

Prejudice

Sociology



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Link: http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/1996/05/13/212386/index.htm

Application Essay – Prejudice This article featuring Denny's turnaround from

one of the most racist if not the most racist restaurant in America to an ethnically diversified restaurant is a classic example of prejudice and racial discrimination. In this restaurant, colored employees and customers alike, especially blacks are discriminated upon. In the higher echelon of the organization, it was predominantly composed of whites and blacks are non-existent. In the lower strata of the organization, black employees are insulted in front of its employees and are told to be grateful for having a job. The word "N", them and those kind of people were also commonly used.

Black customers are equally discriminated. There was an instance where the restaurant became an icon of racial discrimination overnight when it made to wait six black secret service agents while the others were promptly served.

Also, when there are a significant number of black people coming into the restaurant, part of its old ritual was to routinely close shop calling it a "blackout". This racism was primarily brought about by the homogeneity of Denny's Executive Leadership where it is solely composed of "whites" where it is considered as the in-group while the blacks were considered as out-group or the outcast and as such, not entitled to privileges and is discriminated upon. Also, the tendency of the mores of the locality where the restaurant is located to influence the norm of the restaurant to be equally bigoted against employees and restaurant. In a way, it is like a contagion effect, starting from the leadership which implicitly divides employees and customers by the color of their skin and the prevailing mores of the whites to discriminate against the blacks which infected the corporate culture. This racism or

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stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against the colored people could root from the social categorization of Social Identity Theory where there is an ingroup bias against the outgroup, which in this case, are the black and colored people. The form of this stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination at Dennys Restaurant are done both implicitly and explicitly. Implicit in a way that its top management used to be composed solely of white people. Though not explicitly mentioned in any official communication, the mere fact that there are no colored people there is an implicit way of discrimination. It may have subtleties in discriminating in the upper level of management but it does not practice civility in the lower end of its organization. Employees, particularly the black people, are being insulted explicitly in front of customers. They have nowhere to bring their grievance and instead of being consoled, are instead told to be thankful that they have a job. It does not spare its customers where it derives its revenue from its stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination also. When a large number of black people come into the restaurant, they do explicit “black-outs” or the routine closing-in of the restaurant and makes black customers wait like the case of six federal secret service agents. Our only consolation is that this discrimination no longer exists today. It took a serious political will of its new CEO, Jim Petty to re-orient the organization culture against stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. That to reduce and eliminate it, he has to do extensive re-training and automatic associations among its new employees to change the culture of the company.