

**THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN BUILDING DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY KENYA****<sup>1</sup> Waweru Milka Mukami, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Nteere Kennedy Kirima -Phd**<sup>1</sup> Masters Degree in Human Resource Management of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite popular belief, diversity does not always lead to inclusion. To adapt and thrive in today's dynamic business environment, a wide range of skills and competencies are essential. In Kenya, the need for effective diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives is pressing. These gaps in D&I practices and the underrepresentation of women and persons with disabilities in Machakos County inform the current study, which aims to assess the role of HRM in building diverse and inclusive organizations in the region. The general objective of this study was to assess the role of human resources in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. The study specifically sought to establish the influence of inclusion training strategy in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County and to explore the influence of diversity needs assessment strategy in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. This study was guided by Human Capital Theory, and Expectancy Theory. The study used descriptive research design. In this research study, study targeted 464 employees of the Machakos County Government who are employed at the county's central administrative office. The study's sample size of 198 was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula (Russell, 2017). Stratified random sampling is the technique that was applied in selecting the sample for this study. The study then used simple random sampling in selecting a sample from each stratum. Data was collected using a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire. A drop and pick later method was used in administering the questionnaire. For this study, 20 respondents were used in the pilot study, representing 10% of study sample. The pilot group was selected randomly from the study population and was excluded from the final study. Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis to be used was multiple regression and correlation analysis. The significant of each independent variable was tested at a confidence level of 95%. The findings of data analysis was presented using tables and figures. The study findings revealed significant positive effects of inclusion training ( $B = 0.310$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and diversity needs assessment ( $B = 0.328$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) on organizational diversity and inclusion, with the diversity needs assessment having the most substantial impact. The study concluded that these HR strategies are critical in fostering inclusivity, and systematic assessments being particularly influential. Recommendations include providing continuous inclusion training support, and establishing clear processes for addressing diversity assessment findings to further improve inclusivity in the workplace.

**Key Words:** Human Resource Management, Diverse and Inclusive Organizations, Inclusion Training, Diversity Needs Assessment

## **Background of the Study**

In today's globalized business environment, the imperative for diversity and inclusion within organizations is more pronounced than ever. Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a pivotal role in not only recognizing the necessity of diverse and inclusive workplaces but also in implementing strategies that bring these concepts to life (SHRM, 2020). The integration of diverse perspectives within an organization can drive innovation, improve decision-making, and enhance overall organizational performance. However, achieving true diversity and inclusion requires a dedicated and strategic approach from HR professionals (Smith, 2021).

Diversity and inclusion are societal issues that manifest in a wide variety of settings, and they are global, everyday concerns. For instance, the resurgence of interest in diversity and inclusion following George Floyd's death exemplifies how these themes resonate with many individuals, prompting reflections on how such events occur and what steps can be taken to prevent them in the future (Roberson, 2020). Globalization has further emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion, and organizations address these issues in various ways (Schmidt, 2021). Efforts to promote diversity and inclusion are not limited to organizations alone; global labor groups like the European Union (EU) and the United Nations advocate for diversity and inclusion both theoretically and practically within workplaces (Syed & Özbilgin, 2015). Additionally, the United Nations has set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to decrease inequalities and achieve gender equality, emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion (United Nations, sd).

An increasing number of businesses have established dedicated divisions to oversee and advance diversity and inclusion initiatives, recognizing the importance of legislative frameworks in shaping policies (Schmidt, 2021). Vinkenburg et al. (2021) suggest that heightened awareness of potential prejudices can greatly benefit diversity and inclusion initiatives. Their study identifies sources of prejudice and individuals most affected by biases, offering insights into addressing biases in job interviews and application processes. Furthermore, research from Asia highlights the strategic advantages modern managers gain from embracing diversity in the workplace, emphasizing the unique challenges and opportunities diversity presents in different cultural contexts (Huong et al., 2020).

However, challenges to promoting diversity and inclusion persist in various regions. In Nigeria, a lack of comprehensive legislative frameworks hinders organizations' ability to fully promote diversity within their workforce (Abdulai, 2020). Covert discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and regional affiliation exists in Ghana's public sector, highlighting the importance of policies to address biases and discrimination (Abdulai, 2020). Similar challenges are observed in Tanzania's industrial sector, where constraints limit the effectiveness of labor diversity despite its potential benefits (Samwel, 2020).

In response to such challenges, legal mechanisms are being implemented in various countries to promote diversity and inclusion. The Kenyan Constitution, for example, includes affirmative action programs to support underrepresented groups and outlines a constitutional framework for addressing discrimination (Nyakoi, 2020). Such efforts aim to ensure adequate representation, equal employment opportunities, and special benefits for marginalized groups, aligning with the broader goals of promoting national unity and integration. Overall, the pursuit of diversity and inclusion involves multifaceted efforts across organizations, global institutions, and legislative frameworks to address biases, promote equity, and foster inclusive environments for all individuals.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite popular belief, diversity does not always lead to inclusion. To adapt and thrive in today's dynamic business environment, a wide range of skills and competencies are essential. Constant reevaluation, changes, and the application of new technology are required to maintain the company's present and future viability and to avoid issues such as employee dissatisfaction

and turnover. Proactive measures and moments of self-awareness are essential to achieving diversity and inclusion's stated aim of making the workplace a more welcoming and inclusive place for all employees. Businesses should prioritize a sense of justice to foster a more varied and inclusive workplace (Roberson, 2020).

In Kenya, the need for effective diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives is pressing. A study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019) revealed that only 35% of formal sector employees in Kenya are women, indicating a significant gender gap. Moreover, a report by the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) (2020) found that 45% of employees in Kenya feel that their workplaces do not adequately support diversity and inclusion efforts. This data suggests that there are substantial opportunities for improvement in creating more inclusive workplaces in Kenya. Specifically, in Machakos County, the Machakos County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018-2022 indicates that only 40% of formal employment positions in the county are held by women, highlighting a gender disparity. Furthermore, only 15% of leadership roles are occupied by women, and persons with disabilities constitute less than 2% of the workforce, demonstrating a significant gap in the inclusion of these groups.

Empirical studies underscore the importance of diversity and inclusion. For example, Mwangi (2022) found that leading companies in Kenya, such as Safaricom and Equity Bank, which have established D&I policies and initiatives like diversity training programs, mentorship schemes, and employee resource groups, report higher employee engagement and reduced turnover rates. However, these initiatives are not uniformly applied across all organizations, particularly in regions like Machakos. Kamau (2021) highlights that many Kenyan companies still struggle with implementing effective D&I practices due to cultural attitudes and biases. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Kenya's guidelines on gender equality in financial institutions have led to programs like Equity Bank's Wings to Fly initiative, which provides scholarships and mentorship to high-achieving but disadvantaged students, many of whom are girls from marginalized communities (Central Bank of Kenya, 2020). These gaps in D&I practices and the underrepresentation of women and persons with disabilities in Machakos County inform the current study, which aims to assess the role of HRM in building diverse and inclusive organizations in the region.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to assess the role of human resources in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County.

The study specifically sought to;

- i. To establish the influence of inclusion training strategy in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County.
- ii. To explore the influence of diversity needs assessment strategy in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Human Capital Theory**

Human Capital Theory, introduced by economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz in the 1960s, posits that investments in individuals' education, skills, and abilities enhance their productivity and economic value. This theory underscores the importance of training and development as critical components of human capital investment. Effective training programs increase employees' skills, competencies, and knowledge, leading to higher productivity, innovation, and job satisfaction. Becker's seminal work highlights the importance of education and continuous skill development in driving economic growth and productivity, emphasizing that investments in human capital yield substantial returns for both individuals and

organizations (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). This perspective aligns with organizational strategies that prioritize training and development to maintain a competitive edge.

A critique of Human Capital Theory is that it often focuses primarily on economic returns, potentially neglecting the social and personal aspects of employee development. For instance, the theory might overlook the importance of creating supportive and inclusive environments that nurture employees' well-being. Additionally, it may not fully address structural inequalities that impact access to education and training opportunities, which can perpetuate disparities in the workplace. Spence (1973) argued that while Human Capital Theory emphasizes the importance of education and skills, it may not account for the signaling effects of education. He suggested that education can serve as a signal of an individual's capabilities to employers, rather than merely enhancing productivity. This perspective adds complexity to the theory, highlighting the multifaceted role of education in labor markets.

In the present study, Human Capital Theory was used to establish the influence of inclusion training strategy on building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. By applying this theory, the study evaluated how training programs can enhance employees' skills and foster a more inclusive workplace culture. This involves examining the effectiveness of training initiatives in promoting diversity awareness and competencies, thereby contributing to a more inclusive organizational environment.

### **Expectancy Theory**

Expectancy Theory, developed by Victor Vroom in 1964, posits that individuals are motivated to act based on their expectations that their actions lead to desired outcomes. This theory emphasizes the alignment of individual expectations with organizational goals to enhance motivation and commitment. According to Expectancy Theory, motivation is influenced by three factors: expectancy (belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance leads to rewards), and valence (value of the rewards to the individual). Expectancy Theory supports diversity needs assessment strategies by identifying gaps where diverse groups may feel underrepresented or unsupported. By understanding these gaps, organizations can create environments where employees believe their efforts towards promoting diversity were recognized and rewarded, thereby enhancing their motivation and commitment to these initiatives.

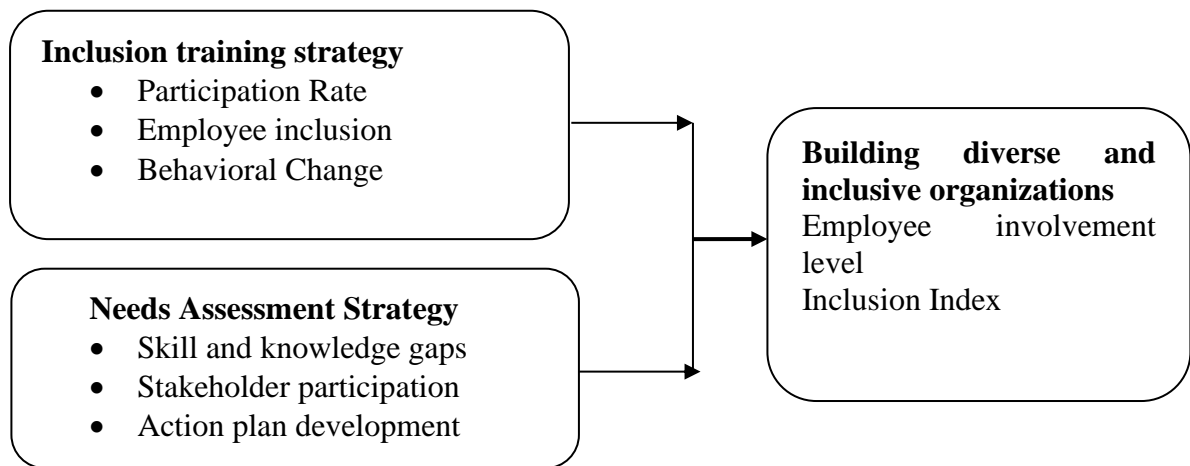
Critics of Expectancy Theory argue that it may not fully capture the intrinsic motivations that drive individuals' behaviors. For example, some employees might be motivated by factors such as personal growth or ethical considerations, which are not fully addressed by the theory. Additionally, the theory's focus on rational decision-making processes might overlook the emotional and psychological factors influencing employee motivation. Porter and Lawler (1968) expanded on Vroom's work, suggesting that job satisfaction and performance are also influenced by the perceived equity of the rewards. They emphasized the importance of fair reward systems in enhancing motivation. Additionally, Adams (1965) introduced Equity Theory, which complements Expectancy Theory by highlighting the role of perceived fairness in motivation. Equity Theory suggests that employees are motivated by a sense of fairness in the distribution of rewards and resources.

In the current study, Expectancy Theory was applied to explore the influence of diversity needs assessment strategy on building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. By using this theory, the study assessed how aligning employees' expectations with organizational D&I goals can enhance their engagement and commitment to these initiatives. This involves evaluating how well organizations understand and address the diverse needs of their employees, ensuring that all individuals feel valued and included.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual framework is a scheme of variables which the study operationalizes in order to achieve the set objectives. A variable being the measurable characteristic that assumes different

values among the subjects, independent variables are the ones that the study manipulates in order to determine their effects on another variable. The dependent variable attempts to indicate the total influence arising from the effects of the independent variables. It therefore varies as a function of the independent variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The proposed study's conceptual framework is shown in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

### **Inclusion Training Strategy**

Inclusion training involves educating employees about the importance of diversity and providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to create an inclusive workplace. This training is critical for fostering a culture of respect and collaboration. Research by Kalinoski et al. (2019) demonstrates that inclusion training can effectively reduce bias and increase awareness of diversity issues. Their meta-analysis found that well-designed training programs lead to significant improvements in participants' attitudes towards diversity and their ability to engage in inclusive behaviors.

There are various types of inclusion training, including workshops, e-learning modules, and experiential learning activities. Shore et al. (2018) suggests that interactive and experiential training methods, such as role-playing and simulations, are particularly effective in promoting empathy and understanding among employees. These methods allow participants to experience different perspectives and practice inclusive behaviors in a safe environment. Despite its benefits, inclusion training can face challenges such as resistance from employees and the potential for backlash. Dobbin and Kalev (2020) argue that mandatory training programs can sometimes lead to defensiveness and resistance. They recommend voluntary and continuous training approaches that are integrated into the broader organizational culture to mitigate these issues.

In this study, the inclusion training strategy was evaluated to understand its role in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. By examining the types and effectiveness of inclusion training programs, the study aims to identify best practices for fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

### **Diversity Needs Assessment Strategy**

A diversity needs assessment involves evaluating an organization's current diversity and inclusion practices to identify areas for improvement. This assessment helps organizations develop targeted strategies to address specific diversity challenges. A study by Roberson et al. (2019) highlights the importance of conducting a thorough diversity needs assessment to inform strategic planning. Their research found that organizations that regularly assess their diversity practices are better able to identify gaps and implement effective interventions. This proactive approach ensures that diversity and inclusion initiatives are aligned with the organization's goals and needs.

Various methods can be used to conduct a diversity needs assessment, including surveys, focus groups, and diversity audits. Williams and Mihaylo (2019) suggest that combining quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of the organization's diversity climate. Surveys can capture broad trends, while focus groups and interviews offer deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions. Conducting a diversity needs assessment can be challenging due to issues such as data privacy and employee reluctance to share personal information. Nishii et al. (2020) recommends ensuring confidentiality and creating a safe environment for employees to provide honest feedback. Additionally, organizations should be transparent about how the data was used and the steps they took to address identified issues.

In this study, the diversity needs assessment strategy was explored to determine its impact on building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County. By analyzing the effectiveness of different assessment methods, the study aims to provide recommendations for conducting comprehensive diversity needs assessments.

### **Building Diverse and Inclusive Organizations**

Building diverse and inclusive organizations is a multifaceted process that involves deliberate efforts to create a workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential. Creating a diverse and inclusive organization begins with strategic planning and a commitment from the top leadership. Leaders must articulate a clear vision and set measurable goals for diversity and inclusion (D&I). Research indicates that organizations with explicit D&I strategies are more successful in achieving their diversity goals. According to a study by Bourke and Dillon (2019), companies with strong leadership commitment to D&I are eight times more likely to achieve better business outcomes. This commitment involves allocating resources, setting benchmarks, and holding leaders accountable for progress.

Continuous education and training are essential for promoting inclusivity. Bias awareness training, cultural competency training, and inclusive leadership training are effective methods for raising awareness and equipping employees with the skills needed to foster an inclusive environment. Devine et al. (2017) found that bias awareness training leads to significant reductions in implicit biases and more inclusive behaviors. Implementing inclusive policies and practices is critical for sustaining diversity and inclusion efforts. This includes equitable performance evaluations, promotion practices, flexible work arrangements, and supportive employee resource groups (ERGs). ERGs provide a platform for underrepresented groups to connect, share experiences, and support each other. According to a report by Catalyst (2020), organizations with active ERGs see improved employee engagement and retention rates.

Regularly measuring and monitoring progress towards diversity and inclusion goals is essential for accountability and continuous improvement. Organizations can conduct diversity audits, analyze workforce demographics, and collect employee feedback through surveys and focus groups. Nishii et al. (2018) emphasized that employee surveys effectively identify areas where employees feel excluded or underrepresented, allowing organizations to address these issues proactively. Research has shown that diverse and inclusive organizations benefit from increased innovation, better decision-making, and improved financial performance. A McKinsey report (2020) found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to experience above-average profitability. Furthermore, diverse teams bring a wider range of perspectives and ideas, which can lead to more creative solutions and a stronger competitive edge.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Inclusion Training Strategy in Building Diverse and Inclusive Organizations**

Lewis (2020) conducted a study titled effectiveness of inclusion training in enhancing workplace diversity in U.K. Firms to evaluate the impact of inclusion training on workplace diversity. Based on Social Learning Theory, the experimental study targeted employees in U.K.

firms with a sample size of 300 employees selected through random sampling. Data was collected using surveys and observation, analyzed through ANOVA. Findings revealed that inclusion training significantly improved awareness and inclusive behaviors, with a 30% increase in reported inclusive practices ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training is effective for enhancing workplace diversity and recommended its widespread implementation.

Adjei (2020) investigated impact of inclusion training on organizational culture in Ghanaian firms to assess the role of inclusion training in shaping organizational culture. Based on Social Cognitive Theory, the descriptive study targeted employees in Accra-based firms with a sample size of 300 employees selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using surveys and interviews, analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings revealed that inclusion training significantly improved organizational culture and inclusivity ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training positively impacts organizational culture and recommended its adoption by firms.

Dlamini (2021) explored inclusion training and employee engagement in South African Companies to investigate the impact of inclusion training on employee engagement. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the mixed methods study targeted employees in Johannesburg with a sample size of 250 participants selected through quota sampling. Data was collected using surveys and focus groups, analyzed using mixed methods analysis. Findings indicated that inclusion training improved employee engagement by 22% ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training enhances engagement and recommended its implementation across companies.

Wanjiru (2021) examined effectiveness of inclusion training programs in Kenyan SMEs to understand the effectiveness of inclusion training programs in SMEs. Based on Transformational Learning Theory, the descriptive survey targeted SME employees in Nairobi with a sample size of 200 employees selected through random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that inclusion training programs increased employees' awareness of diversity issues by 25% ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training is effective for raising diversity awareness and recommended its broader implementation.

Otieno (2022) investigated impact of inclusion training on workplace culture in Kenyan corporations to assess the impact of inclusion training on workplace culture. Based on Social Cognitive Theory, the case study targeted corporate employees in Nairobi with a sample size of 180 employees selected through stratified sampling. Data was collected using interviews and surveys, analyzed through thematic and statistical analysis. Findings revealed that inclusion training significantly improved workplace culture and inclusivity ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training enhances workplace culture and recommended its adoption by corporations.

Mwangi (2021) explored inclusion training and workplace diversity in Kenyan Corporations to examine the effectiveness of inclusion training on workplace diversity. Grounded in Transformational Learning Theory, the cross-sectional survey targeted employees in Nairobi-based corporations with a sample size of 350 employees selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Findings indicated that inclusion training increased employees' awareness of diversity issues by 28% ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that inclusion training enhances diversity awareness and recommended corporations implement such training programs.

### **Diversity Needs Assessment Strategy in Building Diverse and Inclusive Organizations**

Martinez (2019) conducted a study titled diversity needs assessment in U.S. tech companies to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity needs assessments in tech companies. Based on the Resource-Based View, the longitudinal study targeted tech company employees in the U.S. with a sample size of 400 employees selected through random sampling. Data was collected

using surveys and HR data analysis, analyzed through regression analysis. Findings revealed that diversity needs assessments led to a 20% improvement in D&I practices and employee satisfaction ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments are effective and recommended their implementation in tech companies to enhance D&I.

Owusu (2020) explored diversity needs assessment in Ghanaian SMEs to understand the role of diversity needs assessments in SMEs. Grounded in Social Identity Theory, the cross-sectional survey targeted SME employees in Accra with a sample size of 250 employees selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Findings indicated that diversity needs assessments significantly improved workplace inclusivity by 18% ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments enhance inclusivity and recommended their adoption by SMEs.

Ndlovu (2021) investigated impact of diversity needs assessments in South African corporations to assess the effectiveness of diversity needs assessments in promoting inclusivity. Based on Human Capital Theory, the descriptive study targeted corporate employees in Johannesburg with a sample size of 300 employees selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using surveys and interviews, analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings revealed that diversity needs assessments led to a 22% improvement in D&I initiatives ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments are beneficial and recommended their broader implementation in corporations.

Muthoni (2022) conducted diversity needs assessment in Nigerian Banks to investigate the role of diversity needs assessments in Nigerian banks. Utilizing Social Cognitive Theory, the mixed methods study targeted bank employees in Lagos with a sample size of 250 participants selected through quota sampling. Data was collected using surveys and focus groups, analyzed using mixed methods analysis. Findings indicated that diversity needs assessments significantly improved inclusivity and employee satisfaction by 20% ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments are effective and recommended their implementation in banks.

Mwenda (2021) examined effectiveness of diversity needs assessments in Kenyan Public Sector to understand the effectiveness of diversity needs assessments in the public sector. Based on Transformational Leadership Theory, the descriptive survey targeted public sector employees in Nairobi with a sample size of 200 employees selected through random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that diversity needs assessments improved inclusivity by 18% ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments are effective for promoting inclusivity and recommended their broader implementation in the public sector.

Njuguna (2022) investigated impact of diversity needs assessments in Kenyan Corporations to assess the impact of diversity needs assessments in corporate settings. Based on Social Exchange Theory, the case study targeted corporate employees in Nairobi with a sample size of 180 employees selected through stratified sampling. Data was collected using interviews and surveys, analyzed through thematic and statistical analysis. Findings revealed that diversity needs assessments significantly improved D&I initiatives and employee engagement ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that diversity needs assessments are crucial for enhancing D&I and recommended their implementation in corporate settings.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive research design. In this research study, study targeted 464 employees of the Machakos County Government who are employed at the county's central administrative office. The study's sample size of 198 was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula (Russell, 2017). The population was grouped into four strata, that is; Top Management, Middle Management, Low Management, and Non-Management employees in Machakos County. The study then used simple random sampling in selecting a sample from



each strata. The advantage of random sampling is that it ensures that the sampling error is minimal which increases precision of techniques of estimation in use (Cooper & Schindler, 2017). Data was collected using a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire. Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistical included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis to be used was multiple regression and correlation analysis. The significant of each independent variable was tested at a confidence level of 95%.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study targeted a total of 198 respondents from various management levels within the Machakos County Government. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 178 were filled and returned, resulting in a response rate of 89.7%. This response rate is considered excellent and meets the recommended threshold of 70% as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), indicating strong participation from the respondents and enhancing the credibility of the study findings. The response rate of 89.7% implies that the data collected is comprehensive and representative of the targeted population, thus providing a reliable basis for analyzing the role of human resources in building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County.

### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to assess respondents' agreement with statements related to the influence of inclusion training strategy, and diversity needs assessment strategy on building diverse and inclusive organizations. The analysis was based on the mean and standard deviations, where a mean value of 1-1.4 was strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4 disagree, 2.5-3.4 neutral, 3.5-4.4 agree, and 4.5-5 strongly agree.

### Inclusion Training Strategy

The first objective was to establish the influence of inclusion training strategy on building diverse and inclusive organizations. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Inclusion Training Strategy**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Inclusion training is regularly provided to all employees.	3.851	0.864
The training effectively raises awareness about diversity issues.	3.792	0.882
Training programs are tailored to address specific diversity challenges.	3.867	0.832
Inclusion training has improved workplace relationships.	3.901	0.829
Employees feel more valued and respected after attending inclusion training.	3.812	0.879
The training includes practical strategies for promoting inclusion.	3.926	0.813
There is ongoing support and follow-up after training sessions.	3.794	0.854
Training materials are accessible and relevant to all employees.	3.871	0.872
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>3.864</b>	<b>0.853</b>

The findings on the inclusion training strategy at Machakos County Government indicate that the training programs are perceived positively by employees, with an overall agreement reflected in the mean scores. The highest rating was given to the statement that the training includes practical strategies for promoting inclusion ( $M = 3.926$ ,  $SD = 0.813$ ), suggesting that employees find the training sessions actionable and relevant to their roles. Inclusion training is also seen as beneficial in improving workplace relationships ( $M = 3.901$ ,  $SD = 0.829$ ), highlighting its impact on enhancing interpersonal dynamics within the organization. The training is regularly provided to all employees ( $M = 3.851$ ,  $SD = 0.864$ ) and is perceived as tailored to address specific diversity challenges ( $M = 3.867$ ,  $SD = 0.832$ ), reflecting the County's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. However, ongoing support and follow-up after training sessions received a slightly lower score ( $M =$

3.794, SD = 0.854), suggesting that there could be further improvement in sustaining the impact of the training over time.

These findings indicate that inclusion training at Machakos County Government is effective in raising awareness, improving workplace relationships, and promoting a sense of value and respect among employees, although continuous support could further enhance the training's effectiveness. The aggregate mean of 3.864 suggests agreement on the importance of inclusion training. These findings align with Kalinoski et al. (2019), who demonstrated that inclusion training significantly improves awareness of diversity issues. Dobbin and Kalev (2020) also emphasized that effective training reduces resistance and promotes inclusivity.

### Diversity Needs Assessment Strategy

The second objective was to explore the influence of diversity needs assessment strategy on building diverse and inclusive organizations. Table 4.7 shows the findings.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Diversity Needs Assessment Strategy**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Diversity needs assessments are conducted regularly.	3.812	0.857
The assessments effectively identify areas for improvement.	3.876	0.821
Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on diversity issues.	3.891	0.835
The results of diversity assessments are communicated to all employees.	3.854	0.846
Action plans are developed based on assessment findings.	3.832	0.872
There is a clear process for addressing identified diversity issues.	3.792	0.894
Diversity needs assessments have led to positive changes in the workplace.	3.904	0.812
Employees feel their input is valued in the diversity assessment process.	3.835	0.879
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>3.862</b>	<b>0.852</b>

The findings on the diversity needs assessment strategy at Machakos County Government indicate a generally positive perception among respondents, with an overall agreement reflected in the mean scores. Diversity needs assessments are perceived as leading to positive changes in the workplace (M = 3.904, SD = 0.812), highlighting their effectiveness in enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts. The assessments are conducted regularly (M = 3.812, SD = 0.857) and are effective in identifying areas for improvement (M = 3.876, SD = 0.821), suggesting that the County actively monitors and evaluates its diversity initiatives. Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on diversity issues (M = 3.891, SD = 0.835), and their input is valued in the assessment process (M = 3.835, SD = 0.879), reflecting a participatory approach that engages staff in diversity efforts. The results of these assessments are communicated to employees (M = 3.854, SD = 0.846), and action plans are developed based on the findings (M = 3.832, SD = 0.872), indicating a transparent and responsive process. However, the clear process for addressing identified diversity issues received a slightly lower score (M = 3.792, SD = 0.894), suggesting that while steps are being taken to address these issues, there is room for further refinement in how these processes are structured and communicated.

The findings suggest that diversity needs assessments at Machakos County Government are effective tools for promoting positive workplace changes, fostering inclusivity, and valuing employee input. The aggregate mean score of 3.862 indicates strong agreement on the positive impact of diversity needs assessments. The assessments' role in identifying improvement areas supports Roberson et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of needs assessments in identifying gaps and aligning D&I strategies. Williams and Mihaylo (2019) also highlighted the role of assessments in enhancing workplace inclusivity.

### Organizational Diversity and Inclusion

The dependent variable, organizational diversity and inclusion, was measured through several statements that assess the perception of diversity and inclusivity within Machakos County Government. The responses were analyzed to determine the overall perception of the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Diversity and Inclusion**

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The organization has a diverse workforce.	3.845	0.854
Employees from all backgrounds are treated fairly and equitably.	3.892	0.828
There is a culture of respect and inclusion in the workplace.	3.901	0.841
The organization actively promotes diversity and inclusion.	3.876	0.857
Employees feel valued and included regardless of their background.	3.864	0.873
There are equal opportunities for career advancement for all employees.	3.821	0.891
The organization regularly reviews and updates its diversity and inclusion policies.	3.835	0.878
Employees have access to resources and support related to diversity and inclusion.	3.874	0.862
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	<b>3.876</b>	<b>0.861</b>

The findings on organizational diversity and inclusion indicate a generally positive perception among respondents, with an overall aggregate mean score of 3.876 (SD = 0.861), reflecting agreement with the statements on diversity and inclusion within Machakos County Government. The highest rating was given to the statement that there is a culture of respect and inclusion in the workplace (M = 3.901, SD = 0.841), suggesting that the organizational environment is perceived as supportive and inclusive. The perception that employees from all backgrounds are treated fairly and equitably (M = 3.892, SD = 0.828) further emphasizes the positive view of the organization's commitment to equity. The organization's active promotion of diversity and inclusion (M = 3.876, SD = 0.857) and regular review of its diversity policies (M = 3.835, SD = 0.878) indicate that efforts to foster an inclusive workplace are ongoing and dynamic. However, slightly lower scores were noted for equal opportunities for career advancement (M = 3.821, SD = 0.891), suggesting a potential area for further improvement. Overall, these results highlight that while Machakos County Government has established a generally inclusive and equitable work environment, continuous efforts are needed to enhance career advancement opportunities for all employees.

The overall findings, reflected in the aggregate score of 3.876 for organizational diversity and inclusion, indicate a positive perception of the County's inclusivity efforts. These results align with Bourke and Dillon (2019), who argue that organizations with strong diversity and inclusion strategies are more likely to experience better employee engagement and business outcomes. The general positive perception suggests that the County's ongoing efforts to promote respect, equity, and inclusion are effective, resonating with Shore et al. (2018), who emphasize that inclusive workplace cultures lead to enhanced team performance and higher retention rates. However, the findings also highlight the need for continuous improvement, particularly in ensuring equitable opportunities for career advancement, as noted by Roberson et al. (2019), who point out that many organizations struggle with implementing D&I strategies that translate into tangible career growth for all employees. This underscores the importance of not only maintaining inclusive policies but also actively addressing barriers that may hinder equal career progression within the organization.

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variables (inclusion training strategy, and diversity needs assessment

strategy) and the dependent variable (organizational diversity and inclusion). The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.: Correlation Analysis**

Variable		Organizational Diversity and Inclusion	Inclusion and Training	Diversity Needs Assessment
Organizational Diversity and Inclusion	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000		
	N	178		
Inclusion Training	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.748*	1.000	
	N	178	178	
Diversity Needs Assessment	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.762*	0.733	1.000
	N	178	178	178

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Inclusion training strategy showed a strong positive correlation with organizational diversity and inclusion ( $r = 0.748$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that inclusion training significantly improves organizational inclusivity, aligning with Kalinoski et al. (2019), who found that well-designed training programs enhance employees' understanding and inclusive behavior.

The correlation between diversity needs assessment and organizational diversity and inclusion was 0.762 ( $p < 0.05$ ), the highest among the variables, indicating a very strong positive relationship. This implies that regular assessments are vital in identifying and addressing gaps in diversity and inclusion efforts. Roberson et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of ongoing assessments in driving positive organizational change.

### Regression Analysis

The regression coefficients provide detailed insights into the impact of each independent variable on organizational diversity and inclusion.

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.942	0.203		4.642	0.000
Inclusion Training	0.310	0.068	0.301	4.559	0.000
Diversity Needs Assessment	0.328	0.059	0.322	5.559	0.000

The coefficient for inclusion training ( $B = 0.310$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) suggests a significant positive relationship between training programs and organizational diversity and inclusion. This finding underscores the importance of ongoing training in promoting inclusive behaviors among employees, supporting findings by Lewis (2020), who emphasized that inclusion training enhances awareness and reduces workplace biases.

The coefficient for diversity needs assessment ( $B = 0.328$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) was the highest among the variables, indicating a substantial impact on organizational diversity and inclusion. This suggests that systematic assessments are essential for identifying gaps and making informed decisions to improve D&I strategies. Muthoni (2022) supports this finding by demonstrating the effectiveness of diversity needs assessments in driving positive organizational changes.

The fitted regression equation based on the coefficients from the analysis is:

**Organizational Diversity and Inclusion = 0.942 + 0.310 (Inclusion Training) + 0.328 (Diversity Needs Assessment)**

This equation illustrates how each of the HR strategies contributes to the overall effectiveness of building diverse and inclusive organizations in Machakos County.

### Conclusions

Inclusion training is effective in raising awareness about diversity issues and promoting inclusive behaviors among employees. The training programs at Machakos County Government are well-received and contribute to improved workplace relationships. Nonetheless, the study highlights the importance of providing continuous support and follow-up to sustain the impact of training sessions.

Diversity needs assessments are essential in identifying gaps and driving positive changes in organizational diversity and inclusion. Regular assessments that involve employee feedback and transparent communication of results foster an inclusive work environment. However, there is room for improvement in the processes for addressing identified diversity issues to enhance their effectiveness.

### Recommendations

To maximize the impact of inclusion training, it is recommended that Machakos County Government introduce continuous learning opportunities that go beyond initial training sessions. This could include refresher courses, interactive workshops, and access to resources that address evolving diversity challenges. Establishing a system for ongoing support and follow-up after training sessions will help reinforce learning outcomes and encourage the application of inclusive behaviors in daily work practices.

Diversity needs assessments should be conducted regularly, with clear processes in place for addressing identified issues. It is recommended that the County develop detailed action plans based on assessment findings and ensure these plans are communicated to all employees. Engaging employees in the assessment process through feedback mechanisms and incorporating their input into decision-making will further enhance the effectiveness of these assessments. Regularly reviewing the assessment criteria will ensure that they remain relevant and aligned with the County's diversity and inclusion objectives.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

Further research could investigate the impact of organizational culture, employee engagement, and external societal influences on diversity and inclusion outcomes. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into employees' experiences with HR strategies and identify potential areas for improvement.

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