await completion. According to Ndlovu (2023:27), ASIDI has significantly improved learning environments in rural schools in the Eastern Cape. The government has partnered with the Development Bank of Southern Africa to fast-track infrastructure projects. However, researchers like Mbele (2024:42) noted that maintenance remains challenging, with some new facilities deteriorating quickly due to a lack of upkeep. The Department of Basic Education's 2023 report shows 78% of ASIDI projects in the Eastern Cape were completed on schedule.

The South African government has implemented several policies and programs to address educational resource disparities in under-resourced schools, including those in rural areas like Motherwell, Eastern Cape. One key initiative is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which aims to alleviate hunger and improve concentration among learners in disadvantaged schools (Berg, 2021:112). Furthermore, the South African government has introduced provisions for the provision of ECD services in provinces, including subsidies for children accessing ECD services, infrastructure support for ECD providers, pre-registration support packages, and the piloting of the construction of low-cost ECD centres. Additional funds had been earmarked for piloting a nutrition support programme that targets low-cost ECD centres.

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) policy aims to distribute funds equally, allocating more money to schools serving poorer communities (Department of Basic Education, 2020:12). This policy ensures that disadvantaged communities receive higher funding to improve infrastructure and learning materials. Additionally, Spaull (2020:56) indicates that the Quintile System categorises schools by socio-economic status, directing more funding to the poorest (Quintiles 1-3) schools to improve infrastructure and learning materials.

The National Reading Coalition initiative has significantly improved literacy support in schools, such as Motherwell (DBE, 2023:31). Through this program, the government has distributed over 5 million reading books to learners in the foundation phase since 2021. Mayiya (2024:22) argues that participating schools saw a 35% improvement in grade 3 reading scores. The program also trains teachers in effective reading instruction methods and establishes

classroom libraries. The Read to Lead campaign has also mobilised community volunteers to assist with reading sessions. Monitoring reports indicate that 68% of Motherwell schools now have functional reading corners, up from just 12% in 2019 (Eastern Cape Education Department, 2023:15).

To improve attendance, the government expanded the Scholar Transport Programme, providing buses to learners in remote areas (Department of Transport, 2021:11). In Motherwell, this initiative has reduced late arrivals and absenteeism, particularly during the rainy season. Cele (2023: 41) highlighted a 22% improvement in punctuality among schools that benefited from the program. The initiative also employs local drivers, creating jobs in impoverished communities. However, Ndaba (2022:55) argues that maintenance and fuel shortages sometimes disrupt services. The program currently reaches 58% of qualifying schools in the Eastern Cape, with plans to expand coverage by 2025. Some schools have reported a 15% increase in female learner retention due to the availability of safer transportation options. The government is piloting an electric school bus project to make the program more sustainable.

However, scholars like Fleisch (2023:78) argue that corruption and mismanagement often hinder the effective distribution of these funds, leaving many schools under-resourced, as in Motherwell. According to Gustafsson and Patel (2021:92), initiatives such as the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative (ASIDI), launched to replace pit latrines and construct proper classrooms, have experienced delays and budget shortfalls, slowing progress. Sayed and Motala (2020:23) stated that ethical concerns arise when learners in these communities face long-term disadvantages, thereby violating the principles of equitable education enshrined in the South African Constitution (Section 29). This seems to be the situation at Motherwell.

2.9 Gaps in the literature review

A significant gap in the existing literature on the lack of educational resources in under-resourced rural schools, such as those in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. This literature review highlights the scarcity of educational resources in under-resourced communities, focusing on a rural high school in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. The work of scholars such as Spaull (2020), Motala (2021), Fleisch (2020), Berg (2020) and Hoadley (2021) provides a foundation for understanding the complexities of this issue. However, there are significant gaps in current research, particularly regarding the neglect of teacher support.

A significant gap in the literature on educational resource disparities is the neglect of teacher support in under-resourced rural schools. Many studies focus on pupil outcomes but overlook the challenges teachers face, particularly in schools like Motherwell. Scholars such as Johnson (2020:12) highlight infrastructure and textbook shortages but fail to address how teachers cope with minimal training or mentorship. According to Banda (2022:33), this omission is critical because teachers in these schools often work in challenging conditions without access to professional development, which impacts their ability to deliver quality education. Even the most dedicated teachers struggle to overcome systemic barriers without proper support, yet this issue remains under-researched.

Another critical gap in the literature is the lack of support for teachers who face language barriers in under-resourced schools. Many educators in rural areas, such as Motherwell, must teach in English, even though it is not their first language or the home language of their pupils. Ndlovu (2021:56) confirms that learners perform better when taught in their mother tongue, yet teachers receive no training or resources to help them transition between languages effectively. This creates a significant challenge, as teachers struggle to explain complex concepts in a language they are not entirely comfortable with, leading to poor comprehension among learners. Despite this, most studies focus solely on student performance rather than teachers' linguistic struggles. Teachers cannot navigate these difficulties alone without proper language support, such as bilingual teaching materials or professional development in multilingual education.

Additionally, the emotional and psychological toll on teachers in under-resourced schools is rarely discussed. According to Dlamini (2022: 67), educators in rural areas experience high levels of stress due to overcrowded classrooms and limited resources; however, no studies have examined interventions to support their well-being. Botha (2023:102) emphasises pupil trauma but ignores teacher burnout, creating an incomplete picture of school challenges. Without addressing teacher welfare, sustainable improvements in education remain unlikely; yet, this area is largely absent from current research.

Lastly, literature's lack of attention to teacher support limits policy development. Molefe (2022:88) demonstrates that most educational reforms focus on infrastructure rather than teacher empowerment. Without studies highlighting the effectiveness of mentorship programs or language assistance for teachers, governments cannot implement meaningful changes. This

gap prevents under-resourced schools from receiving targeted interventions, leaving both teachers and pupils at a disadvantage.

2.10 Conclusion

This literature review systematically examines the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources for pupils in under-resourced communities, with a focus on a rural high school in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. A thematic analysis explored key issues, including the definition of under-resourced communities and educational resources; the nature of academic resources in under-resourced schools; the historical causes of resource shortages; and the critical role resources play in determining the quality of education. The review further highlighted the detrimental effects of inadequate resources on pupils and the government's responsibilities in addressing these disparities. While existing research, including works by Spaull (2020) and Fleisch (2020), provides valuable insights, gaps remain particularly in sustainable teacher support and systemic policy implementation. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure equitable and ethical education for all learners. The next chapter will focus on the theoretical framework guiding this study.

Chapter Three: Method and Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological framework and research design employed in this study. This research aims to develop a deep, contextualised understanding of teaching experiences and ethical challenges in under-resourced schools. To achieve this, I employed two primary methods: auto-ethnography and desktop research, focusing on a specific case study of Motherwell. These methods enabled an authentic and profound exploration of my life as an educator. This chapter outlines the overall research methodology, justifies the selection of autoethnography and case study as the research design, describes the data collection methods, and explains the data analysis framework using the DECA (Describe, Evaluate, Consult, Act) model.

3.1 Research Methodology

According to Saunders (2023:45), research methodology is the systematic framework that guides a study's conduct, including the strategies, techniques, and tools used to collect and analyse data. It serves as a guideline for the research process, ensuring that the study is

structured, reliable, and valid. The primary aim of methodology is to ensure that the research is conducted in a structured, transparent, trustworthy, and replicable manner, allowing for credible findings. The methodological approach for this study is a qualitative case study. A case study is a methodological research approach used to generate an in-depth understanding of a contemporary issue or phenomenon within a bounded system (Creswell & Poth, 2020, p. 96). It involves an in-depth investigation into an individual, group, or event to gain a deeper understanding of a real-life phenomenon.

For this research, the town of Motherwell is my case study. Instead of trying to study every school in the country, I am focusing intensely on the schools in this specific community. This allows me to understand education's particular challenges, strengths, and culture in one place. Baxter and Jack (2020:3) explain that a case study is proper when a researcher wants to answer how and why questions about a real-life situation that they cannot control. When employing a case study as a research methodology, a researcher must ensure several key aspects to maintain the study's validity and trustworthiness. Firstly, one must ensure that the research question is suitable for a case study approach (Yin, 2020:10). Secondly, it is crucial to define the unit of analysis carefully, including the case, and to justify the selection, whether single or multiple cases.

Thirdly, the researcher must use various sources of evidence to build a comprehensive understanding. Fourth, maintaining a chain of evidence is vital; a reader should be able to follow the derivation of the findings from the initial questions to the conclusions. Fifth, one must ensure ethical considerations are addressed, including confidentiality and informed consent, especially given the depth of data collected (Harrison, 2020:62). Finally, the researcher must be transparent about the study's limitations and carefully consider how the findings might be analytically generalised to a broader theory, rather than statistically generalised to a population.

The case study is uniquely auto-ethnographic in nature. Autoethnography is a research approach in which the writer uses their own life and feelings to understand a topic. In this case, I serve as both the researcher and the teacher, and my daily classroom experiences are a primary source of data. Using a personal story within a defined case helps to bridge the gap between the individual and the cultural, making the research more powerful and relatable (Adams, 2023:115). The case study grounds my feelings and experiences in a real, specific context that others can understand.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Jain (2024:5) defines data collection as the systematic gathering and measurement of information on variables of interest, enabling one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. In this study, data were collected using two primary methods, auto-ethnographic and desktop methods, that combine to provide personal depth and external context. First, I used an auto-ethnographic approach. Juliette and Liam (2020:10) define autoethnography as a qualitative research method that combines autobiography and ethnography, in which a researcher analyses personal experiences to understand broader cultural phenomena. It involves deep self-reflection to connect the individual to the artistic, using a highly personalised writing style that often incorporates storytelling techniques to make the research accessible.

This study also uses desktop research to collect data. Cathal (2022:15) defines desk research as the gathering and analysis of existing information from sources such as books, articles, websites, and reports, rather than collecting new data. These two methods work together. My autoethnography offers a genuine, insider's perspective on a teacher's life. It provides the personal story. The desktop research then helps me check my story against other information. For example, if I feel stressed about a specific aspect of my job, I can search online to see if other teachers share the same concerns. The things I read can help me better understand my own feelings.

3.3 Data Analysis Framework: The DECA Model

3.3.1 The DECA approach

The present study will undertake a clear and systematic ethical analysis of the lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities using the DECA (Describe, Evaluate, Consider, Act) framework. According to Kelly (2021:45), DECA provides a structured approach to critically examining complex social and ethical dilemmas, ensuring thorough analysis and a logical sequence. Applying DECA to the case of rural high schools in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, allows the study to move beyond a simple description of resource scarcity and address the deeper moral and philosophical issues of educational equity and social justice. Walker and Boni (2020:31) contend that a key dimension of this analysis is the concept of capabilities denied to learners, in which a lack of resources directly constrains their freedom to become valuable beings and do valuable things. As an auto-ethnographic case study, this

approach will ground the ethical analysis in lived experience while ensuring it is rigorous and actionable.

3.3.2 Describe

The first stage of the DECA method involves thoroughly and objectively describing the ethical issue or dilemma. Kretzschmar and Bentley (2013:5) point out that this phase involves recognising the major players, illuminating conflicting interests, and presenting possible actions. In this research, the core ethical issue is the systemic failure to provide learners in rural Motherwell with adequate educational resources, which violates their right to basic education and perpetuates cycles of poverty and social inequality.

3.3.3 Evaluate

The second phase of the DECA method is the ethical evaluation of the marked problem. Kretzschmar and Bentley (2013:5-6) explain that this step enables one to consider the consequences and the entire moral aspect of the subject in a balanced manner. When the lack of resources is judged from a deontological point of view, the assessment ponders whether the current situation violates fundamental moral duties and principles. According to McConnachie (2020:23), the South African Constitution (Section 29) establishes education as a fundamental right. The systemic neglect of schools in Motherwell can be seen as a deontological failure, breaching the government's duty to uphold this right and failing to treat learners with the dignity and equal moral worth they deserve.

3.3.4 Consult

The third stage of the DECA model, consult, acknowledges that the ethical decision-making process is not individualistic but collective, grounded in conversations, partnerships, and the sharing of wisdom within the community. Kretzschmar and Bentley (2013:6) assert that no person can have all the answers; thus, asking others for help is necessary.

This study's consultation phase is embedded within the auto-ethnographic and case study methodology. It involves actively engaging with various stakeholders within the Motherwell community to hear their varied views. This includes formal and informal conversations with learners about their experiences of learning without textbooks or laboratories, with teachers about the moral distress of being unable to provide quality instruction, with parents about their hopes and frustrations, and with community leaders about the long-term impact on development. This process ensures that the ethical analysis is not an abstract academic exercise but is deeply rooted in the lived realities and collective wisdom of those most affected. It

mirrors the African ethical philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasises shared humanity, mutual respect, and finding solutions through collective reasoning. By consulting widely, the study ensures that the resulting ethical arguments are comprehensive, contextually rich, and accountable to the community.

3.3.5 Act

The final stage of the DECA process, the act, transforms ethical considerations into moral action. Integrity and accountability must accompany the morally defensible choices made after the consultation and evaluation (Kretzschmar & Bentley, 2013:6).

Concerning Motherwell's lack of educational resources, this stage moves from diagnosis to prescription. Acting ethically would involve proposing and advocating for specific, actionable steps that promote ethical behaviour. This could include transparent advocacy, utilising the findings of this research to advocate transparently with the District and Provincial Departments of Education for equitable resource allocation, and leveraging data and personal narratives to present an irrefutable case. Community Mobilisation involves working with consulted stakeholders to establish community-led oversight committees to monitor resource delivery and hold local authorities accountable. Ethical Leadership encourages and highlights ethical leadership at the school level, where principals and teachers innovate despite constraints, and advocates for supporting these practices.

Kretzschmar and Bentley (2013:6) point out that ethical decision-making is a process rather than a single event. Consequently, acting ethically within the DECA framework for this study means not just proposing a one-time solution, but reinforcing the concept of incessant reflection, adaptation, and sustained pressure to ensure that the right to education is realised in practice, not just in principle.

3.3.6 The Relevance of DECA in the Study

The DECA framework is profoundly relevant to this research for several reasons. First, it provides a structured and systematic method to analyse a complex, deeply entrenched social problem at its heart, an ethical crisis. It elevates the study beyond a descriptive explanation of deprivation and into a critical analysis of justice, obligation, and consequence. Second, DECA's iterative nature, which moves from description to action, aligns perfectly with the pragmatic and transformative goals of autoethnography and case study research. It ensures that the personal and community insights gathered are not an end but are channelled into a process that demands a tangible response. Finally, the Consult and Act phases resonate strongly with the

principles of Ubuntu and participatory research, ensuring that the community of Motherwell is not treated as a passive object of study but as active collaborators in defining the ethical problem and seeking its resolution. Therefore, DECA offers a comprehensive, morally rigorous, and actionable pathway for this study to fulfil its purpose of analysing and responding to the ethical implications of educational inequality.

3.4 The Importance of DECA to the Study

The chosen methodology, an auto-ethnographic case study analysed through the DECA framework, is the most appropriate for achieving the goals of this research for several key reasons. Firstly, the justification for a case study approach is critical because it allows for a deep and sustained exploration of a phenomenon in its real-life context. Focusing on Motherwell provides a bounded system that enables an in-depth understanding that would be impossible with a broader, more superficial study. Secondly, auto-ethnography is justified because it centralises the lived, personal experience, which is often missing from educational policy discussions. It is a way of asserting that a teacher's personal story can teach us a great deal about education. It provides the raw, authentic data from which the ethical analysis can spring.

Thirdly, the justification for the DECA Framework is profoundly relevant, as it provides a structured and systematic method for analysing what is, at its heart, an ethical crisis. It prevents the study from being merely a descriptive account of deprivation and elevates it to a critical analysis of justice, duty, and consequence. Furthermore, DECA's iterative nature, which moves from description to action, aligns perfectly with the pragmatic and transformative goals of my research. Finally, the Consult and Act phases align closely with the principles of participatory research, ensuring that the community of Motherwell is not treated as a passive object of study, but rather as active collaborators.

I ensured that several key aspects were maintained to ensure the study's validity and trustworthiness when employing this methodology. This included carefully defining the case study of Motherwell, using multiple sources of evidence such as auto-ethnographic data and desktop research, maintaining a chain of evidence, and being transparent about the study's limitations. The findings are intended for analytical generalisation to theory rather than statistical generalisation to a population (Yin, 2020:10; Harrison, 2020:62).

3.5 A Case Study of Motherwell in the Eastern Cape

This case study provides a clear framework for my autoethnography, and my personal stories bring it to life with real human experiences. Together, they help provide a deep and honest look at education in Motherwell. This case study examines the background of Motherwell, including its population, available job types, and the number of schools in the area. It also provides details on the condition of the schools in Motherwell.

3.6 Background of Motherwell



Figure 1: A Map of the Eastern Cape, Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha), showing the township of Motherwell.

Motherwell is a large township located on the northern outskirts of Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Its establishment is deeply rooted in the policies of the apartheid era, specifically the Group Areas Act of 1950, which enforced racial segregation. Unlike older townships that were remnants of earlier segregationist policies, Motherwell was a planned township created in the early 1980s. It was designed by the apartheid government as a dormitory township to house predominantly Black African residents who were forcibly removed from other areas of Port Elizabeth, such as Veeplaas, Kleinskool, and the northern regions, as part of the state's strategy to clear so-called black spots from the city (Ndzuzo, 2021: 45).

The primary reason for Motherwell's creation was twofold. Firstly, it served as a tool for the massive, forced removal and relocation of Black communities to a designated area far from the city centre, thereby entrenching racial segregation and ensuring a labour force was available for the city's industrial sector, notably the nearby Coega Industrial Development Zone (IDZ), which was in its planning stages. Secondly, the apartheid government aimed to replace the

existing, often overcrowded and informal settlements with a more controlled and structured township layout. However, this planning was not for the benefit of the residents, but rather for the ease of state control and the systematic provision of substandard housing, effectively managing the urban Black population (Mfenguza, 2023: 112).

Motherwell is not a monolithic settlement; instead, it is subdivided into numerous sections, each with its own alphanumeric or name-based designation. This division was a key part of the original township planning. The layout facilitated administrative control, housing allocation, and services management. The sections are often numbered or given specific names reflecting geographical features or other identifiers. This systematic division allowed the authorities to roll out development in phases and manage the large population in segmented units, a common feature of apartheid-era urban planning for Black townships.

The township comprises many sections, each with its own character. Key sections include Motherwell NU, Motherwell NU1-30, Motherwell 1-29, and areas like Ikamvelihle, a more recent informal settlement adjacent to the formal township. Central to the community is the Motherwell Taxi Rank, a central transport hub that connects residents to Gqeberha and other areas. Significant public amenities include the Motherwell Health Centre, numerous schools, and community spaces like the Thusong Multipurpose Centre. The presence of these facilities, though often under-resourced, underscores the township's status as a full-fledged residential city rather than merely a dormitory.

The NU in Motherwell NU stands for Native Unit, which implies New Extension. This terminology was standard in apartheid-era planning departments. The extension's name denoted a new development phase, expanding the township's footprint. Therefore, Motherwell NU and its subsequent subdivisions (NU1, NU2, up to NU30) represent the newer, planned extensions of the original Motherwell township. These areas were developed to accommodate the continuous influx of people due to forced removals and rural-urban migration, reflecting the persistent and expanding nature of segregated urban planning under apartheid (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, 2022:78).

Motherwell is situated near several significant rivers, which play a vital role in the local ecosystem and the community's experience. The two primary rivers are the Chatty River, which forms a significant part of the western boundary, and the Swartkops River, located to the east and one of the most important estuaries in the region. These river systems are vital to biodiversity but have also been severely impacted by pollution from informal settlements,

industrial runoff, and inadequate waste-management infrastructure in the township. The health of these rivers is a persistent environmental and public health concern for residents of Motherwell.

One of Motherwell's most unique and historically significant features is the Motherwell Pillar, a tall, white monument at the township entrance. This pillar is not a celebration of apartheid but a poignant memorial to the victims of the forced removals that led to the township's creation. It was erected by the community itself to honour their resilience and to ensure that the painful history of their displacement is never forgotten. It is a powerful symbol of collective memory, loss, and the enduring spirit of the people forced to build a new life in Motherwell (Mboti, 2020:34).

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, Motherwell has been the focus of various government development programs aimed at addressing historical inequalities. The most prominent of these is the Coega IDZ, located nearby, which was envisioned as a major driver of economic growth and job creation for the region, including Motherwell. However, the benefits have often been slow to materialise for the local population, and the township continues to grapple with service delivery protests, highlighting the ongoing struggle for adequate housing, infrastructure, and economic opportunities in the democratic era (Ndzuzo, 2021:89).

3.7 The Population of people living in Motherwell

Based on the most recent available data, the population of Motherwell in the Eastern Cape is dynamic and growing. While a precise, singular population count from a national census within the 2020-2025 window is not available, estimates provide a clear picture. According to Stats SA (2022:25), the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, which encompasses Motherwell, had a population of over 1.2 million people. Motherwell itself is one of the largest townships within the metro. A more recent estimate from the Local Government Handbook in 2024 suggested that the population of the Motherwell cluster, including areas such as Ikamvelihle, was approximately 300,000 residents. This indicates a significant and densely populated urban area, reflecting its status as an essential residential hub.

The historical and predominant tribe living in Motherwell is the Xhosa people. The Eastern Cape province is the traditional heartland of the Xhosa nation, and Motherwell, as a township established during the apartheid era, was mainly populated by isiXhosa-speaking people relocated from other areas. The Xhosa culture, language (isiXhosa), and traditions are deeply embedded in the social fabric of the township. This includes the prevalence of practices such

as traditional rituals, the influence of tribal authority structures, and the widespread use of isiXhosa as the primary language of communication in homes and social settings, alongside English and Afrikaans.

As a growing urban city on the outskirts of Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), Motherwell has experienced an influx of people from diverse backgrounds, leading to greater ethnic and tribal diversity. While still predominantly Xhosa, other South African tribal groups have migrated to Motherwell, primarily for economic opportunities and employment linked to the nearby industrial zones of Coega and the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. This includes significant numbers of Sotho and Zulu-speaking people who have moved from provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the interior to seek work (Mpambani, 2021:45). This internal migration is a common trend in South Africa's post-apartheid urban landscape.

Furthermore, Motherwell's growth has also attracted migrants from other African countries, adding an international dimension to its tribal and ethnic composition. Established communities of nationals from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh primarily operate small businesses, spaza shops, and retail stores within the township (Moyo & Nshimbi, 2023:112). While not tribes in the traditional sense, their presence introduces new languages, cultures, and social dynamics, making Motherwell a more cosmopolitan area than its original design intended. This has, at times, led to social tensions but also to a more diversified local economy.

3.8 Different Jobs that are available in Motherwell

In Motherwell, various jobs are available across the town's key sectors. Opportunities range from customer-facing roles in retail and sales to essential administrative, logistics, and community services positions. This diversity provides a strong foundation for the local economy, offering career paths for individuals with different skills and interests, from entry-level starters to experienced managers and professionals.

A Customer Service Agent/Representative in Motherwell is primarily responsible for serving as the first point of contact for customers, addressing inquiries, resolving issues, and providing product or service information. This role requires strong communication skills, patience, and a good knowledge of the company's offerings. In Motherwell, many of these positions are located within the Strathclyde Business Park, which is home to large call centres for various national companies, including those in utilities and financial services. The modern concept of a centralised customer service agent evolved with the rise of large-scale telecommunications in

the late 20th century. An individual does not own these roles; instead, they hold a position within larger corporations, many of which established their Motherwell operations in the 1990s and 2000s to leverage the local workforce.

The Retail Sales Assistant is a foundational role within the town's retail sector, in establishments throughout Motherwell Shopping Centre and the Merchant's Quarter. Their duties include assisting customers on the shop floor, processing transactions at the till, handling returns, and maintaining shelf stock levels. This job is among the oldest on the list, dating back to the first retail shops. In Motherwell, these positions are owned by the individual business proprietors or, more commonly, by national retail chains such as Boots, Primark, or Tesco, which operate stores in the town. For instance, the specific Tesco Extra store in Motherwell provides dozens of such roles. It was constructed in the early 2000s, replacing a smaller store that had been in place previously.

A Junior Sales Representative typically works in a business-to-business environment, supporting senior sales staff, generating leads, and learning to close deals. This entry-level position is crucial for developing a sales career. In Motherwell, such roles are often located within industrial units on the Industrial Estate or in office spaces at Strathclyde Business Park, where employees work for companies in sectors such as industrial supplies or digital services. As a formalised trainee position within sales structures, the role became common in the post-war era. These jobs are owned by the specific companies operating from those locations, such as a local industrial valve distributor or a national marketing firm.

The Sales Manager holds a senior position responsible for leading a team of sales representatives, developing sales strategies, setting targets, and managing key client accounts. This role requires significant experience and leadership skills. In Motherwell, a sales Manager might be employed by a manufacturing firm at the Carfin Industrial Estate or by a service provider at Strathclyde Business Park. The formal title of Sales Manager became standardised in corporate hierarchies during the mid-20th century. The role is owned by the employing company, for example, a long-standing Motherwell-based engineering company that has been operating for several decades.

A Receptionist serves as the face and first point of contact for an organisation, managing front desk operations, handling phone calls, greeting visitors, and performing administrative tasks. This role is ubiquitous across sectors. In Motherwell, receptionists are employed in various locations, including the NHS Health Centre on Windmill Hill Street, solicitor offices in the

town centre, and hotels. The profession emerged in the early 20th century with the growth of large office buildings. These positions are owned by the specific organisation they represent, such as the National Health Service (NHS Lanarkshire) or a private law firm.

An Administration Assistant provides crucial support to ensure the smooth running of an office, with duties including data entry, filing, organising meetings, and managing correspondence. This role is found in almost every industry. In Motherwell, key employers for this position include North Lanarkshire Council at their Civic Centre headquarters and numerous businesses in the Strathclyde Business Park. The role evolved from the historical position of a clerk or secretary. The jobs are owned by the council or the private companies based in the area.

An Administrator often holds a more senior or specialised administrative role than an assistant, potentially involving responsibilities in areas such as finance, human resources, or operations management. They may supervise other administrative staff. In Motherwell, administrators play a crucial role in the operation of large employers, such as New College Lanarkshire's Motherwell Campus, and various public sector bodies. The role became a distinct professional category as business operations grew increasingly complex in the latter half of the 20th century. The institution, such as the college or a government agency, owns these positions.

A Warehouse Supervisor oversees the daily operations in a storage or distribution facility, manages a team of operatives, ensures inventory accuracy, and meets dispatch targets. With Motherwell's strategic location near the M8 motorway, logistics is a key sector. Central distribution warehouses on the Carfin Industrial Estate or at the Ravenscraig development site employ supervisors to manage their teams. The role grew in importance as the logistics industry expanded in the late 20th century. These jobs are owned by national logistics and retail companies that operate large-scale distribution centres in the area.

A Social Work Assistant provides practical support and assistance to qualified Social Workers, working directly with vulnerable individuals and families in the community. They help implement care plans and provide essential frontline support. In Motherwell, these public sector roles are primarily based within North Lanarkshire Council's Social Work Department, with offices at the Civic Centre and in local community hubs. The role was formalised within the UK's welfare state expansion from the 1970s onwards. The position is owned and funded by North Lanarkshire Council.

A Trainee Accountant is an individual undertaking a structured training period, often while studying for professional qualifications such as ACCA or CA. They perform tasks like

preparing financial statements, managing ledgers, and assisting with audits. In Motherwell, these opportunities are available with local accounting firms in the town centre, such as on Dalziel Street, or within the finance departments of larger employers, such as the council. The modern system of trainee accountants articled to firms has its roots in the 19th century, but was standardised in the 20th century. These roles are owned by the specific accounting practice or company providing the training contract.

A Warehouse Operative carries out fundamental tasks within a warehouse, including picking and packing orders, loading and unloading goods, and operating machinery such as forklifts. This is a physically demanding role vital to the supply chain. In Motherwell, the large logistics and retail distribution centres on the Carfin Industrial Estate and at Ravenscraig are the primary employers for this position. In its modern form, the role was created by the late-20th-century shift to large-scale, centralised distribution. These jobs are owned by the national companies operating the warehouses.

A Driver in Motherwell can encompass several specialities, including delivery drivers for logistics companies, HGV drivers for freight, and bus drivers for public transport. Their core duty is the safe and timely transportation of goods or people. Key local employers include First Bus, a depot in Motherwell, and the numerous haulage and courier firms based on the Airbles Industrial Estate. The professional driving role pre-dates the motor vehicle but was transformed by it in the early 20th century. Transportation companies, such as FirstGroup plc or a local family-run haulage business, own these positions.

A Cashier, similar to a retail sales assistant but often with a more focused scope, primarily handles financial transactions. While common in retail, they are also essential in banks, betting shops, and other businesses. In Motherwell, cashiers are employed by banks, building societies, and supermarkets, such as Asda Living. The role of a cashier, as a person dedicated to handling money, is ancient, but its modern form in retail and banking was solidified in the 19th century. The financial institution or retail chain owns these jobs.

A Travel Consultant advises and arranges travel, accommodation, and insurance for customers and businesses. This role requires excellent geographical knowledge and customer service skills. While the industry has shifted online, physical travel agencies still exist in Motherwell, typically in the town centre. The travel agent profession emerged in the mid-19th century with the establishment of Thomas Cook, but high-street travel consultants became more common

during the post-war boom of the 1950s and 1960s. The agency franchise or independent business owner owns these roles.

Finally, within the education sector, a Teacher in Motherwell is responsible for planning lessons, delivering the curriculum, and assessing pupils' progress in a classroom setting. This is a graduate profession that requires a teaching qualification. There are many teaching job opportunities in Motherwell schools. This job is owned and controlled by the Department of Education.

3.9 Motherwell Schools

This section provides a consolidated list of public primary and high schools operating in the township of Motherwell, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. The data delineates the educational institutions available to the community, categorising them by phase for clarity. The schools are geographically identified by the Motherwell "NU" (Native Unit) numbering system, which specifies their location within the township's various zones. The following sections detail the specific schools within each category.

3.10 Primary Schools

Motherwell is served by numerous primary schools, ensuring that foundational education is accessible across its various residential zones. The identified primary schools include: Ikhwezelihle Primary (NU 6), Khulile Primary (NU 7), Fumisukoma Primary (NU 9), Nxanelwimfundo Primary (NU 8), Melisizwe Primary (NU 10), Elufefeni Primary (NU 7), Mdengentonga Primary (NU 7), Vukanibantu Primary (NU 5), and Vezubuhle Primary (NU 6). Further institutions are Dumani Primary (NU 3), Elundini Primary (NU 4), Siyaphambili Primary (NU 2), Enkwenkwezini Primary (NU 2), Enqileni Primary (NU 2), Mbiniselo Primary (NU 1), Imbasa Primary (NU 12), Mpumalanga Primary (NU 9), Zanoxolo Primary (NU 1), Canzile Primary (NU 1), and Enkululekweni Primary (NU 29). This school highlights the community's significant investment in basic education.

3.10.1 Ikhwezelihle Primary Schools (NU 6)

Ikhwezelihle Primary School, located in Motherwell NU 6, Gqeberha, was established in 1986, a period deeply entrenched within South Africa's apartheid era. This historical context is crucial, as the school was created under the Bantu Education system. The conditions at Ikhwezelihle Primary today directly reflect its challenging origins and the persistent socio-economic inequalities in the region. The school suffers from severe overcrowding, with

classrooms often accommodating between 50 and 60 learners, severely compromising the quality of teaching and individual attention. Furthermore, Chronic issues include leaking roofs that disrupt classes during rain, broken windows and doors, a critical shortage of functional toilets posing health risks, and a general lack of furniture and maintenance. A severe shortage of essential learning materials, such as textbooks and stationery, and a lack of functional libraries or computer labs compound these physical challenges.



Figure 2 above shows the leaking roof at this school.

3.10.2 Dumani Primary School (NU 3)

Dumani Primary School (NU 3) was established to serve the educational needs of its local community, with a precise founding date of 1993. The school currently operates under challenging conditions. Its infrastructure is generally poor, with classrooms often in disrepair and with inadequate furniture. There is a significant shortage of essential learning materials like textbooks, stationery, and teaching aids. Overcrowding in classrooms is common, straining limited facilities and making it difficult to provide individual attention. Furthermore, access to basic amenities such as clean water and functional sanitation can be unreliable.



Figure 3 illustrates the conditions at this school, which lack suitable infrastructure for teaching and learning.

3.10.3 Elufefeni Primary School (NU 7)

Elufefeni Primary School was established in 1998 to serve a growing community. The school was built with a strong community spirit, but it has faced significant infrastructure challenges. A major issue is the poor condition of the pit latrine toilets. These facilities are often overflowing and pose a serious health risk to the learners, especially during the rainy season. This unsanitary situation affects the children's well-being and creates an uncomfortable learning environment.

3.10.4 Elundini Primary School (NU 4)

Elundini Primary School is one of the oldest institutions in the area, having been founded in 1975. Its age is clearly visible in the state of its buildings. A specific and critical problem is the persistent roof leaks in several classrooms. Lessons are frequently disrupted when it rains as water drips into the rooms, damaging learning materials and furniture. This not only interrupts valuable teaching time but also creates damp conditions that can lead to respiratory problems for students and staff. The school has repeatedly requested funds for proper roof repairs.



Figure 4 shows a picture of the school's conditions, which include a leak on the roof, as well as the classroom conditions where teaching and learning take place.

3.10.5 Enkwenkwezini Primary School (NU 2)

Enkwenkwezini Primary School opened its doors to learners in 2001. While the school community is vibrant, it struggles with a severe shortage of textbooks. There are not enough books for every child in many subjects, and sometimes three or more pupils must share a textbook. This makes it difficult for students to complete homework or study effectively at home. It also slows down the pace of learning in the classroom, as teachers cannot assign individual reading or exercises from the book.

3.10.6 Enqileni Primary School (NU 2)

Established in 1989, Enqileni Primary School educates children from mostly farming families. A defining challenge for this school is the chronic shortage of classrooms, because there are not enough rooms; many classes are extremely overcrowded, with some having over 50 learners squeezed into a space designed for far fewer. This overcrowding makes it hard for teachers to give individual attention and for children to concentrate on their lessons, negatively impacting the quality of education.



Figure 5 above shows the overcrowded conditions in this school, with 50 to 60 learners per class.

3.10.7 Enkululekweni Primary School (NU 29)

Enkululekweni Primary School was established in 2005 to cater to the educational needs of a new settlement. A significant barrier to learning here is the inconsistent supply of electricity. Power outages are a common occurrence that disrupts the use of essential technologies, such as computers and printers. During the winter, the lack of power also means no lighting or heating, making the classrooms dark and cold. This unreliable infrastructure hinders the school's ability to integrate modern teaching methods.

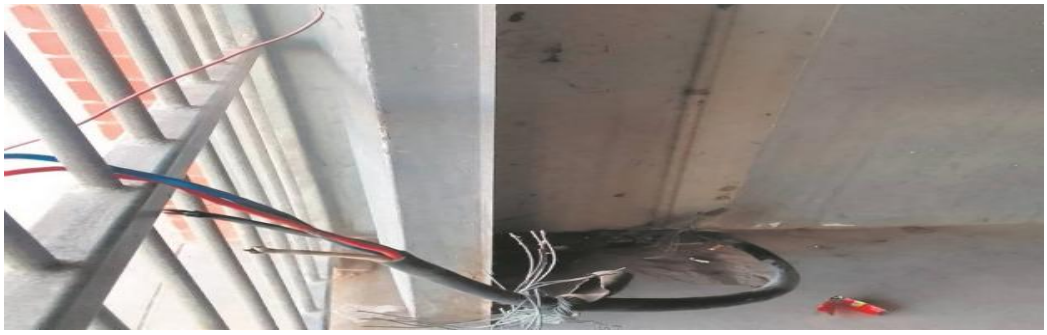


Figure 6 illustrates the lack of electricity in these schools, highlighting that careless wiring can be hazardous to children who encounter it, as learners sometimes become careless.

3.10.8 Fumisukoma Primary School (NU 9)

Fumisukoma Primary School began its operations in 1994. The school faces a unique and dangerous problem: a proper perimeter fence. This allows animals to wander onto the school grounds, making the property vulnerable to theft and vandalism. The safety of the learners is a constant concern for the teachers, as they cannot securely monitor who enters the schoolyard. This insecure environment is a significant distraction from the primary goal of education.



Figure 7 shows a picture of this school in Motherwell, where there is no proper fence, which may lead to the school being robbed or vandalised, compromising the safety of the school's learners.

3.10.9 Ikhwezelihle Primary School (NU 6)

Ikhwezelihle Primary School was established in 2003 with high hopes for the future. However, the school is hampered by a critical lack of learning materials beyond textbooks. There is a severe shortage of basic items, such as exercise books, pens, and chalk. Teachers often have to purchase these supplies themselves or ask parents to contribute, which can be difficult for many families. This scarcity affects the pupils' ability to participate in classwork and complete written assignments.

3.10.10 Imbasa Primary School (NU 12)

Imbasa Primary School has been serving its community since 1982. A major issue affecting learners' health is the absence of a reliable, clean water source on the school property. Children are forced to bring their own water from home, which is often insufficient, or the school must ration water from a single tap. This leads to dehydration, especially on hot days, and makes it difficult for children and staff to maintain basic hygiene, such as washing their hands.



Figure 8 shows a picture of the water shortage at this school, as there is not enough water available.

3.10.11 Khulile Primary School (NU 7)

Khulile Primary School was founded in 1996. The school's grounds are very bare and lack any proper playground equipment. The children have no swings, jungle gyms, or sports facilities during break times. This lack of recreational space means learners cannot engage in physical education properly, which is an integral part of a child's development and helps them focus better when they return to the classroom.

3.10.12 Mbiniselo Primary School (NU 1)

Mbiniselo Primary School, one of the oldest in the region, was established in 1970. Due to its age and location, the school building has become a home for pests, including rats and insects. This infestation poses a health hazard as these pests contaminate food and can spread disease. It also creates a frightening, unhygienic environment for young learners, making it hard for them to feel safe and comfortable at school.

3.10.13 Mdengentonga Primary School (NU 7)

Mdengentonga Primary School started in 1999. A significant challenge is the furniture's poor condition. Many desks and chairs are broken, wobbly, or splintered, making it uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe for children to sit and write. This damaged furniture is a distraction in the classroom and can cause minor injuries. Replacing this furniture is a low priority for the education department, but it has a direct impact on the pupils' daily comfort and well-being.

3.10.14 Melisizwe Primary School (NU 10)

Melisizwe Primary School was created in 2008. A serious problem it faces is the high number of learners who come to school without breakfast. Many children come from homes facing poverty and are often hungry, which makes it difficult for them to concentrate in class. While

the school operates a feeding scheme, it is sometimes insufficient to address the widespread hunger that affects students' ability to learn and participate.

3.10.15 Mpumalanga Primary School (NU 9)

Mpumalanga Primary School has been operating since 1985. The school is located in a windy area and has issues with its windows. Many of the windowpanes are broken and cannot be closed properly. This allows dust and cold wind to blow into the classrooms, making the learning environment uncomfortable. Children must wear jackets indoors during cold weather, and the dust can trigger allergies and asthma among learners and teachers.

3.10.16 Nxanelwimfundo Primary School (NU 8)

Nxanelwimfundo Primary School was established in 2001. The school struggles with a high teacher-to-learner ratio, but a more specific issue is the lack of a proper staff room. Teachers often lack a dedicated, quiet space for planning lessons, marking books, or taking breaks. They often have to work in the noisy hallway or in a corner of the library, which leads to low morale and reduces their effectiveness as educators.

3.10.17 Siyaphambili Primary School (NU 2)

Siyaphambili Primary School opened in 1992. A key challenge is the long and arduous journey many learners must undertake to reach school. Children often have to walk long distances, sometimes over rough terrain and across small streams, which can be dangerous during the rainy season. This tiring journey means some students arrive at school tired and late, missing critical first lessons.

3.10.18 Vezubuhle Primary School (NU 6)

Vezubuhle Primary School began its work in 2004. The school faces a significant issue with its science and computer laboratory. While the room exists, it is not functional because it lacks the necessary equipment and apparatus. Science experiments cannot be demonstrated, and computer classes are purely theoretical. This limits learners' exposure to practical, hands-on learning, which is crucial for understanding modern technology and scientific concepts.

3.10.19 Vukanibantu Primary School (NU 5)

Vukanibantu Primary School was founded in 1997. The school's main building has a ventilation issue in the classrooms. The rooms get very stuffy and hot, especially during the summer months. With many children in one room, the air becomes stale quickly, making it hard for learners to stay alert and focused. This uncomfortable environment can reduce productivity and cause headaches and drowsiness.

3.10.20 Zanoxolo Primary School (NU 1)

Zanoxolo Primary School, established in 1978, is located in a noisy area. A major distraction for learners is the high noise pollution from a nearby road. The constant traffic and loud trucks make it difficult to hear the teacher and disrupt concentration during lessons and exams. This persistent issue of uncontrollable external noise is a challenge that the school struggles to resolve.

3.11 High Schools

Motherwell's secondary education sector comprises several high schools catering to students progressing from the primary phase. The listed high schools are: Cingani High (NU 6), Vulumzi High (NU 5), James Jolobe High (NU 4), Masiphathisane High (NU 1), Ndyebo High (NU 9), Douglas High (NU 2), Ncedo High (NU 10), Coselelani High (NU 9), Soqhayisa High (NU 9), Motherwell High (NU 7), and Mfesane High (NU 12). These institutions are responsible for providing the Senior Phase (Grades 8-9) and Further Education and Training (FET) Band (Grades 10-12), preparing learners for the National Senior Certificate and pathways to tertiary education or the workforce.

3.11.1 Cingani High School (NU 6)

Cingani High School was founded in Motherwell, South Africa, in 1993. The buildings are located at 61 Kabonqaba Street, Swartkops Valley, Gqeberha, 6211. Cingani High School is currently experiencing significant technological advancement alongside persistent systemic challenges. In February 2025, the Shoprite Foundation invested over R3 million to install two state-of-the-art robotics labs, providing grades 8 through 12 with advanced equipment like robotics, coding, artificial intelligence kits, laptops, and free Wi-Fi. This investment in digital skills is a significant step forward for a school serving a predominantly impoverished community with limited home internet access. The school has also recently benefited from upgrades to its physical infrastructure, including six new classrooms funded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in May 2024, an improvement overseen by dedicated principal Mbuleli Sandi. However, challenges remain, as the school's buildings were initially constructed for a primary school.

The school's buildings were initially intended for a primary school but are now used for a high school that accommodates 1,505 learners, possibly contributing to overcrowding and infrastructure-related issues. Despite recent upgrades, the school's location in the impoverished Motherwell area means many learners lack access to technology and Wi-Fi at home, even with

the new robotics labs. The broader Nelson Mandela Bay region also experiences high crime rates, with criminals targeting schools for robberies and staff and students facing threats of violence, including gang activity. Furthermore, the Eastern Cape education system has faced long-standing issues such as inadequate infrastructure maintenance and resource shortages. These systemic problems likely place additional strain on the Cingani school environment.

3.11.2 Coselelani High School (NU 9)

Coselelani Secondary School in Motherwell, Gqeberha, was established in 1995 and has faced significant challenges but has experienced remarkable improvements. After achieving a 100% matric pass rate in 2019, the school experienced a substantial increase in enrollment, leading to a severe teacher shortage in 2020 and prompting parent protests. This occurred just a few years after the school was nearly closed down due to extensive vandalism, with broken windows, doors, and damaged toilets. However, under the leadership of Principal Langa Tshangana, the school secured sponsorship to make repairs. It introduced a skills-based curriculum in 2019, offering practical subjects like woodwork and baking to address high dropout rates. These initiatives have had a positive impact, with the school achieving a 96% pass rate in the second term of 2024 and partnering with Indlela Mental Health to provide on-site student support.

The challenges at Coselelani reflect the broader conditions schools face in the Motherwell area. Many educational institutions struggle with persistent infrastructure backlogs, including inadequate sanitation and a lack of essential resources such as libraries and proper facilities. Vandalism and crime are also widespread issues. This school has experienced repeated break-ins, resulting in the theft of computers, equipment, and building materials. This forces this school to redirect already limited budgets toward security measures and repairs. The high crime rates in the surrounding communities can also extend into schools, impacting the safety and well-being of students and staff. For example, in 2024, an armed robbery occurred during a school ceremony in Motherwell, underscoring the serious nature of these security concerns.

3.11.3 Douglas Mbopa High School (NU 2)

Douglas Mbopa High School, situated in the township of Motherwell, Gqeberha, was established in approximately 1989. The public school faces several difficult conditions, with overcrowding among the most serious problems. In 2023, the school was reported to have over 1,300 learners but only 15 classrooms, meaning that some classes contained more than 120

students. This situation falls far short of the ideal class size, creating a suboptimal learning environment and making it very challenging for both students and teachers.

As a result of the extreme overcrowding, the school also faces a shortage of basic resources. The lack of desks and chairs is a significant issue, as some learners do not have a place to sit during class. This forces some students to miss lessons, which can harm their education. These challenging conditions are a common struggle for many schools in impoverished areas across the nation.

In addition to problems with physical resources, the school has also dealt with serious issues concerning the well-being of its students. For example, in February 2022, a 14-year-old student attempted to take her own life after allegedly being bullied by a teacher. This incident highlighted the mental health challenges some learners face and the need for stronger emotional support at the school. Despite these difficulties, the school community has shown positive signs of working together. In 2024, for instance, learners took part in an environmental project, creating a "Garden on Wheels" from recycled tyres to promote sustainability. This demonstrates that students and staff can still come together for meaningful activities despite challenges.



Figure 9 shows a limited amount of furniture for learners, with 40 to 50 students per class.

3.10.4 James Jolobe High School (NU 4)

James Jolobe Secondary School was established in 1992 in the Motherwell area of Gqeberha, South Africa's Eastern Cape province. The school was once perceived as underperforming, but it has since improved its academic results despite facing numerous complex challenges.

The school faces significant challenges, particularly in terms of safety and infrastructure. The school lacks a proper fence, which has led to numerous crimes, including robberies and vandalism. Students and teachers were often robbed, and school property was frequently stolen. Learners reported feeling scared and unsafe at school because of these issues. Additionally, the

school has faced challenges with its buildings and resources, including a lack of classroom electricity and a shortage of essential learning tools such as computers and projectors.

Despite these challenging conditions, the school has made significant efforts to improve its performance. In recent years, James Jolobe has seen a rise in its matric pass rate, which has consistently stayed above 80% since 2022. This success demonstrates the dedication of the school's teachers and students, who have achieved excellent results despite the challenges they faced. In 2024, for example, one student achieved seven distinctions, and several teachers achieved a 110% pass rate in their subjects.

3.11.5 Masiphathisane High School (NU 1)

Masiphathisane High School was established in the 1990s. The conditions at Masiphathisane High School are reportedly highly challenging, significantly hindering the learning environment. A primary issue is the severe lack of space, as the school does not have enough yard for learners to utilise for recreational activities, assembly, or physical education. This congestion contributes to a restrictive atmosphere where students lack a balanced school experience that includes essential physical and social development outside the classroom.

Furthermore, the school operates under a constant threat of crime, directly impacting its already limited resources. The institution has been targeted by robbers who steal the available classroom furniture. This recurring problem means that even the most necessary items, such as chairs and desks, are not secure, leading to a dire shortage. Consequently, students are often forced to learn in under-equipped and unstable environments, severely compromising their ability to focus and achieve academic success.

3.11.6 Mfesane High School (NU 12)

Mfesane High School (NU 12) was established in 1997. It is located in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha), and has faced severe infrastructure challenges for many years, including overcrowded classrooms, crumbling walls, and leaking pipes. A major rebuild, completed in early 2022, has provided the school with a new, state-of-the-art building that has dramatically improved learning conditions for its more than 1,400 students.

Mfesane High School struggled with complex conditions that hurt its students' education. The buildings are too old and have serious problems, such as precast concrete walls that are unstable in strong winds. This school is overcrowded, with over 50 students crammed into classrooms designed for 25 to 30 students. Students also had to deal with broken furniture, a shortage of

textbooks, and unpleasant, leaking toilets. These issues contributed to a significant drop in the school's pass rate.

3.11.7 Motherwell High School (NU 7)

Motherwell High School (NU 7) was established in the 1980s. The school has faced ongoing problems with old and crumbling buildings. I have noticed a leak in this school's water and sewer pipes. A shortage of chairs and other basic furniture has been an issue. Additionally, staff accused the principal of failing to report a theft of school funds. The school must address societal issues such as crime and vandalism, but its dedicated staff and students have achieved high matric pass rates. The school has recently received a new robotics lab and renovations to a block.

Motherwell High School is a public school that serves a community facing significant challenges, including poverty and unemployment. Its students often come from complex backgrounds, which can negatively impact their learning. Despite these challenges, the school and its community demonstrate remarkable resilience. They are working to provide the best possible education with limited resources, sometimes with help from outside groups. The school's success in recent years is a sign of this strong determination.

3.11.8 Ncedo High School (NU 11)

Ncedo High School, also known as NU 11, was established in 1999. It was built to give a good education to children in the area. However, now, the school buildings are in terrible condition. The poor state of the school makes it very hard for students to learn and for teachers to teach correctly.

You can easily see the problems in the classrooms. Some classrooms do not have doors. This means there is no quiet for lessons, and the wind and dust can blow inside. It also means anyone can walk in, and things can get stolen. Other classrooms have a big problem with the roof. Parts of the roof are missing or have large holes. When the sun is intense, the room gets too hot. Water enters the classroom when it rains, making everything wet and forcing the students to leave.

These bad conditions cause many difficulties for everyone at the school. It is difficult to pay attention in a classroom with no door because of the constant noise from outside. A classroom with a broken roof is neither a safe nor a comfortable learning environment. It feels like the school has been forgotten. The students and teachers show great strength by attending school daily, but they deserve safe, solid learning buildings.

3.11.9 Ndyebo High School (NU 9)

Ndyebo Senior Secondary School in Motherwell, Gqeberha, was established before 2001, as official records indicate it opened that year. It is a public school with no fee and is situated in the rural area of NU 9 in Motherwell. The school offers secondary education and serves a large number of students, with reports indicating that nearly 1,000 learners are enrolled. As a public institution in an urban area, it faces many of the challenges schools in under-resourced communities across the Eastern Cape face.

The school's facilities face common issues, including limited resources and infrastructure challenges, which can impact the learning environment. This school has been reported to suffer from overcrowding, ageing buildings, and a shortage of study materials, such as textbooks. These conditions significantly strain students and staff, as learners may lack adequate space and materials to engage with their studies. A shortage of teachers can also be a recurring problem, further compounding the challenges students face in pursuing a quality education.

Despite these difficulties, the school community has shown resilience and a strong commitment to education. Community groups, such as the Go Big Community Development organisation, are involved and recognise students' achievements. These groups often provide valuable support where official funding and infrastructure are lacking. The dedication of learners and the community highlight the determination to overcome educational obstacles and provide the best possible opportunities for the youth at Ndyebo Senior Secondary School.

3.11.10 Soqhayisa High School (NU 9)

Soqhayisa High School (NU 9), located in Motherwell, Gqeberha, was established in 2008, when Principal Mlungisi Melvin Nopote took leadership. The school's mission is to transform our society by providing a high-quality education to its learners. It serves a community of students from squatter camps and impoverished backgrounds. Despite these considerable challenges, Soqhayisa has become a school of academic excellence in the Eastern Cape, demonstrating that strong leadership and community engagement can lead to outstanding educational outcomes.

Soqhayisa High School faces significant resource and infrastructure limitations despite its academic achievements. This school has faced challenges, including broken windows, missing doors, and a lack of electricity in some classrooms. These challenges force teachers and students to work in less-than-ideal conditions. The school also faces high learner enrolment, with an average class size of 40 students, though a new robotics lab and a renovated classroom

block were introduced in early 2025. In November 2022, the school also experienced friction with some parents over unpaid school fees, with some learners reportedly humiliated for non-payment.

The extraordinary success of Soqhayisa is primarily attributed to its dedicated teachers and a strong institutional culture of hard work and discipline. Teachers often volunteer their time after hours and during holidays to help students prepare for exams. A key factor is the school's ability to recruit additional teachers through the School Governing Body (SGB) to supplement staff, with many volunteers eventually becoming paid employees. Students consistently acknowledge their teachers' commitment and dedication as the reason for their academic success. This has enabled the school to achieve a 100% matric pass rate for four consecutive years despite resource scarcity.

3.11.11 Vulumzi High School (NU 5)

Vulumzi High School was created in 1996. This was a significant time in South Africa, just two years after the country became a democracy. The new government needed to build more schools to provide a good education for all children, especially in townships like Motherwell, which had been previously neglected. Vulumzi was founded to meet this need, providing a space for young people in the community to learn and build a brighter future. From the outset, the school's mission was to deliver quality education despite its numerous challenges.

The school's buildings and facilities are old and poorly maintained. This has led to many practical problems that affect everyone at the school. The school has a severe shortage of learning materials. There are not enough textbooks for every student, so they often must share. The science laboratory lacks proper equipment for experiments, making it hard for students to learn practical skills. The library is small and lacks a wide variety of new and interesting books. Students' toilets and bathrooms are often in disrepair. Sometimes, there is no toilet paper or soap, and some toilets or taps may be out of order. This creates an uncomfortable and unhygienic environment.

Despite all these hardships, the heart of Vulumzi High School lies in its teachers' and students' positive, determined attitude. The teachers are very dedicated. They use creative ways to teach with limited resources, often spending their time and money to help their students succeed. The learners are motivated and come to school with a strong desire to learn and improve their lives. The school does not just accept its situation. The principal, teachers, parents, and students often work together to improve things. They hold fundraising events, such as car washes or fun runs,

to raise money for repairs or new supplies. They also write letters and petitions to the local government, requesting assistance in repairing the buildings and allocating more resources.



Figure 10 illustrates the scarcity of textbooks for learners, with learners seated three to a desk and sharing two textbooks between them.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the ethical challenges and lived realities of teaching in under-resourced schools within the township of Motherwell, Eastern Cape. Using a qualitative, auto-ethnographic case study supported by desktop research, the study aimed to provide a deeply contextualised understanding of the complex relationship between education, inequality, and social justice in a historically marginalised community.

The methodological framework used personal reflection, allowing the researcher's teaching experiences to serve as a source of data and a lens through which broader systemic issues were examined. The DECA (Describe, Evaluate, Consult, Act) model provided a structured ethical framework that transformed simple observation into a critical moral analysis and an advocacy tool for ethical action.

Findings revealed that schools in Motherwell face persistent challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of textbooks, furniture, electricity, and sanitation, and an absence of safe, functional learning environments. These material deficits are not merely logistical problems but reflect a deeper moral failure to uphold learners' constitutional right to quality education. The research also found evidence of resilience, innovation, and ethical leadership among teachers and community members who strive to provide quality learning despite systemic neglect.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The literature review of this dissertation was discussed in the previous chapter. It explored themes like resource definitions, historical causes of shortages, and their impact on pupils, while emphasising government responsibilities and existing research gaps. This chapter focuses on the ethical theories that will be used in this study. This study will apply consequentialist theory to examine the moral implications of limited educational resources for pupils in under-resourced communities, with a focus on Rural High School in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. The theory aligns with the study by framing the lack of educational resources as ethically unjustifiable, given their harmful outcomes, poor academic performance, limited opportunities, and the perpetuation of inequality. The study will focus on defining the ethical theory of Consequentialism, its proponents, arguments in favour of the moral theory, arguments against it, and how the theory will guide this work.

4.1 Defining the Ethical Theory of Consequentialism

Consequentialism is an ethical theory that evaluates the morality of actions based solely on their outcomes or consequences. According to Julia Driver (2020:12), "Consequentialism holds that the right action is the one that produces the best overall results". This perspective emphasises that the value of an action is determined by its contribution to desirable ends, rather than by any intrinsic qualities of the action itself. Driver (2020:15) further argues that consequentialist theories assess actions based on future outcomes rather than past intentions.

Philip Pettit (2021:34) expands on this definition by stating, "Consequentialism is a moral framework where decisions are justified by their consequences, and no other considerations are morally relevant". Pettit (2021:36) highlights that this theory is often associated with utilitarianism, which seeks to maximise happiness, but notes that consequentialism is broader, as it can incorporate various value systems. The focus remains on identifying which actions lead to the most favourable outcomes, regardless of the specific values promoted. Similarly, Michael Smith (2022:45) defines consequentialism as "a theory that judges actions purely by their consequences, without regard to the nature of the actions themselves". Smith (2022:47) argues that this approach provides a transparent and objective method for moral evaluation, as it relies on observable results rather than subjective intentions.

Campbell Brown (2020:22) refines the definition by stating, “Consequentialism is the view that moral rightness depends exclusively on the value of consequences”. Brown (2020:24) emphasises that this theory requires a comparative assessment of possible outcomes to determine the best course of action. This comparative element is central to consequentialism, as it necessitates evaluating multiple scenarios to identify the most morally justifiable decision. Elizabeth Harman (2023:56) offers a nuanced perspective, arguing that “consequentialism is not just about producing good outcomes but also about minimising harm”. Harman (2023:58) argues that the theory obligates individuals to consider both positive and negative consequences when making ethical choices.

Tim Mulgan (2021:29) defines consequentialism as “a moral theory that requires agents to act in ways that bring about the best possible state of affairs”. Mulgan (2021:31) stresses that this formulation implies a duty to maximise overall well-being, even if doing so requires personal sacrifice. This aspect of consequentialism raises questions about individual obligations but maintains that the theory’s strength lies in its commitment to collective welfare. Shelly Kagan (2024:62) provides a more technical definition, stating, “Consequentialism is the thesis that the deontic status of an act depends entirely on the value of its consequences”. Kagan (2024:64) explains that “deontic status” refers to whether an action is morally permissible, obligatory, or forbidden.

Frank Jackson (2020:18) offers a practical interpretation, arguing that “consequentialism is best understood as a decision-making procedure that seeks to optimise outcomes”. Jackson (2020:20) notes that this approach is instrumental in policymaking, where decisions must be justified by their potential impact. Similarly, Alastair Norcross (2022:39) states, “Consequentialism is the view that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by the goodness of its consequences”. Peter Railton (2023:51) defines consequentialism as “a moral theory that evaluates actions based on their contribution to overall good, where ‘good’ is defined independently of the actions themselves”.

Therefore, consequentialism is a moral framework that evaluates actions solely on their outcomes, rather than on motives or inherent rightness. It maintains that the ethically correct choice produces the best balance between good and dire consequences. The theory requires comparing potential outcomes to identify which action maximises overall benefit, typically defined as happiness, welfare, or utility. This approach is pragmatic, adapting to circumstances

by focusing on real-world effects. Consequentialism reduces morality to calculating consequences, making it both straightforward in principle and demanding in practice.

4.2 Who are the proponents of this theory?

According to Cummisky (2020:1), key proponents of consequentialism theory include Jeremy Bentham (1789), John Stuart Mill (1861), and Henry Sidgwick (1907). These thinkers, particularly Bentham (1789) and Mill (1861), are considered classic proponents of consequentialism. Other notable figures who have contributed to the development and discussion of consequentialism include Peter Singer (1972) and Derek Parfit (1984).

William MacAskill (2020:56) notes that Jeremy Bentham, in 1789, introduced utilitarianism as a form of consequentialism in his work “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation”. MacAskill (2020:60) argues that the core argument of this theory is that actions should be judged based on their consequences, specifically their ability to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Driver (2022:112) stated that Bentham (1789) believed that pleasure and pain were the only measures of good and evil, and he developed the "hedonic calculus" to quantify happiness. His approach was strictly empirical, dismissing abstract moral rules in favour of measurable outcomes. He claimed that laws and policies should maximise utility, which means whatever increases happiness and reduces suffering.

Ben Eggleston (2021:78) observes that John Stuart Mill expanded on Bentham’s ideas in his 1861 work on Utilitarianism. Egglestone (2021:80) argues that Mill (1861) agreed that actions should be judged by their consequences, but argued that not all pleasures are equal. Helen McCabe (2023:93) further notes that Mill’s emphasis on long-term consequences "anticipates modern concerns about sustainability and intergenerational justice".

Anthony Skelton (2020:45) states that in his 1907 book “The Methods of Ethics”, Henry Sidgwick refined consequentialism by addressing its philosophical challenges. He argued that morality must be based on rational principles that maximise good outcomes. Skelton (2020:50) further contends that Sidgwick (1907) distinguished between egoistic and universalistic hedonism, ultimately favouring the latter as it promoted overall happiness. He acknowledged that conflicts could arise between individual and collective good but maintained that impartial reasoning should guide decisions.

MacAskill (2020:100) states that in his 1972 book “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, Peter Singer applied consequentialism to global ethics. His "effective altruism" principle urged

people to donate to charities that maximise positive outcomes. MacAskill (2020:102) builds on Singer's (1972) ideas, noting that if suffering is evil, individuals have a moral duty to prevent it, even at personal cost. This claim asserts that distance does not diminish moral responsibility, and people should help those in need, regardless of their location.

Hilary Greaves (2021:89) notes that Derek Parfit, in his 1984 book "Reasons and Persons", explored consequentialism through the lens of personal identity and future generations. He argued that since personal identity changes over time, moral decisions should prioritise overall well-being over individual interests. Campbell (2022:134) argues that Parfit (1984) introduced the "non-identity problem," demonstrating that the existence of future people depends on present choices, thereby complicating traditional ethics. Therefore, dissolution of personal identity "forces a re-evaluation of long-term moral responsibility".

4.3 Arguments for the ethical theory of consequentialism

The core argument for consequentialism is that morality should be based on the consequences of actions, rather than on intentions or duties. The theory holds that the right action is the one that produces the most overall good. Consequentialism is compelling because it focuses on tangible results, provides clear guidance for decision-making, and is adaptable to various circumstances. It also aligns with the intuitive idea that we should strive to make the world a better place.

4.3.1 Maximising Well-being

A primary argument for consequentialist theory, particularly utilitarianism, is its emphasis on maximising overall happiness or well-being. Greaves (2022:112) contends that this theory aligns with the intuitive idea that we should strive for the best possible outcomes for everyone involved. For example, a consequentialist approach might justify distributing resources to those who need them most, even if it means some individuals receive less, because it leads to a greater overall benefit. By focusing on outcomes, consequentialism prioritises reducing suffering and increasing happiness. Singer (2020:89) states this is a powerful and attractive idea because it places human and animal welfare at the centre of moral consideration. Guha (2023:5) discusses consequentialism as a theory of morality, stating that the best consequences determine moral value and that it is morally right to act in ways that promote the greatest good.

4.3.2 Intuitive Appeal

Brown (2023:76) stated that consequentialism's core idea is that an action's morality is determined by its consequences, which resonates with many people's everyday moral

reasoning. We often consider the likely consequences of our choices when deciding whether something is right or wrong. For instance, most people would agree that lying is generally bad but might consider it acceptable if it prevents harm. This suggests that a consequentialist approach to thinking is deeply ingrained in our common-sense morality. Norcross (2021:54) argues that the rightness of actions often depends on foreseeable consequences, which aligns with this intuitive understanding. Furthermore, Frick (2022:33) notes that people usually justify decisions by pointing to positive outcomes. The theory's simplicity, focusing on results rather than abstract principles, strengthens its practicality. It avoids complicated moral dilemmas by prioritising what benefits people most.

4.3.3 Adaptability

Another key argument in favour of consequentialist theory is its adaptability to various situations. According to MacAskill (2023:67), this theory enables nuanced judgments based on specific circumstances and potential outcomes. This makes it more applicable to the complexities of real-world moral dilemmas. Driver (2021:56) stated that consequentialism can be applied to various ethical dilemmas, including new or unprecedented ones. For a consequentialist, moral decision-making involves assessing the likely outcomes in a specific context and choosing the expected action to yield the best results. Guha (2023:8) contends that this makes it a flexible and practical theory for addressing modern challenges, such as those in environmental ethics, where the consequences of actions are complex and far-reaching. Brown (2022:34) highlights that this theory can incorporate scientific advancements to improve decision-making. For instance, medical ethics often rely on outcome-based reasoning to determine treatments. The theory also accommodates cultural differences by focusing on universal well-being rather than fixed norms.

4.4.4 Clear Guidance

Consequentialism provides a relatively clear path to determining the morally right action. For example, Chappel (2021:95) stated that this theory, which focuses on maximising positive outcomes, offers a framework for making decisions when faced with competing options. This can be particularly helpful in situations where conflicting ethical considerations arise. Spaull (2022:41) contends that other theories may leave moral agents with conflicting duties or a vague sense of what a virtuous person would do; consequentialism offers a method for resolving such conflicts. It states that an action is morally right if it produces a greater balance of good over evil than any available alternative. This reduces ambiguity in moral decision-making.

4.4.5 Promoting Social Progress

Consequentialism promotes social progress by advocating for actions that benefit society as a whole. Mulgan (2020:112) argues that consequentialist thinking can drive positive social change by enabling individuals and institutions to prioritise actions to enhance well-being and progress. For example, advocating for policies that reduce poverty or improve healthcare can be seen as a consequentialist approach aimed at maximising overall societal benefit. Peters (2024:29) adds that consequentialism justifies reforms by focusing on their societal impact. This focus on outcomes continuously re-evaluates social systems and institutions to ensure they produce the best results. The theory also promotes global cooperation by prioritising collective well-being over national interests.

Therefore, in summary, the argument for the ethical theory of consequentialism is that it offers a compelling ethical framework by prioritising real-world outcomes that maximise well-being and minimise harm. Its strength lies in aligning with our natural tendency to judge actions based on their consequences rather than rigid rules, making moral decisions more intuitive and practical. The theory's flexibility allows it to adapt to diverse situations and evolving circumstances, ensuring relevance across different contexts. Focusing on measurable results provides clear guidance for objectively addressing complex moral dilemmas. Ultimately, this results-oriented approach fosters continuous social improvement by systematically evaluating actions that yield the most significant benefits for society.

4.4 Arguments against the ethical theory of consequentialism

The core of the argument against consequentialism centres on its singular focus on outcomes, which critics argue is a flawed and insufficient basis for a complete moral theory. A key issue is its demandingness, requiring individuals to sacrifice their well-being and relationships for the greater good. Furthermore, the theory is criticised for potentially justifying actions that violate fundamental rights and principles of justice if they lead to a net positive result. The practical application of consequentialism is also challenged by the inherent difficulty, if not impossibility, of accurately predicting and measuring the long-term consequences of actions.

4.4.1 Demandingness

Saunders (2024:56) stated that the demandingness argument against consequentialism, particularly in its utilitarian form, highlights that the theory can be excessively demanding on individuals. It highlights that individuals are morally obligated to act in ways that produce the greatest good, even if it requires sacrificing their personal well-being, interests, and

relationships. Campbell (2022:12) argues that this can create a perpetual state of moral obligation, where one is always required to do more to help others. For example, a person might be required to donate a significant portion of their income to charity, even if it means they cannot afford necessities or pursue personal goals. Chappell (2023:21) argues that consequentialism is an unlivable and unreasonable moral theory, as it sets an unattainable standard for human behaviour. It clashes with the idea that individuals have a right to pursue their own lives and happiness, separate from a constant obligation to maximise global well-being.

4.4.2 Justifying Rights Violations

Driver (2020:12) contends that a significant argument against consequentialism is that it can justify actions that violate individual rights or moral principles if doing so leads to a better overall outcome. This is often illustrated through thought experiments and situations in which a person's rights are sacrificed for the benefit of the majority. For example, Fleisch (2022: 4) highlights that if punishing an innocent person would prevent a riot and save many lives, a strict consequentialist might argue that it is the morally correct action. This is problematic because it disregards individuals' inherent value and rights, treating them as mere means to an end. Alexander (2024:21) criticises this theory by arguing that specific actions, such as torture, murder, or violating a person's autonomy, are inherently wrong, regardless of the positive consequences they might produce. This argument highlights a fundamental conflict between consequentialism and deontological ethics, emphasising moral duties and rules.

4.4.3 Predicting Consequences

Consequentialism requires individuals to assess and predict the outcomes of their actions to determine what is morally right. However, accurately predicting the long-term consequences of actions is often impossible. Smith (2021:45) contends that human knowledge is limited, and unforeseen variables can significantly alter the outcome of an action. An action that seems beneficial in the short term might have disastrous consequences in the long run. For example, implementing a new policy to solve a social problem might have unintended adverse side effects that are difficult to anticipate. Because of this, Johnson (2022:78) argues that consequentialism is impractical and unreliable as a moral guide. It forces people to make decisions based on incomplete information and speculation, leading to adverse outcomes and making it impossible to honestly know if an action was the "right" one. This uncertainty undermines the very foundation of consequentialism, which is built on the principle of maximising good outcomes.

4.4.4 Justice and Fairness

Another key argument against consequentialism is that it can conflict with our deeply held intuitions about justice and fairness. According to Sinnott-Armstrong (2023:30), the theory focuses solely on the overall outcome, potentially disregarding how that outcome is achieved or how benefits and burdens are distributed. For instance, punishing a criminal for wrongdoing might be considered just. Still, a consequentialist might argue that punishing an innocent person to deter others from committing a crime is better if it maximises overall societal safety. This is seen as a profound violation of justice. Portmore (2023:56) criticises this theory, arguing that a just society is one in which individuals experience the greatest happiness and are treated fairly, with their rights respected. Johnson (2022:37) argues that consequentialism's emphasis on the aggregate good can result in unfair outcomes for specific individuals or groups, overlooking the importance of concepts such as desert, equity, and moral responsibility.

4.4.5 Measuring Outcomes

Consequentialism relies on measuring and comparing the value of different outcomes to determine which action is the best. Lee (2022:78) stated that this poses a significant challenge, as it is not always clear how to quantify or compare different types of goods or values. For example, how does one measure and compare the value of happiness versus knowledge, or freedom versus security? These values are often incommensurable, meaning they cannot be easily translated into a single unit of measurement. Lee (2022:80) further argues that this makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine which action truly "maximises the good." People might weigh these values differently, leading to conflicting conclusions about the morally correct action. According to Thompson and Garcia (2023:102), this measurement problem undermines the practicality of consequentialism as a decision-making framework, as it lacks a transparent, objective way to evaluate and compare the outcomes of a given action.

In summary, consequentialism has been criticised for being overly demanding, for potentially permitting violations of individual rights, and for relying on uncertain predictions of future outcomes. Scholars like Mulgan (2020:118) note that the demandingness objection assumes that the theory always requires agents to maximise good without limit, which may seem unrealistic in everyday contexts. However, Julia Driver (2021:83) argues that contemporary consequentialist interpretations allow for reasonable expectations and practical constraints, meaning individuals are required to promote good outcomes within realistic institutional and social limits. Rule-consequentialist approaches protect fundamental rights because stable rules that safeguard fairness generally yield better long-term consequences than violations. These

developments show that modern consequentialism has evolved to respond to classical objections and is not as rigid or extreme as critics sometimes claim.

Another criticism is that consequentialism depends on predicting and measuring outcomes, which may be difficult in complex social situations. However, ethical decision-making in public policy and education already relies on outcome-based evidence and probability assessments rather than certainty. Norcross (2022:71) notes that moral reasoning does not require perfect prediction but rather the best available evidence about likely consequences. Similarly, MacAskill (2020:92) argues that using empirical data, statistical modelling, and comparative analysis enables consequentialist reasoning to guide responsible real-world decisions. In applied research contexts, such as education policy, measurable indicators, like pass rates, dropout rates, and resource availability, yield observable consequences that can be ethically evaluated. Therefore, although uncertainty exists, consequentialism remains practically workable because it aligns with evidence-based assessment methods already used in social science research.

Despite these criticisms, consequentialism was selected as the guiding ethical theory for this study because its outcome-focused framework is particularly suited to analysing educational inequality and resource distribution. The study aims to evaluate whether limited resources produce harmful academic and social consequences for learners; therefore, a theory that judges the morality of systems by their real-world effects is methodologically appropriate. Harman (2023:60) stresses that ethical evaluation in social institutions should prioritise reducing preventable harm. At the same time, Peter Singer (2020:95) maintains that moral analysis is strongest when it focuses on the tangible impact of policies on well-being. This research investigates measurable educational outcomes, long-term learner prospects, and systemic disadvantage. Consequentialism provides the most coherent framework for linking empirical findings with ethical judgment. For this reason, the theory is adopted not because it is free from criticism, but because its strengths directly support the aims, data structure, and applied moral evaluation required by the study.

4.5 How will the ethical theory of consequentialism guide this study?

The ethical theory of consequentialism will guide this study by focusing on the outcomes of limited educational resources on pupils in under-resourced communities. Consequentialism evaluates actions based on their consequences, arguing that the morality of a decision depends on its results rather than intentions (Sinnott-Armstrong 2022:45). In this research, the theory

will help assess whether the lack of resources leads to adverse outcomes such as poor academic performance, high dropout rates, and limited future opportunities. By examining these effects, the study will determine whether the current distribution of resources is ethically justifiable. Pettit (2020:32) argues that policies should be judged by their impact on well-being, which aligns with this study's focus on pupils' welfare.

Consequentialism will also help evaluate the fairness of resource allocation in the Rural High School in Motherwell. The theory prioritises the greatest good for the greatest number, suggesting that ethical decisions should maximise positive outcomes (Driver, 2021: 78). If limited resources harm the most pupils, the study will highlight a moral failure in the education system. For instance, consequentialism would deem this situation unethical if a lack of textbooks leads to widespread poor performance. According to Hooker (2023:56), policies that create avoidable suffering are morally wrong, reinforcing the need to analyse resource disparities. This approach ensures the study focuses on real-world impacts rather than abstract principles.

Another way in which consequentialism guides this study is by analysing the long-term effects on pupils' lives. The theory considers immediate and future consequences, making it helpful in assessing how limited resources affect career prospects and socioeconomic mobility (Mulgan 2020:102). If pupils in Rural High schools face lifelong disadvantages due to poor education, consequentialism would classify this as an ethical concern. Norcross (2022:67) emphasises that ethical evaluations must account for sustained harm, which justifies examining long-term educational outcomes. This perspective ensures the study captures the full moral weight of resource shortages.

The theory also facilitates the comparison of different scenarios involving resource distribution. Consequentialism encourages evaluating alternative actions to determine which produces the best results (Bales, 2021:89). The study can explore how additional resources might improve pupil performance, using empirical data to assess potential benefits. For example, if studies show better-equipped schools yield higher pass rates, consequentialism will support redistributing resources. Singer (2023:112) argues that ethical decisions must consider feasible improvements. This comparative approach strengthens the study's ethical analysis.

Consequentialism further guides the study by emphasising measurable outcomes over subjective opinions. The theory relies on observable consequences rather than personal beliefs, ensuring an objective assessment (Eggleston 2020:76). In this research, data on dropout rates,

exam results, and university admissions will provide concrete evidence of resource-related impacts. Bradley (2022: 54) argues that ethical judgments must be evidence-based, which aligns with this study. The research avoids bias and strengthens its ethical conclusions by focusing on quantifiable results.

The theory also helps identify who is most affected by limited resources. Consequentialism requires examining which groups suffer the most from a given policy or situation (Portmore 2021: 98). In Rural High schools, pupils from low-income families may face greater hardships due to resource shortages. The study will assess whether these disparities create unequal consequences, which consequentialism deems unethical. Woodard (2023: 65) highlights that ethical analysis must prioritise vulnerable groups and ensure that the research addresses systemic inequities. This focus ensures the study remains grounded in real pupil experiences.

The theory also encourages considering the unintended consequences of resource shortages. Consequentialism values all outcomes, even those not initially anticipated (Hare 2020: 59). For example, limited resources may lead to teacher frustration, further harming pupil learning. The study will explore such indirect effects to provide a comprehensive ethical evaluation. Hanser (2023:81) reinforces the importance of examining secondary impacts, ensuring no ethical dimension is overlooked. This thorough approach strengthens the study's validity.

Finally, consequentialism will guide the study's conclusion by summarising whether current resource distribution produces ethically acceptable outcomes. If the evidence shows widespread harm, the theory will classify the situation as morally unjust (Schroeder 2021: 93). By synthesising data through a consequentialist lens, the research will present a clear ethical verdict. Spaull (2022:48) stresses that ethical theories must provide actionable insights to ensure the study's relevance. This final assessment will tie all findings to the central moral question.

In summary, consequentialism will direct this study by focusing on outcomes, fairness, long-term effects, and measurable data. The research will ensure a contemporary and evidence-based ethical analysis. The theory's emphasis on consequences over intentions makes it ideal for evaluating real-world educational disparities. Through this approach, the study will provide a robust ethical examination of limited resources in Rural High schools.

4.6 Conclusion

This study has explored the ethical theory of consequentialism, defining it as a moral framework that evaluates actions based on their outcomes rather than intentions or inherent principles. It examined key proponents such as Bentham (1789), Mill (1861), and Singer (1972), who argued that morality should maximise overall well-being. The study also presented arguments for consequentialism, including its intuitive appeal, adaptability, and focus on measurable outcomes. It also addressed criticisms such as its demanding nature, potential for rights violations, and challenges in predicting consequences. The study then outlined how consequentialism will guide the study by assessing the impact of limited educational resources on pupils in under-resourced communities, focusing on measurable outcomes, fairness, and long-term effects. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will analyse the ethical implications of resource shortages on pupils at Rural High School in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, examining how these limitations affect academic performance, opportunities, and overall well-being.

Chapter Five: An Analysis of the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources on pupils in under-resourced communities with the moral theory of Consequentialism.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework was discussed in the previous chapter. It has explored the ethical theory of consequentialism, defining it as a moral framework that evaluates actions based on their outcomes. It has examined key proponents of the theory, presented arguments in favour of it, and presented arguments against it. This chapter analyses the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources for pupils in under-resourced communities through the lens of consequentialism. It examines how resource scarcity demotivates students, reduces engagement, and complicates teaching, ultimately compromising the quality of education. Therefore, it will examine how these factors create long-term negative consequences, as disinterested students and unmotivated teachers result in poorer learning outcomes and harm pupils' futures.

5.1.1 The Violation of Equal Opportunity and Its Societal Consequences

When one examines the ethical implications of this lack of resources, it becomes apparent that there are only negative consequences for the pupils. It unfairly limits their chances to learn and succeed. This creates a cycle where inequality is passed from one generation to the next. It denies children the opportunity to reach their full potential. This situation treats students

differently based only on their community's wealth. It breaks the promise of equal opportunity for every child. Ultimately, it harms not just the individual but our entire society.

The lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities raises serious ethical concerns when analysed through consequentialism, which evaluates actions based on their outcomes. When schools lack textbooks and technology, students lose motivation, engagement declines, and learning suffers. Poor education leads to long-term harm, including limited career prospects and sustained poverty. Smith (2021:45) states that this creates an unjust cycle in which disadvantaged students struggle to compete with their better-resourced peers. The consequences extend beyond individuals, affecting entire communities and economies.

Under consequentialism, the ethical weight of educational deprivation is determined by the scale, depth, and persistence of harms that accrue to learners over time. In this analysis, the central claim is that the lack of resources at Rural High School in Motherwell translates into adverse outcomes for students' futures, and that these harms carry moral significance precisely because they accumulate across the lifespan and across cohorts. The overall thrust is that resource scarcity should be understood as a morally relevant pattern of contingencies that constrains human flourishing, not merely as a contingent fact about school operations.

5.1.2 Demotivation and Disengagement Among Students

The consequentialist view asks us to judge actions and systems by their outcomes. When schools in under-resourced communities lack educational resources and a safe environment, this harms learners and is thus morally troubling. In simple terms, fewer tools lead to weaker learning and lower life chances, and that outcome is what matters most for consequentialism. Material deprivation produces harms in motivation and performance. Johnson (2022:12) agrees with the above concerns and states that resource scarcity depresses learners' expectations and effort.

Demotivation and disengagement among students indicate a decline in learners' enthusiasm, interest, and participation in academic activities (Smith, 2020:45). Demotivation occurs when students lose their drive to learn due to factors such as repetitive teaching methods, a lack of recognition, or excessive academic pressure. On the other hand, Taylor (2022:78) describes disengagement as involving withdrawal from classroom interactions, such as avoiding participation, skipping classes, or displaying apathy toward assignments. For example, a student who once actively contributed to discussions but now remains silent may be experiencing disengagement from the learning process. Similarly, a learner who no longer

completes homework, despite having previously shown diligence, may become demotivated. These issues often stem from emotional exhaustion, uninspiring curricula, or unsupportive learning environments.

Poor educational resources in under-resourced communities severely impact student motivation and engagement. Smith (2021:45) contends that students struggle to follow lessons effectively when schools lack basic materials such as textbooks, writing supplies, and digital tools. This point about the struggle to follow lessons is something I feel daily. It is not just that students do not have books; my teaching is constantly interrupted. I must spend precious class time figuring out how to share one textbook between five students, or how to explain a concept without any visual aids. These constant problem-solving tasks drain energy from actual teaching and disrupt the flow of the lesson. For the students, it is like trying to build a puzzle with half the pieces missing. They start confused and fall further behind, minute by minute. Without these essential resources, learners are unable to complete assignments, participate in class discussions, or engage in hands-on activities, resulting in frustration and disinterest.

Brown (2020:78) argues that students in poorly equipped schools are more likely to develop negative attitudes toward education, viewing it as inaccessible or irrelevant to their lives. I explore my guilt and frustration in my classroom when a bright, curious student slowly shuts down. They ask a great question, and I want to dive deeper, but we can’t because we lack the basic tools to explore the answer. Over time, they stop asking. They learn that school is where their curiosity hits a dead end. They do not decide that education is irrelevant one day; it is a conclusion they are forced to make after hundreds of small, disappointing moments.

Johnson and Lee (2022:15) further argue that the absence of basic learning materials creates a sense of hopelessness among students, leading them to believe that education is not for them. I see it in their body language. Students tend to internalise the lack of resources as a message: "You and your education are not important enough to invest in." This is the most painful part to witness. It is not that they are not capable; it is that the system has convinced them they are not worthy. This belief discourages them from putting effort into their studies, resulting in passive learning behaviours such as daydreaming, absenteeism, or even dropping out.

Taylor (2022:102) finds that a lack of educational resources signals low institutional support, which students internalise as a low ceiling on success. This perception reduces persistence on complex tasks and lowers attendance. The emotional toll is also heavy, as students feel shame when they are unable to participate in class activities fully. From my desk at the front of the

class, I see the problem clearly. It starts with the small things: the broken projector that I cannot get fixed, the textbooks we do not have enough of, and the constant juggling of the one computer lab between six classes. The students internalise this scarcity. They see the empty shelves and outdated equipment and read it as a message from the school that their success is not a priority. This belief places a low ceiling on their own ambition.

Furthermore, the emotional cost of this is the heaviest burden to witness. I see the shame on a student's face when they admit they could not print their assignment, or are the only one without the materials for a science experiment. This is not just about missing a worksheet; it is a repeated, public experience of resource-based exclusion. Each instance is a small cut that corrodes their belief in their ability to succeed. This crumbling self-efficacy becomes instantly apparent in my classroom. The usual hands that would shoot up during a discussion stay down. Attempts at homework become less effective and then stop altogether.

Moreover, the consequences are cumulative, piling up until they become a permanent state. The short-term frustration of not having a book today becomes a chronic, profound disengagement by next term. The problem is compounded by peer influence; disengagement becomes infectious. When one student stops trying, another can take their place. The class norm subtly shifts from what we can achieve to what we can get away with. Effort itself becomes uncool, something to be mocked rather than celebrated. This is the tragedy of collective demoralisation. It is no longer just about individual students falling behind; the entire class's energy shifts towards minimal participation and low expectations. We are not just failing to teach individuals; we are failing entire cohorts, creating a culture of underachievement that is incredibly difficult to reverse. The damage is severe, and it is a direct reflection of the resources we have failed to provide them.

Smith (2020:76) argues that the long-term consequences of harm do not remain confined to the classroom; they shape later employment, earnings, and health. In short, the consequences accumulate: day-to-day frustration becomes lost years of learning. That daily frustration is like a slow leak. You do not notice it much at first, but over time, it drains the joy and energy out of learning. Children are often confused because they cannot take a book home to practice, and they gradually start to believe they are not smart. They stop raising their hand. They disengage. That is when a frustrating day becomes a lost week, and then a lost year of missed learning opportunities. I have watched bright, curious kids slowly fade because the support was not there to keep their curiosity alive. This does not end when they leave my classroom. I often

think about my former students. I know that the opportunities available to them, the jobs they can get, the lives they can build are directly tied to the foundation they got at school.

Their future options shrink when that foundation weakens because we did not have enough. It affects their health, too, because the stress of falling behind and the disappointment of unmet potential takes a real toll. The hardest part is that it is not about anyone meaning to cause harm. Nobody wakes up wanting to shortchange children. However, the impact is what matters. The result is the same: my students are predicted to have more complicated lives. Seeing that happen, year after year, feels like a moral failure. It is a heavy weight to carry, knowing that the simple act of not providing enough resources inevitably leads to worse outcomes for the children I care about. The harm is obvious, even though the system may label it 'neutral.'

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities yields profoundly detrimental outcomes, rendering the situation morally unacceptable. Consequentialism maximises actions and systems based on their results, specifically, whether they maximise well-being or, in this case, perpetuate avoidable harm. The consequences of resource scarcity are overwhelmingly negative: students struggle to learn effectively without basic materials, such as textbooks, writing supplies, or digital tools, leading to poor academic performance and stagnant skill development. This deprivation also erodes motivation, fostering a sense of hopelessness that discourages effort and normalises disengagement. Over time, this creates a cycle of collective demoralisation, where entire classes adopt low expectations, further diminishing individual and group outcomes. The harms extend beyond the classroom, affecting long-term employment prospects, earnings, and health, trapping communities in generational disadvantage. Emotionally, repeated exclusion due to inadequate resources damages self-efficacy, leaving students ashamed and resigned to failure.

5.1.3 Reduced Teacher Effectiveness and Morale

Another negative implication of the lack of resources is reduced teacher effectiveness and morale. Smith (2020:45) believes that reduced teacher effectiveness and morale refer to teachers being less able to teach well and feeling less motivated in their jobs. Clark (2021:89) describes reduced effectiveness as meaning lessons are less clear, students are less engaged, and overall education quality suffers. Teachers may also feel frustrated, leading to higher absenteeism or even leaving the profession.

When teachers are overworked, stressed, or unsupported, their performance drops, and they may lose passion for teaching. For example, I find myself just going through the motions,

reading from the textbook instead of crafting an engaging. My patience is worn so thin that a student's simple question cannot be answered, and I see the confusion on their faces when my explanations are unclear. I know I am not providing them with the education they deserve, but I lack the energy and motivation to do more due to the limited resources available to me. The passion I once had for uncovering a child's potential has been buried under paperwork and exhaustion. I feel ineffective and disconnected, as if I am failing both my students and myself.

When teachers feel demoralised, they may become less creative in lessons. For instance, a teacher who feels unappreciated might stop putting effort into planning engaging activities. Over time, this can harm student learning and classroom energy. Teachers in under-resourced schools face significant challenges that negatively impact the quality of teaching students receive. According to Wilson (2021:89), without access to proper teaching aids, updated textbooks, or digital learning tools, educators struggle to deliver engaging and effective lessons towards students. Every morning, I walk into my classroom with the same hope: I can give my students the education they deserve today. However, the reality of these under-resourced walls always finds a way to dim that light. My greatest challenge is not a lack of love for teaching; it is the crushing absence of the basic tools to do it properly.

I plan lessons around a single, outdated textbook that still lists countries that no longer exist. While I know the world of education has moved to digital learning and interactive tools, my reality is a broken chalkboard and a handful of dry markers. I see the disinterest in my students' eyes when I must lecture from a decade-old book, which breaks a piece of my spirit each time. I want to facilitate projects, let them learn by doing, and put technology at their fingertips. Instead, I often have them memorise facts not because I believe it is right, but because I have nothing else to give them.

The hardest part is watching a student struggle and knowing I do not have the capacity to provide them with the one-on-one support they need. The class is too large, the resources are too scarce, and my energy is too depleted. I see them fall behind and feel a profound sense of failure, even though I know the reasons are systemic. This is not just an achievement gap; it is a gap I witness in the eyes of a child every day, and it reinforces a devastating cycle where our community's education is viewed as inferior. In the quiet moments, I fear the long-term consequences of this reality. I am preparing my students for a future that operates with tools and ideas I cannot provide them. It feels like I am trying to equip them for a race, but I can only

give them one shoe. The system is weakened, and I think that weighs daily, fearing it fails them not because of their potential, but because of the opportunities they were never given.

Smith (2020:81) observes that a lack of educational resources shifts educators' work from teaching to coping. Smith's (2020:81) observation is not an abstract theory I read about; it is the log entry of my own professional life. I catch myself, mid-lesson, mentally pivoting from a planned activity to a "coping" mechanism, a worksheet, a silent reading period, anything that does not require the printer that has been out of toner for a month or the shared laptop cart that was never allocated to us. Moyo (2022:122) describes a "pedagogical narrowing" in which creative tasks disappear because the materials do not exist to support them. The innovative, project-based tasks I trained for have vanished from my lesson plans, not for a lack of will, but because the material world to support them does not exist. My classroom, the site of my inquiry, has become a place focused on survival rather than growth. I feel the creative parts of my teaching practice atrophy in real-time, and I record it with a sense of profound helplessness.

Chen and Patel (2023, p. 209) report that "a stalled instructional cycle" occurs when teachers, facing persistent scarcity, reduce expectations. This reduces the challenge for students and further lowers engagement. Due to logistical constraints, the classroom climate weakens as feedback becomes infrequent and late. Over time, this produces poorer learning outcomes. Students thus experience less responsive, less rigorous, and less inspiring teaching. The negative consequences accumulate across years and grade levels, sealing in lower achievement.

Another challenge in rural schools like Motherwell is the language barrier between teachers and pupils. The Department of Education assigns some teachers to schools where they do not speak the local language fluently, making communication difficult. When learners are not taught in their native language, it becomes difficult for them to understand the subject matter. This affects lesson delivery, as learners struggle to understand instructions in a language, leading to poor comprehension. The South African curriculum encourages mother-tongue instruction in early grades, like grade 1, but many teachers are not trained to teach in indigenous languages. This disconnect widens the gap between teachers and pupils, slowing academic progress.

From a consequentialist perspective, the language barrier hinders teachers' improvement as they teach in a resource-lacking educational environment where translation tools are absent. The theory evaluates actions based on their outcomes, and in the case of schools in Motherwell, the consequences are overwhelmingly negative. Poor teaching quality, low teacher morale, and

outdated methods lead to disengaged students and weak academic performance, perpetuating a system that fails to maximise well-being as noted in chapter 2 and above. The language barrier further exacerbates the problem, as miscommunication hinders learning and increases dropout rates, ultimately reducing the long-term prospects for students. Consequentialism argues that these outcomes are unjust because they cause the most significant harm to the most vulnerable, denying learners the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society in the future. The theory would condemn such systemic neglect, as the consequences of poor achievement, frustration, and wasted potential clearly outweigh any short-term cost savings from underfunding schools.

5.1.4 Poor Learning Outcomes and Academic Performance

Another critical issue is poor learning outcomes and Academic performance. According to Harris (2024:89), poor learning outcomes refer to learners' inadequate acquisition of knowledge, skills, or competencies, often reflected in their inability to meet expected educational standards. This concept encompasses low retention rates, difficulty grasping core concepts, and unsatisfactory assessment performance. In the context of Motherwell, I see the reality of these poor learning outcomes daily in my classroom. Many of our learners struggle with foundational literacy and numeracy, and as a result, they are unable to meet the basic requirements of the curriculum. Core concepts are often not grasped, leading to a domino effect of misunderstanding as we move to more complex work. Assessment results consistently fall below expected standards, with a high prevalence of failing grades. Low retention rates are evident as learners frequently miss school, further widening their knowledge gaps.

Wilson (2020:67) defines poor academic performance as a student’s consistent failure to achieve desired grades or meet institutional academic requirements. Low test scores, frequent absenteeism, or lack of coursework submissions characterise it. As a teacher in Motherwell, I see this definition come to life daily. Despite my efforts in my grade 8 maths class, a bright student consistently scores below 40% on tests. Another learner has missed 15 days this term, falling far behind in English classes in grade 9. A group does not submit their history projects in grade 10, leaving me with nothing to mark. During parent meetings, we discover that many children have no quiet space at home to complete homework assignments. A science teacher in my school encountered a pupil struggling to read the textbooks, which became a source of frustration and disengagement. Some learners are promoted to the next grade despite not mastering the basics, setting them up for further failure.

In the context of Motherwell, the long-term effects of poor academic performance present a significant and persistent challenge, creating a complex cycle that is difficult to break. Students who fall behind during their primary and secondary education at local schools are markedly less likely to pursue higher education or vocational training after matric. This early educational setback has profound consequences for their future careers. Reed (2021:63) argues that this severely limits their career options, effectively trapping many young adults in low-wage, often precarious jobs with minimal opportunity for upward mobility. In Motherwell, this problem is compounded by a lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are typically developed through a quality education. Without these essential skills, individuals find it exceptionally difficult to adapt to the rapidly changing demands of the modern job market.

Rahman (2020:38) states that "achievement lags widen with each year of exposure to scarcity," because learning is cumulative, deficits in earlier grades make later content more difficult, creating a compounding effect. This is called layered loss, which adds another layer of missed skills each year. In Motherwell, I see this crisis daily in my high school classroom. It begins in primary school, where learners who cannot read are still promoted to the next grade. The learning gap is massive when they reach me in high school. A learner in Grade 8 cannot sound out simple words, so they cannot understand the history textbook or the science questions. This creates a layered loss; each year, another skill is missed. Students become frustrated and silent in class. They start to believe school is not for them, not even realising their core problem is reading. They become demotivated and disengaged, often choosing to leave school entirely. They think they are failing because school is hard, not because they were never taught to read and write correctly. The harm is deepest for our poorest learners, whose families cannot afford extra help. This truly sorts their futures by their postcode right here in Motherwell. We are losing a generation, not because they lack potential, but because they lack the foundational support they need.

As noted, Consequentialism assesses actions based on their outcomes; in this case, the outcomes are overwhelmingly harmful. The lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities has consequences that ultimately diminish both individual and societal well-being. Without access to essential learning materials, such as adequate textbooks, technology, and sufficient infrastructure, students face immediate disadvantages, which can lead to poor academic performance. Over time, these struggles compound, leaving learners unprepared for higher education or skilled careers and trapping them in cycles of poverty. By failing to provide

equitable education, society perpetuates a reality in which entire groups are denied opportunities to thrive, thereby undermining collective progress.

The long-term effects, limited career prospects, generational poverty, and social stratification collectively reveal a decline in overall happiness and societal benefits. From a consequentialist perspective, this situation is morally unacceptable, as it prioritises short-term cost savings over the greater good of fostering an educated, capable population. This emphasises that the consequences of educational deprivation extend far beyond classrooms, weakening communities and stifling human potential. When evaluated through this lens, the current state of under-resourced schools produces far more harm than good, making it an ethical failure by consequentialist standards.

5.1.5 Social and Psychological Impact on Students

Johnson (2021:45) stated that the social and psychological impact on students refers to the measurable changes in learners' interpersonal relations, sense of belonging, emotional well-being, and cognitive-affective functioning that arise from educational, family, and societal conditions. It encompasses stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, loneliness, motivation shifts, and perceived academic self-efficacy that jointly shape engagement and achievement. As a teacher in Motherwell, I have witnessed firsthand how a lack of resources in our schools profoundly impacts students' minds and social lives. This is not just about outdated textbooks or malfunctioning computers; it is about tangible improvements in our learners. You see children who slowly stop believing they belong or can succeed. Their emotional well-being suffers, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and a deep sense of loneliness. Their motivation shifts, and their belief in their own academic abilities ends. I recall a bright young boy in Grade 10 at my school who was highly excited about science. However, because we lacked lab equipment and science books, he began to feel that he was falling behind compared to his peers in other towns. He became quiet and withdrawn, losing his connection with his friends because he felt ashamed that he could not understand the topics they discussed so easily.

The psychological effects of inadequate educational resources are profound and long-lasting. Grant (2021:82) stated that students in under-resourced schools often internalise their struggles, developing feelings of inferiority compared to their peers in better-equipped institutions. This leads to low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in their academic abilities. The psychological damage is profound. Students here often internalise the struggle, blaming themselves for not understanding, when the real problem is a lack of proper support. They develop a deep feeling

of inferiority. Here in Motherwell, I taught a pair of sisters who were incredibly talented artists. However, we had no art supplies beyond broken crayons and scrap paper. They constantly compared their work to digital art they saw online from better-equipped schools and decided they were "rubbish at art." This knocked their self-esteem terribly, and not just in art, they started to believe they were bad at everything. The constant stress of trying to learn without the right tools creates heavy anxiety that makes it impossible for them to focus on class, which then makes their grades worse, creating a vicious cycle.

The long-term psychological impact includes higher dropout rates and diminished aspirations (Fisher, 2023:27). Many students disengage from education altogether, believing they cannot succeed. This struggle has long-lasting consequences that follow students into adulthood. We see higher dropout rates because many of our learners disengage, thinking they cannot succeed. A former student in Motherwell was a practical, hands-on learner who could have been a brilliant engineer. Still, because our school had no technology workshops or career guidance, he became frustrated and felt stupid. He dropped out in the 10th grade, convinced he would never amount to anything. That mindset stays with them. Now, as an adult, he avoids further training or courses, believing he will fail. This limits his career advancement and keeps him in a cycle where he feels excluded from opportunities.

Furthermore, the emotional toll leads to feelings of complete isolation and hopelessness. Many of our students experience a deep sense of alienation, feeling left behind in a world that seems to reward others. Without access to computers and the internet, they feel disconnected and develop a defeatist attitude, believing their efforts are pointless. I recall a group of Grade 11s working on a project. They gave up before starting because they knew they could not create the fancy PowerPoint presentations they saw on TV; they believed their simple posters would be laughed at. The absence of counsellors or mentors in our school means this emotional distress has nowhere to go. Students are often left without effective coping mechanisms, which can negatively impact their resilience and self-worth. This stigma of coming from a poor school reinforces social hierarchies and deepens their feelings of inferiority. These are not minor problems; they are psychological scars perpetuating a cycle of disempowerment, limiting personal and professional growth long after our students leave the school gates.

From a consequentialist perspective, the long-term effects of inadequate educational resources in under-resourced communities result in significant harm, reducing overall societal well-being. The psychological toll of low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression diminishes individual

happiness and productivity, leading to poorer life outcomes. When students internalise feelings of inferiority, the consequences extend beyond personal suffering to broader social and economic costs. The lack of confidence and motivation hinders innovation and reduces opportunities for upward mobility, thereby reinforcing social inequality. Consequentialism evaluates actions based on outcomes, and in this case, the systemic neglect of educational resources produces overwhelmingly negative consequences: a disempowered population, reduced societal progress, and entrenched marginalisation.

5.1.6 Limited Access to Extracurricular and Enrichment Opportunities

According to Smith (2020: 45), limited access to extracurricular and enrichment opportunities refers to the barriers that prevent students from participating in activities beyond the standard curriculum, such as sports, arts, and academic clubs, which are crucial for holistic development. As a teacher in Motherwell, I have seen firsthand how limited access to extracurricular activities hinders our students' progress. In our schools, the barriers are very real and daily. Financial constraints mean that many families cannot afford the fees for a simple sports club or purchase the correct kit for their children. Our geographic location also plays a part; we do not have the same easy access to specialised facilities, museums, or visiting artists that schools in bigger cities might have. For instance, a student with a musical talent might never get the chance to join an advanced orchestra or learn a specific instrument because those programmes are unavailable here. I have watched incredibly bright students miss out on joining a robotics club because the cost of the parts and competition fees was far beyond what the school or their families could manage. This lack of institutional support and funding means that these enriching opportunities, crucial for building a child's confidence and social skills, are often the first thing to be cut from our budget.

The absence of these activities has a direct and painful impact on our students' holistic development. Without proper sports facilities and team sports, our children miss out on critical lessons in discipline, teamwork, and perseverance that are learned on the football field or netball court. I have noticed that when we have no arts programmes, students lose a vital outlet for creative expression and stress relief, which negatively affects their mental health. They lack a sense of belonging that comes from being part of a club or team. I have taught students who struggle with low self-esteem and find it difficult to integrate socially, precisely because they have not had these safe, structured environments to practice social skills and build friendships outside the academic pressure of the classroom. This gap in their school experience means they

are not developing the well-rounded soft skills that are just as important as their educational knowledge.

Ultimately, this limitation not only affects our students now but also severely impacts their future opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of inequality. When our learners apply for college or a job, their applications often appear bare compared to those of students from well-resourced schools, which typically feature a long list of clubs, competitions, and leadership roles. They lack the well-rounded profiles that many institutions and employers value. Furthermore, they miss out on early networking and mentorship opportunities that often come from participating in these activities, such as connecting with a coach or a visiting professional. This lack of exposure also narrows their career aspirations; a student who has never been in a coding club might never consider a future in technology. This systemic neglect perpetuates the existing social and economic divides. As their teacher, I find it heartbreaking to see their potential for upward mobility limited by their ability and lack of opportunity.

Consequentialism theory examines the results of actions, and in this case, the lack of extracurricular opportunities leads to adverse outcomes. From a consequentialist perspective, denying students access to these activities produces harm by limiting their personal and social growth. Without sports or music, students miss opportunities to develop skills that contribute to long-term happiness and success. Consequentialism focuses on the greatest good for the greatest number, and here, the absence of enrichment programs harms many learners. This theory highlights how this neglect leads to unequal societies where some groups consistently underperform. This theory stresses that the consequences include reduced employability and poorer mental health for affected students. The result is a less productive and less cohesive society, as fewer individuals can reach their full potential. In this case, the consequences are overwhelmingly negative, affecting individuals and society. The lack of investment in extracurricular activities leads to a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break.

5.1.7 Educational Inequality as Social Injustice

Educational inequality as social injustice refers to the systemic disparities in access to quality education, resources, and opportunities that disproportionately affect marginalised groups due to socioeconomic, racial, or geographic factors (Reardon, 2021:34). I have stood in my classroom here in Motherwell and witnessed the deep educational inequality that defines our children's lives. This is not just a theory from a book; it is the daily reality for learners. For example, a bright male student in my school's Grade 9 class. He has so much potential, but he

is trying to learn maths from a textbook that is falling apart, missing pages, and is shared among five other students. In the same province, just a forty-minute drive away, from Motherwell to New Brighton town, students have their own books, interactive whiteboards, and science labs in their schools. These systemic differences mean that learners are already at a disadvantage when entering my classroom. The system is set up to fail him, perpetuating a cycle where his opportunities are limited before he even tries. It feels like we are sending our children to run a race with shoes full of holes, while others get a head start on a smooth track.

The lack of fairness is what hurts the most. The principle of fairness means everyone should have a fair shot, but in reality, the opposite is true. I remember at the beginning of 2025, our school finally received a small donation of new dictionaries. The children were so excited to touch the crisp pages. It broke my heart because something so basic felt like a luxury. We do not have a proper library or a computer lab with working internet. How can I teach learners about researching for projects when their only source of information is a single outdated encyclopedia from the 1990s? The unfairness is also in the little things: on a hot day, the classrooms are stifling with broken windows, and on a rainy day, we have buckets in the hallway to catch water from the leaky roof. This is not just about books; it is about the message it sends our children that they are not worthy of a safe, clean, and adequately resourced place to learn. This unfair distribution tells them they are left behind, killing their belief in a fair future.

This situation destroys any notion of equality of opportunity. Success should depend on a child's effort and talent, but for our learners in Motherwell, it depends on their postcode and their parents' income. One of the teachers in Motherwell reflects that this reminded her of her former student, one of the hardest-working girls she has ever trained. She dreamed of being an engineer. However, our school could not offer Advanced Programme Maths or Physical Sciences at the required level because we were unable to find textbooks, laboratory manuals, books on scientific matters, kits, software, CDs, and other multimedia materials, such as videos, that provide the necessary equipment and materials for specific inquiry-based lessons. She had the talent and put in the effort, but she was denied the opportunity to compete for a university spot against students from affluent schools who had those resources. Her future was limited not by her ability but by her address. This is the ultimate social injustice. We are trapping generations of bright, capable children in a cycle of disadvantage, reinforcing the idea that their background dictates their future, and systematically denying them their right to a fair chance at success.

From a consequentialist standpoint, the unequal distribution of educational resources produces outcomes that fundamentally undermine fairness and equality of opportunity. Consequentialism judges actions by their results; in this case, the results demonstrate systemic harm. When resource disparities violate fairness, the result is a society in which children's academic success depends more on their background than on their potential, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of disadvantage. This theory highlights how an unfair system leads to the underutilization of talented students in under-resourced schools, preventing them from fully developing their abilities and similarly, violating the principle of equality of opportunity results in social mobility failing, trapping generations in poverty despite their best efforts. From a consequentialist perspective, outcomes are morally unacceptable because they maximise suffering for disadvantaged students and society by causing lost productivity and innovation.

This theory emphasises that the current system's consequences include deepening class divisions, with the privileged maintaining their advantage while others face significant barriers. This creates a huge loss for society, as the benefits concentrated among the few outweigh the widespread harm to the many. From a purely outcome-based perspective, such educational inequality fails the consequentialist test because it produces more negative consequences than positive ones. This theory concludes that any system producing such imbalanced outcomes, in which fairness and equality are systematically undermined, cannot be morally justified, as it fails to promote the greatest good for the greatest number.

5.2 Violation of Human Rights

5.2.1 The Right to Education

According to Tomasevski (2020:45), the human right to education is a fundamental entitlement that ensures every individual has access to inclusive, equitable, and quality learning opportunities without discrimination. It encompasses the right to free and compulsory primary education, as well as accessible secondary and higher education, and the elimination of barriers such as cost or social exclusion. This includes a transformative tool for empowerment, enabling individuals to participate fully in society while fostering critical thinking and societal progress. This right includes the freedom to choose educational paths aligned with one’s cultural and philosophical beliefs.

The right to education is not just about a child having a school to attend; it is about what happens inside that school. In Motherwell, we are failing this principle on a fundamental level. International frameworks emphasise equitable education, meaning every child should have an

equal opportunity to succeed regardless of their background. Our textbook situation is a perfect, painful example of how we violate this. When five children must share one book, they are not receiving an equitable education. The child holding the book has an advantage over the others. They can read independently, study the diagrams, and take it home to revise. The others are left squinting from a distance, their learning passive and fractured. This directly creates inequality within the same classroom. It denies them equal access to knowledge, which is the foundation of the right to education. Furthermore, our books are outdated, contain incorrect or outdated information, and violate the right to a quality education. It is not just about access; it is about the standard of what they are accessing.

This leads directly into the violation of the principle of non-discrimination. This principle means that your education should not be worse simply because you are poor or live in a particular area. However, in Motherwell, that is precisely what happens. I know that a learner at a school in Summerstrand, here in the Eastern Cape, has their own textbook, access to a computer lab, and a library with new books. My learners do not. They are denied the same opportunities because they were born into an under-resourced community. This is systemic discrimination. The government's failure to allocate funding to address this issue is not just poor budgeting; it also violates its duty to provide education without discrimination.

A consequentialist looking at the situation in Motherwell would not primarily focus on the injustice or the violation of a rule or right in itself. Instead, they would judge the morality of this situation solely based on its outcomes and consequences. For a consequentialist, the violation of the right to education in Motherwell is immoral and unjustifiable because its repercussions are overwhelmingly negative. It creates vast suffering, wasted potential, and social instability while preventing the massive potential for happiness, prosperity, and social good. The government's failure to act is a broken promise and a deeply inefficient and harmful policy from a moral perspective. A consequentialist would argue that redirecting funds to fix these schools is not merely a nice thing to do; it is a necessary action. Still, it is the most logical and morally urgent action to maximise society's well-being and prosperity. The current situation does the opposite, making it a clear moral wrong.

5.2.2 The Right of access to information

Mendel (2020:45) stated that the human right of access to information refers to the fundamental freedom of individuals to seek, receive, and impart information held by public authorities. This right is enshrined in international frameworks, such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights, and is crucial for transparency, accountability, and democratic participation (Johnson, 2022:78).

As a teacher in Motherwell, I have seen firsthand how learners' right to access information is being violated, preventing them from reaching their full potential. This right is a fundamental freedom for individuals to seek and receive information, a right that is supposed to be protected for everyone. This violation starts with a critical lack of basic resources in our schools. For example, our school library is almost empty. Our few books are outdated. When a learner wants to do a project on climate change or a famous South African inventor, they cannot find the information here. The information exists worldwide but is being withheld from them because the public authority (the education department) has failed to provide us with an updated library. This directly violates their right to receive information and hinders their ability to learn and understand the world around them.

This problem becomes even clearer when we look at access to technology. In today's world, the internet is the primary means by which people seek and share information, a crucial factor in democratic participation. Our computer lab has only ten old computers for over 60 learners. They are so slow that they can barely connect to the internet, and when they do, the connection is weak and expensive. A learner who needs to research for a debate on current events or watch an educational video to understand a difficult maths concept cannot do so. This creates a massive gap between our learners and those in richer schools with tablets and fast Wi-Fi. The system violates learners' right to seek information by failing to provide functional technology. It makes it impossible for them to be informed and to participate equally in society, which is deeply unfair.

Finally, the violation is also in the simple, everyday teaching tools we lack. A fundamental issue, such as an insufficient number of textbooks, violates the right to access information. In my grade 11 history class, I have 45 learners but only 15 textbooks. This means that three children must share one book, and those in the back often cannot see the diagrams or read the text clearly. When I assign homework that requires information from the textbook, learners who cannot take a book home are unable to complete the work. They are being punished for not accessing information that was never properly made available to them. This violates the learners' fundamental right to be informed and educated, holding them back from a better future.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities produces harmful consequences that violate learners' right to access information, as evidenced by the adverse outcomes these shortages create. Consequentialism argues that actions based on their results, and the results of denying educational resources, are clearly harmful to learners and society. These problems create information deserts that systematically exclude specific populations from accessing the information they need. This suggests that learners frequently have limited access to essential information for educational development, hindering them from reaching their full potential. The long-term consequences are even worse, as these violations lead to perpetuation of intergenerational inequality cycles where low-income families stay poor because their children cannot access educational information. Therefore, this reduces economic mobility for affected populations because learners without access to information are less likely to secure good jobs later in life.

5.2.3 The Right to a Safe Environment

The right to a safe environment refers to the entitlement of individuals to live in clean, safe, healthy, and hazard-free surroundings, protected from ecological harm and pollution (Smith, 2020:45). This right is fundamental to human dignity and well-being, as environmental degradation disproportionately affects vulnerable communities. For example, exposure to toxic waste in industrial areas can lead to severe health issues, such as respiratory diseases. The right also encompasses protection from the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events that displace populations.

Teaching in Motherwell has shown me the incredible potential of our young people. However, it has also highlighted the severe lack of resources in our schools, which actively prevents them from thriving. The environment itself works against us. I worry daily about the physical state of our buildings. Our classrooms are often old and in deplorable condition. I have taught in rooms where the roof leaks when it rains, creating wet, slippery floors that pose a hazard to children. The windows are sometimes broken, exposing learners to winter's cold wind. The sanitation facilities are insufficient for the number of students we have, and many toilets are not working correctly. This forces children to use facilities that are unhygienic and unsafe, putting them at risk of getting sick or having an accident. The school grounds are not properly secured, with broken fences that allow strangers to enter, making us all feel vulnerable easily.

Furthermore, the scarcity of fundamental resources, such as clean drinking water and reliable electricity, directly harms our learners' health and safety. There have been times when the water

supply was cut, meaning children could not drink or wash their hands, thereby increasing the risk of disease transmission. Without electricity, the classrooms are dark and gloomy, making it difficult to read and write, and security systems, such as alarms, cannot function. These issues create a school environment where a child's safety is threatened daily, violating their fundamental right to learn in a secure place.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced schools produces harmful outcomes that violate learners' right to a safe environment. The theory evaluates actions based on their consequences, and in this case, the failure to provide adequate resources leads to preventable physical and psychological harm. For instance, overcrowded classrooms increase stress and conflict, resulting in higher rates of violence and emotional distress among students. Additionally, the absence of proper infrastructure, such as unstable buildings or unsanitary facilities, leads to injuries and health risks, demonstrating how resource deprivation creates unsafe conditions. Without safe infrastructure, students face physical harm from collapsing buildings or unsanitary conditions, which could lead to injuries or even death in extreme cases. Consequentialism emphasises that these adverse outcomes are morally unacceptable, as they prioritise cost-cutting over student welfare. Thus, under consequentialism, the systemic neglect of educational resources is ethically indefensible, as it produces widespread harm and violates learners' fundamental right to safety.

5.2.4 Right to Physical Accessibility

Spaull (2020:112) stated that the Right to Physical Accessibility refers to the normative claim that built environments, transportation, and public facilities must be designed and managed so all persons, including those with disabilities, can enter, navigate, and use them on an equal basis with others. It operationalises non-discrimination by requiring the removal of physical barriers and the provision of accessible routes, signage, and facilities as a matter of rights rather than charity. Human rights law is grounded in principles of equality and dignity and is articulated through accessibility duties imposed on public and private actors performing public functions.

As a teacher in Motherwell, I have seen firsthand how our schools' lack of basic infrastructure severely violates learners' right to physical accessibility. Many of our school buildings are not designed with learners with disabilities in mind. I have taught at a school where a learner who used a wheelchair had to be carried up and down the stairs by his friends or family members every single day because there was no ramp. This was undignified and unsafe for the child,

making him feel like a burden before the school day began. In another classroom, a visually impaired learner lacked access to Braille books or audio tools. This meant she could not read the same textbooks as her classmates and had to rely entirely on others to read to her, which prevented her from learning independently and participating fully in lessons. These are not just inconveniences but direct denials of a child's right to equal access to education.

The consequences of these resource shortages are profound and long-lasting for our learners in Motherwell. I remember a specific case where a bright and eager learner with a hearing impairment struggled immensely because our classroom had no electricity for most of the day. This meant we could not use a computer to show videos with subtitles, which would have helped him understand the lessons visually. Without this basic technology, he fell further behind, his confidence shattered, because the school environment was hostile to his needs. Furthermore, the inadequate sanitation facilities disproportionately affect our girls and learners with physical disabilities. I have witnessed female learners with disabilities avoid drinking water at school to avoid the embarrassing and challenging trip to the toilets, which were often not fit for their use. This led to dehydration and difficulty concentrating, directly affecting their learning.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced schools leads to harmful outcomes that violate learners' Right to Physical Accessibility. The theory evaluates actions based on their consequences, and in this case, the absence of inclusive infrastructure and materials results in widespread exclusion. Learners with disabilities face physical barriers, such as being unable to enter classrooms or use learning tools, which hinder their academic growth. The lack of assistive devices, like hearing aids or wheelchairs, forces disabled students to rely on others, reducing their independence and self-esteem. Schools often fail to create an equitable learning environment without adequate resources, thereby reinforcing social inequalities. The long-term consequence is a generation of learners denied their right to education simply because their schools lack the means to accommodate them.

5.2.5 Right to Economic Accessibility

The Right to Economic Accessibility refers to the entitlement of individuals to obtain essential goods, services, and opportunities such as food, housing, healthcare, education, and utilities at costs they can afford without compromising other basic needs, rooted in the broader right to an adequate standard of living and equality of access (Fleisch,2020:112). It emphasises removing price and non-price barriers that prevent marginalised groups from participating in markets and

public services. In human rights law, it is often linked to states' obligations to ensure affordability and non-discrimination in socio-economic provisioning. Economic accessibility extends beyond physical availability to include fair pricing, transparent information, and predictable costs. For example, this includes affordable public transport fares that enable access to work and services. It also covers equitable tuition and fee structures for primary and secondary education.

My school in Motherwell is severely under-resourced; we have overcrowded classrooms with insufficient textbooks, outdated learning materials, and a critical shortage of subjects such as Science and Mathematics. This means learners cannot acquire the skills they desperately need to compete in the modern job market. For example, we attempt to teach computer skills, but with only a handful of computers available for the whole school, most children never have enough practical time to become proficient. Our graduates are immediately left behind without these essential technical and critical thinking skills. They end up stuck in a cycle of low-paying, unstable jobs or long-term unemployment because they lack alternative opportunities. This is a direct violation of their right to economic accessibility, as they are denied a fair chance at financial stability from the very beginning.

The poor reputation of our under-resourced schools leads to a terrible stigma that punishes our learners even when they try. Employers in nearby areas often see Motherwell on a CV and make assumptions about the quality of the graduate, viewing them as underqualified before even giving them an interview. This discrimination shuts doors and reinforces economic exclusion. For instance, a former student of my school was a hardworking and intelligent young woman. Still, she was repeatedly rejected for entry-level jobs in retail and offices in the Eastern Cape. The employers would choose applicants from more privileged schools, believing they were a safer bet. The lack of books, tools, and support in our schools today directly contributes to the economic despair that the next generation in Motherwell will experience.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced schools results in harmful long-term economic consequences for learners, thereby violating their right to economic accessibility. Consequentialism evaluates actions based on their outcomes, and in this case, the outcome is widespread poverty and limited opportunities. This results in lower lifetime earnings, perpetuating economic inequality. Communities with under-resourced schools experience higher crime rates due to economic desperation. Additionally, the shortage of skilled workers in these areas hinders business growth, ultimately harming the

broader economy. Consequentialism argues that denying learners proper education leads to greater societal harm, as it limits economic productivity and increases social burdens. Therefore, violating economic accessibility through inadequate resources creates adverse effects that harm individuals and society. The theory highlights how failing to provide educational resources leads to unjust economic outcomes, thereby reinforcing systemic disadvantage.

5.2.6 The Rights to Life and Development

The right to life and development is a fundamental human right that encompasses the entitlement of individuals to live with dignity and access opportunities for holistic growth (Smith,2020:45). According to Johnson (2021:32), this right is rooted in international frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which emphasize the intrinsic value of life and socio-economic progress. The right to life protects against arbitrary deprivation of life and demands state respect for survival and dignity, including during policing and conflict. The right to development frames development as a human-centred process entailing equitable participation and fair distribution of benefits.

The right to development is about having a fair chance to grow and reach your full potential. Here in Motherwell, schools are failing to uphold this right. How can a child develop their mind when five students share one textbook? How can they explore science without lab equipment or practice reading in a nearly empty library? This lack of resources creates a huge gap between what they are capable of and what they can achieve. They are being denied equitable participation in their education, which is their right, simply because of where they live and which school they attend. Ultimately, the state must respect, protect, and fulfil these rights. They fail in that duty by failing to provide our school with adequate resources. This is not just about old buildings; it is about depriving an entire generation of learners in Motherwell of the opportunities for holistic growth. They are being set up to fail, denied the fair distribution of benefits that education should bring, and their right to a future filled with possibilities is being violated before our eyes.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced schools leads to harmful outcomes that violate students' rights to life and development. Consequentialist theory judges actions by their consequences; in this case, failing to provide proper resources results in long-term damage. The lack of mental health support results in

increased dropout rates as stressed and depressed learners give up on education. When students are unable to express themselves freely due to a lack of learning materials, their personal growth is stunted, leaving them less confident and less able to think critically. The humiliation of studying in poor conditions erodes self-esteem, leaving learners feeling worthless and unmotivated.

In terms of development, the consequences are equally severe. Without practical skills training, students remain unemployable. The absence of talent development means many gifted individuals never discover their potential, wasting abilities that could benefit society. A lack of digital literacy leaves learners unprepared for modern jobs, rendering them irrelevant in a technology-driven world. Poor career guidance leads to incorrect educational choices, forcing students into low-paying jobs with limited prospects. Consequentialist theory would view these outcomes as morally wrong because they create widespread suffering and limit human potential. The theory argues that actions should maximise well-being, but denying educational resources does the opposite; it creates generations of disadvantaged individuals.

The result is a cycle of unfulfilled lives that harms not just students but society. When schools fail to provide basic resources, they produce adults who are unable to make meaningful contributions to the economy or community. Consequentialist theory holds that long-term consequences harm both individuals and society. The theory suggests that ignoring educational needs not only harms students today but also weakens the future of entire communities. Violations of the rights to life and development lead to a less educated, less skilled, and less productive population, which is a negative outcome for everyone.

5.2.7 Right of learners to participate in decisions affecting their education

Robinson (2021:91) contends that the right of learners to participate in decisions affecting their education refers to students' entitlement to be consulted and have their views considered in educational governance, classroom practices, and policy processes that shape their learning experiences. It is grounded in children's rights frameworks that position learners as rights-holders rather than merely recipients of instruction. Participation includes having a voice in curriculum relevance, assessment design, and school rules, through mechanisms such as student councils and class forums.

The right of learners to participate in decisions affecting their education is recognised as a fundamental aspect of educational justice and democracy. In my classroom at Motherwell, I witness daily how learners' right to participate in decisions affecting their education is

systematically violated. The school's governance is characterised by a command-and-control approach, where policies on everything from the behavioural code to the assessment structure are dictated by the district office or a senior leadership team that is entirely disconnected from the student body. We have a student council, but it is a tokenistic gesture; their proposals for more relevant career guidance or a review of the outdated homework policy are met with polite dismissal and filed away, never to be acted upon. The students are treated as recipients of instruction, and their voices are often seen as an inconvenience to the institution's smooth, authoritarian operation. This creates a sense of powerlessness among the learners, who correctly perceive that their views hold no weight in the systems that govern their daily lives.

This violation is most acute in the classroom and in the formulation of rules. When attempting to implement Robinson's principles, I am actively discouraged from co-creating classroom charters with my students or consulting them on assessment formats that best allow them to demonstrate their understanding. The recent district-mandated shift to a new, standardised testing regime is a clear case study. The students, acutely aware of their own learning styles and anxieties, proposed alternative evaluation methods, such as portfolios or project-based assessments, which were rejected without consideration. Furthermore, school rules regarding mobile phone use and bathroom breaks are enforced with little to no student input, leading to resentment and a culture of covert rebellion rather than mutual respect. This denial of participation fundamentally undermines their status as rights-holders and teaches them a dangerous lesson: that their agency is not valued and that authority is something to be endured rather than engaged with.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities leads to adverse outcomes that violate learners' rights to participate in decisions affecting their education. According to the consequentialist theory, the outcome is that learners are systematically excluded from decision-making processes. The lack of resources leads to low self-esteem and limited critical thinking skills, both of which reduce learners' ability to engage in meaningful participation. The consequences are both immediate and long-term, as learners who are denied participation are less likely to become active members of society. The lack of involvement leads to a sense of powerlessness and disengagement. According to consequentialist theory, actions that produce such harmful effects are morally wrong, as they fail to promote the well-being and rights of all learners. The ongoing denial of resources and participation opportunities thus results in widespread negative consequences for individuals

and communities. In this way, the lack of educational resources is not just a practical problem but a moral violation of learners' rights, leading to unjust and damaging outcomes.

5.2.8 Right to be free from discrimination based on gender, race, or other grounds

Freedman (2020:21) stated that the right to be free from discrimination based on gender, race, or other grounds protects individuals from differential treatment that undermines equal dignity and access to opportunities. It encompasses direct discrimination, where explicit criteria exclude or disadvantage a group, and indirect discrimination, where neutral rules have disproportionate impacts. It also covers intersectional harms, recognising that overlapping identities can intensify disadvantage.

Here in our Motherwell schools, we see daily how the lack of resources creates an environment where discrimination becomes the norm, almost as if it is built into the system itself. When our learners see that schools in wealthier areas are far better equipped, they feel inferior and less valued—this sense of exclusion chips away at their self-esteem and motivation. The girls in particular face additional barriers, like not having access to menstrual products or safe spaces, which too often leads to them dropping out. For our racial and ethnic minority students, the absence of culturally relevant materials or support leads to a deep sense of cultural alienation.

This entire situation is a direct violation of our children's right to be free from discrimination, as they are systematically denied equal opportunities for reasons entirely beyond their control. The cumulative effect is a devastating and widening gap in both educational outcomes and future life chances for our most marginalised learners. By failing to provide an equal start, the system reinforces all the existing societal biases, making it infinitely more challenging for our disadvantaged students to ever succeed. This systemic neglect flies in the face of the very human rights laws that are supposed to guarantee a discrimination-free education, and it perpetuates the social hierarchies that keep our community left behind.

Analysing this issue through the lens of consequentialism, the adverse consequences of a lack of educational resources become even clearer. Consequentialist theory focuses on the results of actions; in this case, the consequences are deeply unjust. When learners are denied resources, discrimination causes long-term harm, including lower educational attainment, reduced employment prospects, and ongoing social exclusion. The theory highlights that the moral wrong lies in the unequal outcomes produced by resource disparities, which disproportionately harm learners based on gender, race, or other grounds. The lack of resources thus perpetuates cycles of disadvantage, making it impossible for affected learners to compete on an equal

footing with their peers. From a consequentialist perspective, violating the right to be free from discrimination is evident in the negative, far-reaching impacts on learners' lives and futures.

5.3 Transparency

The lack of educational resources fundamentally violates three critical dimensions of transparency for students in under-resourced communities. Specifically, it undermines material transparency by obscuring the knowledge students should rightfully have access to; it fractures the transparency of distributed systems by denying them the seamless technological infrastructure needed for modern learning; and it erodes openness in communication and processes, fostering environments of mistrust and unfairness.

5.3.1 Material Transparency

Material transparency refers to the openness and traceability of information about a material's composition, origins, processing, and social and environmental impacts throughout its lifecycle, enabling informed risk assessment, compliance, and ethics. This concept extends beyond basic technical performance to encompass the entire supply chain, including the extraction of raw materials, manufacturing processes, and their associated environmental and social impacts.

The violation of material transparency is a daily frustration that impedes our ability to provide a complete and ethical education. The concept is not just about what a textbook is made of but about understanding the journey and impact of every resource we use. This transparency is violated from the very moment we receive our supplies. We are given outdated textbooks and photocopied worksheets with no information on their origins, the context of their authors, or the hidden biases in their content. For instance, when teaching history, we must use resources printed over 15 years ago that present a single, outdated narrative, with no traceability to modern, diverse perspectives or current archaeological findings. We have no way of assessing the ethics of their production or the completeness of their information. This lack of provenance for our teaching materials means we unknowingly pass on incomplete and sometimes inaccurate information, violating the principle of informed assessment before we even begin a lesson.

The violation becomes even more profound when we teach subjects that rely on understanding modern supply chains and environmental impacts. In Geography or Economics, we hit a wall when discussing the lifecycle of consumer goods, from raw material extraction to manufacturing and disposal. Our school lacks the digital resources to access live data, ethical

company reports, or interactive platforms that map these global processes. We are forced to rely on outdated textbooks that simplify complex issues, obscuring the social and environmental injustices we are trying to teach about. For example, attempting a lesson on the technology industry is impossible when our students cannot access databases to trace the conflict minerals that might be in the second-hand tablets, which we wish we had. The profound lack of transparency in our resources prevents us from fostering critical thinking about transparency in the wider world, creating a painful irony where we teach about concepts that our system fails to provide.

From a consequentialist perspective, the consequences of a lack of material transparency in under-resourced schools are evaluated by the adverse outcomes they produce. Consequentialist theory argues that the harm caused by this resource deprivation results in the most significant detriment to the greatest number, as entire communities suffer diminished educational quality and lifelong opportunities. The theory emphasises that the consequences, such as lower literacy rates and reduced career prospects, outweigh any short-term cost-saving justifications for underfunding schools. The lack of material transparency leads to systemic inefficiencies, preventing students from reaching their full potential and ultimately harming societal progress. Consequentialist theory critiques this outcome as morally unjustifiable, as the long-term suffering and inequality generated by these conditions fail to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Instead, the theory would highlight how the cumulative disadvantage undermines social utility and limits collective prosperity.

5.3.2 Distributed System Transparency

Distributed System Transparency refers to the principle of concealing the complexity of a distributed system from users and developers, making it appear and function as a single, coherent, and centralized entity (Saha, 2020:53). It is a core design objective that aims to create an illusion of simplicity and unity, allowing users to interact with the system without needing to know the location of resources, how they are accessed, or the intricacies of the underlying network. This concept enhances usability and simplifies application development by abstracting away the inherent challenges of distributed environments, such as component failures, data replication, and concurrent access.

Since I have taught here in Motherwell, I have seen firsthand how our lack of basic resources makes it incredibly difficult to create a modern, connected classroom. We do not have enough working computers or a reliable internet connection for all our learners. For instance, when I

try to run a simple collaborative writing project using a shared online document, the lesson often grinds to a halt because the internet drops or five learners have to share one old computer. This breaks the visibility and accessibility that a smooth system requires; learners who cannot access the internet miss real-time updates and discussions, leaving them behind and frustrated. Without the necessary tools and technical support to fix them, we cannot build a consistent and transparent learning environment that other, better-resourced schools take for granted.

The problem extends beyond just hardware. Our learners are also cut off from current information and standardised digital platforms that are common elsewhere. While schools in other areas use interactive software to simulate science experiments, our learners are still relying on outdated textbooks that often lack pages or display outdated diagrams. I remember teaching a lesson on computer networks using a textbook written before most of my learners were born; their understanding of how systems connect today became completely fragmented. This lack of access to standard materials creates a significant inequality. We are not included in system-wide updates or training, so our school falls further behind, making it impossible to hold us to the same standard of accountability and progress as others. This failure to provide adequate resources stifles each learner's potential and disrupts our entire school's ability to function effectively.

From a consequentialist perspective, the result of this systemic deprivation is the perpetuation of educational inequality, in which learners in under-resourced communities face diminished opportunities for academic and professional advancement. Consequentialist theory evaluates actions based on their outcomes, and in this case, the persistent lack of resources leads to harmful long-term consequences, including reduced employability and widened social disparities. The theory suggests that failing to address these inequities hurts society, as the potential contributions of these learners are stifled. Instead of fostering a transparent and equitable educational environment, neglecting under-resourced schools creates a cycle of disadvantage that disproportionately harms marginalised groups, undermining collective societal progress.

5.3.3 Transparency in Communication and Processes

Transparency in communication and processes refers to the openness, honesty, and timely sharing of information throughout an organisation and with its external stakeholders. Transparency is not merely about disclosing information, but ensuring that the information is clear, accurate, and relevant, allowing recipients to draw correct conclusions. It is a

multifaceted concept that goes beyond one-way communication and is increasingly linked to building trust, fostering a sense of psychological safety, and empowering employees. According to Spaull (2022:20), transparency also involves making decision-making processes and rationale visible to everyone, as it enables employees to understand the 'why' behind actions and decisions.

As a teacher in Motherwell, I have seen firsthand how the lack of basic resources makes it impossible to run a transparent school. In Motherwell schools, we lack the necessary tools for proper record-keeping. For example, teacher attendance is often tracked on a piece of paper that gets lost, and student marks are recorded in different books by different teachers, with no central system. This means a student's progress cannot be reliably tracked, and when a parent questions a final grade, there is often no clear paper trail to show how it was calculated. It creates a situation in which we might hide something, even when we are not, because we cannot provide proof. This lack of a reliable system breeds suspicion about favouritism and unfair grading.

Furthermore, communication with parents is a significant struggle. Important notices about school meetings, fee allocations, or new policies often do not reach home because we lack photocopy paper or a working printer. I have seen parents miss out on scholarship opportunities for their children simply because the letter never reached them. This information gap is filled with rumours. For instance, when the school received a donation for new sports equipment, the delay in distributing it led to whispers that the principal had misused the funds, when the process was just stuck in slow, manual paperwork. Trust breaks down when there are no transparent, open channels for sharing information, and parents understandably feel left in the dark and powerless.

From a consequentialist perspective, the lack of transparency in under-resourced schools leads to harmful long-term outcomes that outweigh any short-term administrative conveniences. Consequentialist theory evaluates actions based on their outcomes, and in this case, systemic opacity leads to widespread distrust, inefficiency, and inequity. The theory suggests that when transparency is compromised, the consequences include diminished educational quality, increased corruption, and reinforced social inequalities. Students in these settings suffer from unfair treatment, reduced opportunities, and a lack of faith in institutional fairness, ultimately hindering their academic and professional growth. Consequentialist theory argues that the outcomes of persistent educational disparities and eroded public trust are morally unacceptable

because they fail to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Instead, it perpetuates a cycle where the most vulnerable bear the brunt of systemic neglect, undermining the very purpose of education as a tool for social mobility and justice.

5.4 High Dropout Rates

High dropout rates refer to the significant percentage of students who leave an educational institution before completing their program of study. It is often a symptom of deeper, systemic issues rather than individual student failure. For example, high dropout rates in online higher education, particularly among mature and part-time students, are frequently linked to a lack of integration and isolation from the academic community.

Based on my experience teaching in Motherwell, the high dropout rates are a complex issue rooted in profound socio-economic challenges and a resulting disconnect between the school environment and the harsh realities many of our learners face. A significant number of our students come from households grappling with poverty, unemployment, and unstable home environments. This creates immense pressure on young people, who often assume adult responsibilities, such as caring for siblings or working part-time jobs to contribute to the family income. Concentrating on algebra or history essays becomes a distant priority when you are worried about where your next meal comes from or dealing with the stress of a volatile home life. School can feel irrelevant when more pressing, immediate survival needs are present, leading to chronic absenteeism, which is the primary precursor to dropping out altogether.

Furthermore, this foundational instability often leads to deep-seated educational disillusionment. Students who have fallen significantly behind academically due to sporadic attendance can become profoundly discouraged, believing they can never catch up. They disengage in class, act out, or become invisible. While initiatives exist, the traditional school structure sometimes struggles to provide the intensive, individualised academic and pastoral support needed to re-engage these students. For some, the allure of a quick, albeit low, wage from informal work seems a far more tangible reward than the distant promise of a qualification they feel is unattainable. The dropout is not a sudden decision, but a gradual disconnection process, where the student feels the system has failed them long before they officially leave.

From a consequentialist perspective, the high dropout rates in under-resourced South African schools, specifically in Motherwell schools, lead to far-reaching adverse outcomes, where the consequences of inadequate education perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality. The lack of basic infrastructure, such as proper classrooms and sanitation, directly pushes learners to

abandon their education. As more learners leave school early, the workforce becomes less skilled, reducing productivity and economic growth. Consequentialist theory highlights that the long-term effects of these conditions harm not only individuals but society, as a less educated population contributes to weaker institutions and slower development. Ultimately, the cumulative consequences of these systemic failures reinforce inequality, trapping communities in persistent disadvantage with little hope for upward mobility. The result is a society where the lack of education perpetuates generational poverty, limiting progress and deepening social divides.

5.5 Long-term life-course harms and intergenerational consequences

Long-term life-course harms and intergenerational consequences refer to the lasting, multifaceted negative impacts of adverse events or conditions that extend throughout an individual's life and are passed on to subsequent generations. These harms extend beyond immediate effects and manifest as a cumulative disadvantage throughout a person's life trajectory, often impacting their physical, mental, and socioeconomic well-being. As a teacher here in Motherwell, I see every day how the lack of resources in our schools holds our children back long after they leave. The simple truth is that when our learners do not receive a strong education, their future options become very narrow. They struggle to gain admission to universities or secure good, stable jobs, so they often end up in low-paying, informal work with little job security. This is not just a theory; it is the painful reality for most of our youth, and it traps families in poverty that continues from one generation to the next. The wage penalty they face for having an under-resourced education is something they will carry for their entire lives.

Now, that former student is a parent struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford to live in a neighbourhood with a well-resourced school, so their child ends up in a similar under-resourced classroom. They might be working long hours and lack their own strong education needed to help with homework. The cycle repeats: poor schooling leads to poor job prospects, which in turn lead to a stressful home environment with less support for learning. I have spoken to parents who feel this pain. They sincerely want a better future for their children but feel powerless to provide the academic help they never received. In this way, the problem of one generation's poor education becomes a complicated trap for the next generation to escape.

The damage goes beyond their individual struggles; it weakens our entire community. The disengaged and demoralised learners in school often become adults who are disconnected from civic life and less likely to participate in activities that can strengthen our community. At the

same time, local employers say they cannot find people with the right skills, which means fewer businesses want to invest here, and our local economy suffers. We end up with a society marked by profound inequality, where only a few succeed, and public systems are left to deal with the consequences of higher unemployment and greater social support needs.

From a consequentialist standpoint, the long-term consequences of stunted social mobility, persistent unemployment, and intergenerational disadvantage represent a profound moral failure, resulting in a considerable decrease in overall well-being. The negative outcome extends beyond education, affecting health, economic stability, and democratic engagement, thereby compounding the initial harm. Consequentialist theory deems these outcomes unjustifiable, as they produce far more suffering than any potential benefit from resource deprivation could justify. The systemic nature of the problem means that the negative consequences are not isolated but amplify over time, making the overall impact even more severe. The theory thus underscores that allowing such conditions to persist is ethically indefensible, as it prioritises short-term neglect over the long-term flourishing of individuals and society.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has analysed the ethical implications of educational resource scarcity through a consequentialist lens. It demonstrated how a lack of materials, infrastructure, and support in under-resourced communities demotivates students and disengages them from learning. Concurrently, it reduces teacher effectiveness and morale, crippling the entire educational process. These factors combined to produce poor academic outcomes and severe social and psychological impacts on learners. The deprivation was framed as a violation of multiple human rights, including the rights to education, information, and a safe environment. Furthermore, the analysis highlighted how this systemic neglect fosters discrimination and undermines transparency within the educational system.

The consequences are not confined to the classroom but extend across the entire life course, trapping individuals in cycles of poverty and limited opportunity. Critically, these adverse outcomes are intergenerational, perpetuating and deepening social inequality. From a consequentialist standpoint, this situation is ethically indefensible, as the scale and persistence of the resulting harm overwhelmingly outweigh any possible justification. The chapter concludes that the systemic failure to provide equitable resources constitutes a moral failure that results in the most significant harm to the most vulnerable. The next chapter, Chapter 6,

will summarise these key findings, present a concluding synthesis of the argument, and offer actionable recommendations to address these ethical failures and mitigate the harmful consequences identified.

Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the research study. The study focused on analysing the ethical problems that arise when learners at a rural high school in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, lack access to sufficient educational resources. This final chapter will do three main things. First, it will provide a summary of the entire study. Second, the chapter will present the study's main conclusions based on this summary. These conclusions will directly address the research questions and explain the overall ethical implications of resource scarcity for learners. Finally, the chapter will offer practical recommendations. These suggestions are aimed at various groups, including schools, the government, and the community, to address the ethical issues and improve the situation for learners in under-resourced communities, such as Motherwell.

6.1 SUMMARY

Chapter one introduces the core problem of the severe lack of educational resources in rural high schools in Motherwell, Eastern Cape, as an active injustice and an ethical failure. The chapter outlines the study's background, where the author's personal motivation as a teacher, having witnessed these challenges, serves as the key research question regarding the ethical implications of resource scarcity, along with sub-questions, objectives, and methodology. The methodology employs an autoethnographic approach, in which the researcher draws on their professional experience to contextualise a systematic review of the existing literature.

Chapter 2 presents a critical summary of the literature review, providing a comprehensive thematic review of existing scholarly work on educational inequality. It defines key terms, such as under-resourced communities and educational resources, detailing their nature in places like Motherwell. It explores the historical reasons for this under-resourcing. The review establishes the' critical role of resources in education quality, reducing dropout rates, and supporting teachers. It then details the causes and devastating effects of inadequate resources on pupils, including poor academic performance and limited future opportunities. The chapter also reviews the South African government's responses and critiques their ineffective

implementation. Finally, it identifies a significant gap in the literature: the neglect of teacher support and well-being in under-resourced schools.

Chapter three develops consequentialism as the guiding ethical theory of this study, defining it through key thinkers such as Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick, and contemporary contributors like Pettit, Driver, Railton, Kagan, and Parfit. It argues that moral evaluation should be based on outcomes, particularly overall well-being. It presents arguments for consequentialism, maximising well-being, aligning with common-sense moral reasoning, contextual flexibility, conflict resolution in policy trade-offs, and a reform-minded focus on societal impact, while acknowledging major critiques, including excessive demandingness, the potential to override rights and justice, epistemic uncertainty in predicting and measuring outcomes, and aggregation problems. The chapter explains how consequentialism will guide the study by assessing fairness in resource allocation, prioritising long-term harms, emphasising measurable indicators and attending to unintended consequences.

The methodology of this research is based on using desktop research and autoethnography to investigate teaching experiences in schools with limited resources. Autoethnography offers genuine insider perspectives on everyday classroom reality. The methodical ethical examination of resource scarcity and its consequences is guided by the DECA (Describe, Evaluate, Consult, Act) approach. This paradigm turns the study into a critical analysis of constitutional rights abuses and educational fairness, going beyond simple description. DECA's consult phase embraces the Ubuntu ideology through stakeholder interaction with students, educators, and community members. The act phase pledges to mobilise the community and engage in concrete advocacy for fair resource distribution.

Chapter four analyses the ethical implications of the lack of educational resources for learners in under-resourced communities through consequentialist reasoning, focusing on the case study of Rural High School in the township of Motherwell, Eastern Cape. This chapter applies consequentialist theory to demonstrate how scarcity diminishes equal opportunity, depresses motivation and engagement, and degrades teaching quality, ultimately producing long-term harms in learning outcomes, career prospects, and community well-being. It details mechanisms of harm where textbook and technology are limited, overcrowding, language barriers, and infrastructure that erode self-efficacy, normalise disengagement, and propagate a layered loss of skills over time. The analysis frames these harms as violations of intertwined rights to education, information, safety, participation, non-discrimination, physical and

economic accessibility, and life and development, demonstrating how deficits in libraries, laboratories, assistive devices, transparent systems, and extracurricular opportunities generate a cascading set of disadvantages. Teacher testimony illustrates how coping can replace teaching and creativity, further undermining learner outcomes. The chapter concludes that poor material transparency and digital exclusion exacerbate distrust and inequity, and that high dropout rates are a symptom of deep-seated structural deprivation. The chapter argues that the aggregate adverse outcomes for the most significant number render current conditions ethically indefensible.

Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the research study. This chapter consolidates findings from the literature and an ethical analysis to demonstrate how scarcity affects academic performance, psychosocial health, teacher effectiveness, and long-term life chances, thereby perpetuating intergenerational poverty and social stratification. The chapter concludes by offering actionable recommendations to address ethical failures and mitigate harms aligned with outcome-focused justice through targeted resource allocation. It provides a way forward for future research purposes.

6.2 CONCLUSION

A clear conclusion emerges based on the comprehensive analysis presented in this study. This study examined the ethical implications of inadequate educational resources in under-resourced communities, centring the lived realities of learners and teachers in a rural high school in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. The lack of educational resources in under-resourced communities, such as Motherwell, is not merely an administrative or budgetary issue; it is a severe ethical failure with devastating consequences. The situation is morally indefensible from a consequentialist perspective, which evaluates actions by their outcomes. The evidence from this research demonstrates that resource scarcity leads directly to harm, as students become demotivated and disengaged, teachers are less effective and demoralised, and academic performance deteriorates. This deprivation violates fundamental human rights, including the right to a quality education, access to information, and a safe learning environment. Furthermore, it fosters discrimination, undermines transparency, and perpetuates a cycle of inequality that is both profound and intergenerational.

The ethical implications extend beyond the affected learners' classroom walls and school years. The consequences are lifelong and societal. Students deprived of a proper education face limited career prospects, lower lifetime earnings, and poorer health outcomes. This personal

disadvantage aggregates into a collective harm for their communities and the nation, resulting in a less skilled workforce, reduced economic productivity, and weaker civic engagement. The cycle is self-perpetuating, as children of undereducated parents are themselves more likely to attend under-resourced schools, ensuring that inequality is passed down through generations. This analysis, grounded in the real-world experiences of a Rural High School in Motherwell, reveals that the failure to provide equitable educational resources is an active injustice. It systematically denies pupils their right to equal opportunity and traps them in a pre-determined cycle of disadvantage, fundamentally breaching principles of social justice.

Therefore, this study concludes that addressing the resource gap in schools like those in Motherwell is an urgent ethical imperative. It is a necessary step toward fulfilling the constitutional promise of equal education for all South African youth. The harmful outcomes, including psychological distress, shattered aspirations, and entrenched social injustice, demand immediate and meaningful intervention.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines practical, ethically grounded recommendations to address the resource deprivations affecting rural high schools in Motherwell, Eastern Cape. Guided by the consequentialist lens developed earlier, the focus is on high-impact, feasible actions that minimise harm and maximise learner well-being and outcomes. The recommendations concentrate on immediate classroom-level interventions, teacher support, development, and morale, core learning resources and infrastructure, digital access and literacy; inclusive education and learner well-being, parents and community role, the role of libraries in enhancing learning, inclusive education for learners with disabilities, the role of sports and recreational resources and policy and system-level reforms. Each area presents a coherent set of actions, along with the rationale for their selection, the key actors, and the indicators necessary to monitor progress over realistic timelines.

6.3.1 Classroom-level interventions

Immediate classroom-level actions are crucial to prevent daily learning losses while larger school changes are being planned. Evans (2022:8) highlights that poor and rural schools lost more learning time, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools should use fair ways to share books and materials, such as class sets, rotating homework packs, and a learner materials monitor. This helps all learners use the same resources without wasting teaching time. Teachers can creatively utilise what they already have, work closely with parents and the

community, and incorporate social and emotional learning into their lessons. Teachers can use simple, proven methods even when resources are scarce, such as short review activities, asking recall questions, and using laminated sheets as mini whiteboards to make lessons more engaging. According to Carbonari (2024:12), small-group lessons and extra study time after school also help learners catch up. Low-cost visuals, such as charts, concept maps, and word walls, as well as homemade tools like number lines or cardboard fraction kits, make learning easier to understand. Peer tutoring and small study circles run by learners with teacher help can support weaker students. Teachers can measure success by checking whether lesson starts are quicker, whether learners stay focused, and whether short-term test results improve.

6.3.2 Teacher Support, Development, and Morale

Strengthening teacher support, development, and morale is pivotal for sustained improvements in learning. Weekly professional learning communities (PLCs) should be instituted to focus on lesson study, micro-teaching, and co-development of materials, rotating facilitation to build collective efficacy. Continuous professional development must be short, practice-oriented, and tailored to multilingual, low-resource classrooms, with emphasis on bilingual scaffolding, translanguaging strategies, formative assessment without devices, and large-class management. Mentorship schemes that pair novice teachers with experienced peers, complemented by monthly instructional coaching cycles, can enhance planning, delivery, and feedback. Schools should guarantee at least one weekly planning period to protect teacher well-being, streamline administrative tasks with simple shared templates, and establish peer-support groups. Monitoring can include PLC attendance, classroom observation rubrics, teacher self-efficacy surveys, and retention data.

6.3.3 Core Learning Resources and Infrastructure

Ensuring core learning resources and infrastructure address the most visible rights violations and directly improve learning conditions. A textbook sufficiency plan should aim for a 1:1 ratio in core subjects through audited stocktakes, enrolment-aligned orders with a small buffer, and simple barcode-based tracking to reduce losses. Classroom decongestion can be achieved through the use of temporary prefabricated classrooms when class sizes exceed 40, more efficient timetabling to stagger crowding, and advocacy for prioritisation under safe conditions. Water, sanitation, and safety standards must be guaranteed by repairing toilets, installing handwashing stations, fixing roofs and windows, ensuring basic lighting and secure doors, and conducting regular emergency drills with first-aid capacity. Phased investments in starter science kits and mobile library trolleys should be paired with a small, centralised consumables

budget to restore practical learning. Indicators include the student-to-textbook ratio, average class size, functional toilet-to-learner ratios, incident reports, and the number of practical sessions completed.

6.3.4 Digital Access and Literacy

Closing the digital access gap requires an offline-first approach while connectivity is stabilised. Schools should deploy local servers or preloaded devices with CAPS-aligned open educational resources, including Siyavula, Khan Academy Lite, DBE materials, and Wikipedia ZIM, and support them with an ICT champion teacher. Existing computer labs should be rehabilitated to a minimal functioning standard, scheduled for equitable access, and utilised to deliver basic ICT modules (such as typing, file management, and safe internet use) across all grades. Monitoring should track device uptime, usage logs, the integration of digital resources into lesson plans, and periodic checks of learner digital skills.

Digital access and literacy can transform under-resourced schools using free or low-cost digital tools to bridge resource gaps. Zancanaro (2023:56) highlighted that providing students with internet connectivity and devices unlocks a vast repository of Open Educational Resources (OERs), which are high-quality, adaptable textbooks and lesson plans that eliminate the need for proprietary materials. Digital literacy skills empower students to evaluate online information critically, fostering independent learning and research capabilities that compensate for the limitations of physical libraries. Furthermore, access to educational apps and online platforms enables personalised learning, allowing students to progress at their own pace and access remedial or advanced content as needed.

Tour (2020:67) states that cloud-based collaboration tools can connect classrooms with global knowledge networks and virtual mentors, effectively expanding the school's boundaries. Teacher professional development in digital pedagogy is vital, enabling educators to curate and effectively integrate these free digital resources into their curriculum, thereby enhancing the overall quality of instruction. Ultimately, a strategic focus on building access and literacy creates a sustainable and scalable ecosystem where students are no longer passive recipients of scarce resources but active participants in a global digital learning community.

6.3.5 Inclusive Education and Learner Well-being

To promote inclusive education and learner well-being, schools should implement accessibility upgrades, such as ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, strategic seating, and low-cost assistive tools, including visualisers, fundamental amplification, and large-print materials. Partnerships

with social workers, psychologists, and NGOs can establish weekly on-site psychosocial clinics to create clear referral pathways for abuse and substance use. The National School Nutrition Programme should be stabilised and, where possible, expanded to include breakfast. Schools should also provide sanitary and hygiene packs to reduce absenteeism. Multilingual support includes bilingual glossaries, vocabulary booklets, and code-switching guides. Progress can be gauged through completion of individual education plans, attendance and retention trends, measured reading fluency gains, and uptake of counselling services.

6.3.6 The Parents and Community's Role

Parents and communities in under-resourced areas play a crucial role in supporting learners despite limited educational resources. Parents often volunteer at schools, assisting with basic tasks like cleaning or monitoring classrooms. Secondly, community members sometimes donate old textbooks or stationery to help bridge resource gaps. Thirdly, parents form support groups to encourage learners and discuss the challenges they face. Fourthly, some communities organise extra lessons with retired teachers or educated volunteers. According to Spaull (2020:89), some parents advocate for better resources by engaging with local government, such as councillors. Despite scarce resources, these efforts demonstrate how families and communities collaborate to enhance learning conditions.

Parental involvement is a vital resource that contributes to the quality of education. Students whose parents support their education perform better academically. Parents who provide learning materials, supervise homework, and attend school meetings tend to boost their children's academic performance—schools with active parental participation often record higher student attendance and lower discipline rates. Okoro (2022:64) states that a lack of parental support leads to poor motivation and dropout rates among students. Governments and schools should encourage parents to participate actively in their children's education. When parents and teachers work together, students receive better guidance and encouragement. This relationship demonstrates that parental support is a crucial resource for quality education.

The Motherwell community can help schools by organising fundraisers and donating learning materials. Studies show that communities in rural areas often fill gaps left by the government through local initiatives. For example, churches and businesses can sponsor stationery, books, or even computers for learners. Nkosi (2023:78) suggests that pupils perform better when communities take ownership of education despite resource shortages. Community members can also repair broken desks or classrooms to create a better learning environment.

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in Motherwell play a pivotal role in addressing resource shortages through organised advocacy and fundraising. Schools with active PTAs are more successful in securing additional learning materials and infrastructure improvements. Khoza and Ndlovu (2022:54) stated that PTAs organise regular meetings to identify urgent needs such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, or classroom repairs. A compelling example of PTA success comes from Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, where a revitalised PTA transformed learning conditions through strategic partnerships—facing similar resource challenges to Motherwell, the PTA at Arthur Mfebe Senior Secondary partnered with the Department of Basic Education's Nutrition Programme to establish a sustainable school feeding scheme. Beyond addressing hunger, the PTA negotiated with local farmers to supply fresh produce, creating a dual benefit of supporting agriculture while improving learner nutrition. The association then channelled savings from the feeding program into infrastructure projects, using parents' volunteer labour to renovate classrooms and build a library.

Within three years, this multifaceted approach could reduce absenteeism by 40% and improve matric pass rates by 15 percentage points. Improving school conditions can reduce dropout rates. Governments must address this issue to keep children in school. Scholarships and mentorship programs could help. Without support, rural pupils continue to face disadvantages. Hoadley (2023:60) recommends counselling services in rural schools. Addressing these emotional challenges is key to improving learning outcomes. Governments must provide computers and internet access to rural schools. Without these skills, pupils cannot compete in the modern economy. Investing in technology is crucial for closing the education gap.

6.3.7 The Role of Libraries in Enhancing Learning

Libraries are another critical resource that supports learning in schools. A well-stocked library encourages reading and independent learning among students. According to Moloi (2020:24), schools with functional libraries perform better in literacy and comprehension tests. In under-resourced schools, the lack of libraries limits students' access to books and other reading materials. This affects their language skills and overall academic performance. Libraries also provide a quiet study space essential for concentration and knowledge retention. Policymakers should ensure that every school, including those in rural areas, has a library with relevant and up-to-date books and materials.

Lance and Kachel (2021:12) highlighted that school libraries staffed by qualified professionals play a crucial role in mitigating educational resource gaps by providing equitable access to a

diverse collection of physical and digital materials, ranging from textbooks to e-books and online databases, thereby ensuring that all students have the necessary tools for learning. They serve as dynamic learning hubs where students can develop essential digital and information literacy skills, which are crucial for navigating the modern world, particularly in contexts where these skills cannot be acquired at home. Furthermore, school libraries support independent inquiry and project-based learning, enabling students to explore curricula in depth without being constrained by limited classroom resources.

To maximise their impact in resource-scarce schools, recommendations include strategically leveraging libraries to provide one-to-one device access through laptop and tablet lending programs; extending library hours to create safe, accessible after-school study spaces; and implementing targeted information literacy workshops integrated with the curriculum to improve research capabilities. Krashen (2020:25) also contended that libraries can foster crucial reading engagement through dedicated read-aloud sessions and book clubs, a foundational strategy for improving literacy outcomes when other resources are limited. Ultimately, by positioning the library as the school's primary resource and digital equity centre, these schools can directly counteract the disadvantages under-resourced schools face and democratize access to quality education.

6.3.8 Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

Sharma and Sokal (2023:45) define inclusive education for learners with disabilities as a fundamental human right and a pedagogical approach that ensures all students, regardless of their abilities, are provided with meaningful learning opportunities within a general education environment. This philosophy extends beyond physical placement to champion universal design for learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies, thereby fostering full participation and inclusion.

Educational resources play a crucial role in promoting inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Students with special needs require assistive devices, braille books, and trained teachers to support their learning. Florian and Spratt (2021:118) argued that education leads to improved academic outcomes, enhanced social skills, and greater post-school success for learners with disabilities, while also benefiting their peers through the development of empathy and a more accurate reflection of societal diversity.

In many rural schools, these resources are unavailable, making it difficult for disabled learners to access education. Systemic barriers such as inadequate funding, attitudinal resistance, and

inflexible curricula must be addressed through strong policy frameworks and leadership commitment to realise the transformative potential of truly inclusive schools. Without proper resources, these learners are excluded from the education system, limiting their future opportunities. Governments must ensure that all schools have the facilities to accommodate learners with disabilities.

6.3.9 The Role of Sports and Recreational Resources

Smith (2022:150) defines sports and recreational resources as fundamental public health infrastructure that significantly contribute to physical and mental well-being by providing accessible opportunities for exercise and social interaction, thereby reducing risks of chronic diseases and alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression. They foster social cohesion and community identity by creating inclusive spaces for diverse populations to connect, which is vital for building resilient social networks.

Chen (2021:88) stated that sports and recreational resources provide a critical developmental arena far beyond physical activity, serving as a proactive intervention for holistic growth. Through organised activities, adolescents learn essential life skills, such as goal-setting, time management, and resilience, as they navigate both victory and defeat. Furthermore, the structured rules and consistent practice required in these settings instil a sense of personal responsibility. These resources act as a protective factor, providing constructive supervision and positive peer associations during critical after-school hours, significantly contributing to lower rates of juvenile delinquency, substance use, and anti-social behaviour. These programs offer a vital pathway for channelling youthful energy productively, fostering prosocial identities, and building the foundational character assets necessary for long-term success. The collaborative nature of team-based environments inherently teaches cooperation and communication skills, which are directly transferable to the classroom and future workplace settings.

Sports and recreational resources play a significant role in student development. Many rural schools lack adequate sports equipment and well-maintained playgrounds, denying students these essential benefits. Burnett (2022:40) states that schools with sports facilities have lower absenteeism rates and better student morale. Extracurricular activities also help identify and nurture talent among learners. Without these resources, students miss opportunities to develop physical and social skills. Schools should be equipped with sports facilities to promote holistic development. The government and the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape province

should encourage the development of sports and recreational facilities in schools, as these resources help learners grow and reach their full potential.

6.3.10 Policy and System-level Reforms

An implementation roadmap can phase actions sensibly to put all the above recommendations into action. Schools should prioritise classroom routines, PLCs, psychosocial clinics, transparency dashboards, and strengthening nutrition programmes in the first three months. Over a period of three to nine months, efforts should focus on prefabricated buildings and washroom repairs, offline OER deployment, lab rehabilitation, and basic accessibility upgrades. Capital projects, funding formula adjustments, procurement reforms, and teacher pipeline initiatives should be advanced between nine and twenty-four months. A results framework should be published quarterly, tracking access indicators such as textbook ratios, devices per learner, functional toilets, quality formative assessment gains, maths and science pass rates, reading fluency, equity in attendance and participation by subgroup, disciplinary referrals, SRC involvement, and well-being, including counselling uptake and safety incidents. These recommendations aim to produce the most outstanding educational and social benefits for learners. By coupling immediate classroom improvements with medium-term infrastructure fixes and longer-term policy reforms, schools in Motherwell can reduce harm, restore dignity, and measurably improve learning and life outcomes, meeting the ethical demand to prioritise actions with the best consequences for children and their communities.

The recommendations outlined above provide a multifaceted roadmap for addressing the ethical crisis of resource scarcity in schools like Rural High School in Motherwell. They are grounded in the consequentialist imperative to change a system that causes widespread, intergenerational harm. Implementing these policies and practices would shift the trajectory from neglect and disadvantage to equity, justice, and opportunity. By guaranteeing basic resources, supporting educators, and empowering communities, South Africa can begin to fulfil its constitutional and ethical promise of a quality education for every child, ensuring that their potential, not their postcode, determines their future.

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