

À la Carte Acceptance: A Critical Examination of Selective Inclusion in Modern DE&I Practices

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Recently Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives have gained significant traction in corporate, educational, and social environments. These initiatives aim to foster environments where diverse individuals feel valued, included, and treated equitably. However, a deeper examination reveals a phenomenon that can be described as "à la carte acceptance." This term encapsulates the selective approach to inclusion, where only specific social groups benefit from DE&I efforts, while others remain marginalized. This selective acceptance undermines the true essence of diversity and equity, raising critical questions about the sincerity and comprehensiveness of modern DE&I practices.

The concept of à la carte acceptance suggests a pick-and-choose method in embracing diversity. Corporations and institutions often highlight their commitment to DE&I by showcasing efforts to support certain groups, such as women, racial minorities, and the LGBTQ+ community. While the progress made in these areas is commendable, the focus on these groups can sometimes overshadow the exclusion of others. For instance, individuals with disabilities, older adults, neurodivergent individuals, and those from less visible ethnic minorities might find themselves overlooked in the broader DE&I discourse. This selective focus creates an illusion of comprehensive inclusion while perpetuating inequalities for those who do not fit into the selectively chosen categories.