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An Investigation into the Impact of Stereotypes Against Disabled Employees on Inclusive Behavior in the Air Transport Sector

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ABSTRACT

There are not enough studies in the management and organization literature investigating the effects of attitudes and stereotypes toward disabled employees in organizations on inclusive behaviors. There are basically two types of stereotypes toward individuals with disabilities: competence and warmth. The warmth stereotype defines the degree to which a person likes a disabled individual, while the competence stereotype defines the degree to which they respect them. In the limited number of studies in the literature, it is emphasized that inclusive behaviors toward disabled employees, especially in terms of including them in work teams, are important for revealing their true potential. Inclusive behaviors refer to extra-role behaviors displayed by colleagues toward disabled employees beyond formal job requirements. Attitude is explained as a type of psychological tendency that includes negative or positive evaluations of objects and individuals. The current study aims to determine whether attitudes toward disabled employees have a mediating effect on the relationship between stereotypes and inclusive behaviors. Within this framework, the study was carried out with the participation of 316 employees working in organizations in the air transport sector. The results show that employees who display positive cognitive and behavioral attitudes toward disabled colleagues are more likely to exhibit inclusive behaviors. Unlike prior studies such as Nelissen et al. (2016), the findings reveal that stereotypes do not exert a direct effect on inclusive behaviors, but operate entirely through a multidimensional attitudinal mechanism. In this respect, the study contributes to the literature by providing sector-specific evidence from the air transport context and by offering a more explanatory model of inclusive behavior formation.

Keywords: Inclusive Behaviors; Stereotypes; Attitudes Towards Disabled Employees.

JEL Classification Codes: M10, M12

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INTRODUCTION

In existing academic literature, studies examining the concept of inclusion remain limited. The concept of inclusivity was first used in the United States in the 1990s, when affirmative action practices became widespread, the importance of equal opportunities increased, and egalitarian approaches began to cover all employees; it is seen that academic literature on the subject began to emerge in this period (Van Laer et al., 2022). In this context, approaches and laws aimed at ensuring equality (ADA- Americans with Disabilities Act, England- Equal Opportunity Act) have been created and initiatives for disabled employees have been supported (Shakespeare and Watson, 2002). The prevailing societal perception of disability is rooted in the belief that an individual's impairment diminishes their value, hinders their ability to integrate into society, and restricts their participation in various activities, including employment (Coles and Scior, 2012). As an extension of this perspective, the first studies on disabled employees focus on equality in general, the costs associated with employing disabled employees, physical environmental conditions and their adaptation (Sanclemente et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2026), legal regulations on working life (Van Laer et al., 2022; Byrd, 2026) and problems in the employment of disabled employees (Bellucci et al., 2023). However, in the recent literature, emphasis has been placed on the social acceptance of individuals with disabilities, integration and harmonization efforts, and the necessity of spreading an inclusion-based perspective (Coles and Scior, 2012; Dobusch, 2021; Sanclemente et al., 2024; Colella and Boehm, 2026). According to Bonaccio et al. (2020), inclusivity is an explanation of inclusion or exclusion and is a behavior based on helping or benefiting others. Organizations that promote inclusive

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This study is derived from the doctoral dissertation titled 'The Effect of Stereotypes in Organizations on Inclusive Behaviors Toward Employees with Disabilities: A Study in the Air Transportation Sector,' completed/defended by Selvi Vural under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Füsun Çınar Altıntaş in the Management and Organization PhD Program at the Bursa Uludağ University Institute of Social Sciences, in the 2022 Spring term.

behaviors are called inclusive organizations. Inclusive organizations are organizations that can bring together different people under the same roof within an inclusive framework (Nelissen et al., 2016). Inclusive organizations are believed to be essential for ensuring the retention and long-term employment of disabled employees. Encouraging inclusive behaviors within the workplace is therefore essential for fostering their long-term participation and success. Considering the benefits and interests of the target group in the organization, all of the behaviors exhibited are evaluated as inclusive behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), which are described as facilitating behaviors exhibited by colleagues toward disabled employees in inclusive organizations, are explained as inclusive behaviors in the literature (Williams and Anderson, 1991). Therefore, it is stated that inclusive behaviors not only have an impact on organizational performance and success, but also eliminate prejudices and stereotypes such as exclusion, discrimination and isolation towards employees with disabilities at the individual level (Colella, 1994; Nelissen et al., 2016; Bonaccio et al., 2020). Within this scope, the current study aimed to explore how attitudes and stereotypes toward disabled employees influence inclusive behaviors by analyzing both theoretical and empirical research. One of the most distinctive features of the current research is that it aims to explain the effect of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors by considering the sub-dimensions of stereotypes while examining the mediating effect of attitudes towards disabled employees.

Building on the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002), Stone and Colella's (1996) organizational framework, and Nelissen et al.'s (2016) work on inclusive behaviors, this study proposes an integrated model in which stereotypes (warmth and competence) shape inclusive behaviors indirectly through employees' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes toward disabled colleagues. The study consists of two parts: the section where general concepts are introduced and the literature is examined, and the section where the empirical analysis is conducted.

This study makes three main contributions to the literature. First, it provides sector-specific empirical evidence from the air transport industry. Second, it conceptualizes attitudes as a multidimensional mediating mechanism between stereotypes and inclusive behaviors. Third, unlike Nelissen et al. (2016), it demonstrates that stereotypes influence inclusive behaviors entirely through attitudinal processes rather than directly, suggesting that this relationship is context-dependent. The following sections develop the conceptual framework and empirical analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive Behaviors

According to Bonaccio et al. (2020), inclusivity is the state of inclusion or exclusion. Again, inclusivity is a behavior based on helping or benefiting someone else (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Nelissen et al., 2016; Fels et al., 2026). All behaviors based on considering the benefits and interests of others or a targeted segment in the organization are explained as inclusive behaviors and this situation is defined as organizational citizenship behaviors (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Nelissen et al., 2016; Bonaccio et al., 2020; Kant and Ashuro, 2026). While Dennis Organ (1988) was the first to conceptualize organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), its foundations can be traced back to C. Barnard's (1938) discussion on 'voluntary cooperation' and D. Katz's (1964) differentiation between formal role performance and informal behaviors (Çınar-Altıntaş, 2006). OCB refers to discretionary personal initiatives that, although not formally defined in the organization's reward system, contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Çınar-Altıntaş, 2016; Kant and Ashuro, 2026).

Organ (1988) discussed the concept in five basic dimensions and classified these dimensions into two categories: individual (courtesy and altruism) and organizational (conscientiousness, gentlemanliness, civic virtue). According to Organ (1988), *conscientiousness* is the behavior of employees with a high sense of duty and devotion, *gentlemanliness is the behavior of employees with the* intention of avoiding negativities that may cause conflict or fights against other colleagues in the organization, and civic virtue is dedication to the organization and self-driven actions aimed at benefiting the organization throughout all operational processes.

These dimensions are within the scope of organization-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors (Kar et al., 2025). Courtesy, which is described as individual-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors, is defined as identifying the elements that may pose a problem on behalf of other colleagues in advance and suggesting their solution, supporting and respecting other ideas, while *altruism* is characterized by self-initiated actions intended to support colleagues within the workplace (Çınar-Altıntaş, 2006; Usman et al., 2025). However, in the literature on disabled employees, individual-

centered organizational citizenship behaviors—*courtesy* and *altruism*—are the main types of inclusive behavior (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Nelissen et al., 2016; Bonaccio et al., 2020).

The Concept of Stereotyping

In the literature, the term stereotype was conceptualized by Lippmann (1922). According to Lippmann, stereotyping is the "small pictures" in an individual's mind. According to Lippmann, stereotypes are standardized or stereotypical thoughts and stereotypes consisting of thoughts, expectations and ideologies that are effective in decision-making. Allport (1954) described stereotypes as fundamental aspects of reality, whereas other researchers defined them as beliefs regarding the traits associated with or defining a specific group (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981). Stereotypes are formed from an early age and continue to develop over time under the influence of various factors (such as economic, cultural, political). In this process, hearsay information obtained from the social environment of the individual also affects the formation of stereotyped attitudes, and stereotypes are based on emotions and are far from rationality (Aktan and Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2013). In the literature, the concept of stereotyping has been discussed in three basic dimensions: socio-cultural, psycho-dynamic and cognitive (Ashmore and Del Boca 1981). From a socio-cultural point of view, stereotypes are considered as a part of the knowledge acquired in the process of culture and socialization, while psychodynamic stereotypes are considered in terms of motives and emphasize the needs and defense mechanisms of the individual from childhood. Cognitive stereotypes, on the other hand, are considered as the behavioral aspect of prejudices and discrimination by associating attitude components (Aktan and Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2013). It is argued that stereotypes are based on the cognitive thoughts that an individual has about a group of people, and that these thoughts lead to prejudices, and that prejudices create negative emotional reactions to some groups (Colella and Bruyére, 2011; Nelissen et al., 2016). Therefore, the attitudes and behaviors of the individual are shaped by stereotypes (Mullin et al., 2023). In their study, Çınar-Altıntaş and Kavurmacı-Aytaç (2018) state that individuals in organizations are perceived as a foreign and separate group due to stereotypes. Stereotypes reinforce prejudices against people with disabilities by reinforcing discrimination against certain groups. In this context, in the light of the information obtained from the literature in question, it is clear that workplace stereotypes can directly or indirectly influence inclusive behavior through employees' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: In organizations, stereotypes have an impact on inclusive behaviors.

In the literature, there are generally two types of stereotypes against people with disabilities. Fiske et al. (2002) describe these concepts as competence and warmth stereotypes (Fiske et al., 2002). Fiske (2015) argues that the stereotype of warmth includes elements such as morality, friendship, trustworthiness, tact, and sincerity. Trustworthiness, sincerity, morality, tact, and friendly approach are the elements of the warmth stereotype. Nelissen et al. (2016) also argue that high warmth reduces negative tendencies towards disabled employees in the organization. Nelissen et al. (2016) found that the warmth stereotype has an indirect effect on inclusive behaviors in their study. In this context, given the high perception of warmth stereotypes, it is expected that employees will positively shape their attitudes towards their disabled colleagues, thereby promoting inclusive behaviors. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: The warmth stereotype has a positive effect on inclusive behaviors.

Another stereotype for employees with disabilities is *the competence* stereotype (Fiske, 2015). Competence usually reveals negative perceptions towards a specific or target group. Competence is explained by elements such as intelligence, creativity, skill, and confidence (Fiske et al., 2002). It is emphasized that the perception that disabled employees generally do not have the necessary competence to fulfill their duties actually creates prejudices (Fiske, 2015). Other researchers argue that stereotypes are shaped by the nature of an individual's disability and that disability type serves as a key factor in performance evaluations (Stone and Colella, 1996). Fiske (2015) stated that decisions concerning people with disabilities, such as recruitment and promotion, are taken according to the nature of the disability they have. In another study conducted by Fiske (2015), it is suggested that there is a protective approach towards the disabled in the workplace and that they are seen as a segment that does not arouse competition. Bilgin (2000) highlights that disabled employees are often perceived as insufficient within the organization and are subject to a negative judgment suggesting that their presence may diminish not only their own efficiency and productivity but also that of their colleagues. Similarly, findings from studies carried out in various countries, including Thailand, Africa, America, Finland, the United Kingdom(UK) and studies

conducted in the UK have shown that individuals with disabilities cannot perform effectively in working life, do not have the necessary knowledge and experience for this, and act with the thoughts that they are helpless, reluctant and unreliable (Gould et al., 2020). In Akbulut et al. (2014), it was concluded that employees with disabilities could not perform the performance expected of them based on the belief that they generally did not have the necessary competence. Therefore, negative attitudes or prejudices lie at the root of low competence (Fiske et al., 2002) and low performance expectation (Dwertmann et al., 2025) for workers with disabilities in the work environment. High competency stereotypes can trigger negative attitudes toward employees with disabilities and reduce inclusive behavior. However, certain organizational contexts can modify this effect and lead to complex interactions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1b: High competency stereotyping may negatively affect inclusive behaviors.

Although initially hypothesized as positive based on theoretical assumptions, prior research indicates that high competency stereotypes may generate prejudices and reduce inclusive behaviors (Stone & Colella, 1996; Fiske, 2015). SEM results in this study did not find a significant direct effect, supporting the notion that competency-based stereotypes do not straightforwardly predict inclusive behaviors.

In summary, stereotypes of warmth and competence are expected to influence the display of inclusive behaviors within organizations through employees' attitudes toward colleagues with disabilities. These hypotheses form a basis for examining both direct and indirect effects in the present study. In this context, the relationship between stereotypes, attitudes, and inclusive behaviors can be better understood through a sequential psychological mechanism. Stereotypes represent the cognitive structures individuals hold about a particular group, which shape their evaluations and interpretations. These cognitive evaluations are then translated into attitudes that encompass emotional and behavioral tendencies toward individuals with disabilities. Finally, these attitudes guide actual workplace behaviors, such as the demonstration of inclusive behaviors toward disabled employees. Therefore, rather than exerting a direct influence, stereotypes are expected to affect inclusive behaviors indirectly through attitudinal processes. This cognitive–attitudinal–behavioral sequence provides a more integrated theoretical framework for understanding how inclusion is formed within organizational settings.

The Connection Between Inclusive Behaviors and Stereotypes Towards Employees with Disabilities

Bonaccio et al. (2020) are among the researchers who have produced the most comprehensive studies on inclusivity in the literature. According to them, the phrase inclusivity is a description of inclusion or exclusion. In other words, from a conceptual point of view, it is stated that its use is widespread to correspond to such situations (inclusion-non-exclusion) (Sepetis, 2026). However, it was stated that behaviors based on helping or benefiting another person are generally described as inclusive behaviors. Behaviors demonstrated within an organization that consider the well-being and advantage of others are categorized as inclusive behaviors. In the literature, this concept is described as individual-employee-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors, including courtesy and altruism. Thus, it is aimed to facilitate the integration of the target group or others within the organization into both the organization and the work teams and not to exclude these people (Nelissen et al. 2016).

Stereotypes rooted in prejudice and discrimination, which hinder the incorporation of individuals with disabilities into work groups, play a vital role in the development of inclusion-focused behaviors within organizations (Bonaccio et al., 2020; Nelissen et al., 2016; Stone and Colella, 1996). Colella (1994), in his study on the problems experienced by disabled employees in organizations and the solutions developed for these problems, emphasized the importance of communication-interaction, courtesy and cooperation within the organization in preventing unrealistic expectations and prejudices toward individuals with disabilities. In addition, he drew attention to the fact that even if the programs and policies developed based on courtesy and assistance regarding individuals with disabilities or employees in organizations are increased, disabled employees may still face various judgments.

However (Colella, 1994), also argued that, although there are difficulties, the presence of inclusive behaviors in the organization is important and necessary, and that these behaviors should be effectively maintained. On the other hand, Colella and Stone (1996), in another much more comprehensive study they carried out for disabled employees, stated that the attitudes developed by managers and colleagues of disabled employees towards disabled employees are influenced by the socio-cultural environment surrounding them. This situation may result in behaviors such as exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, marginalization, and differentiation faced by disabled

employees, and may also constitute an obstacle to the development of inclusive behaviors. The presence of favorable stereotypes can lead to positive results and be reinforced by the employees of the organization. In through attitudes toward employees with disabilities. The model assumes that attitudes serve as a key psychological mechanism that transforms cognitive perceptions into observable organizational behaviors.

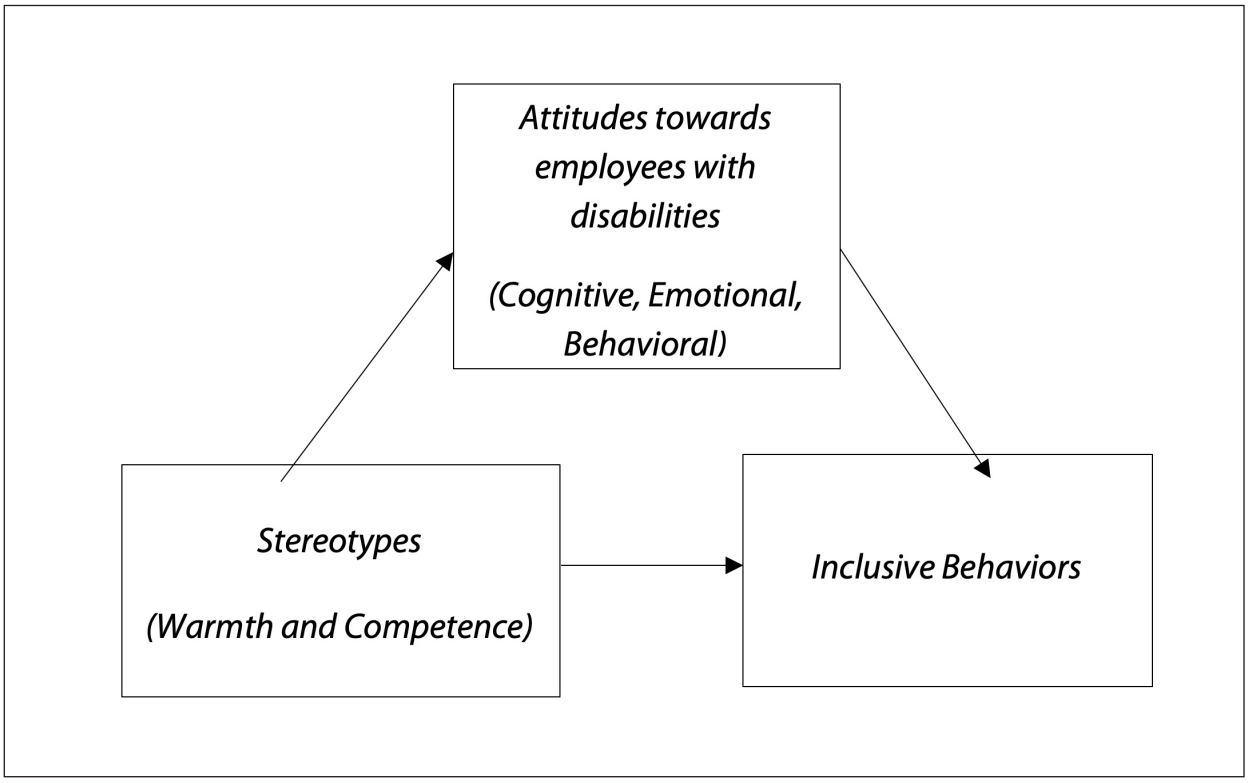

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model

a similar study by Nelissen et al. (2016), it was discovered that stereotypes related to competence and warmth indirectly influence inclusive behaviors, rather than directly determining them. In the research conducted by Nelissen et al. (2016), while examining the effects of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors, it is argued that the attitude as a mediating variable and the work pressure as a moderating variable are useful in explaining this determinism. In other words, it is thought that stereotypes are effective and decisive to some extent in exhibiting inclusive behaviors in the organization and facilitating the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in work groups.

In the literature, it is suggested that the effect of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors may not be direct. Instead, this effect is said to manifest through employees' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (Nelissen et al., 2016). Attitude is considered a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Based on this theoretical framework, the present study proposes a model in which stereotypes influence inclusive behaviors indirectly

The studies by Bonaccio et al. (2020) and Nelissen et al. (2016) show that stereotypes indirectly influence inclusive behaviors rather than directly determining them. In this context, positive or negative stereotypes shape employees' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, and these attitudes can influence the display of inclusive behaviors. Colella (1994) and Colella & Stone (1996) emphasized that organizational communication, collaboration, and the socio-cultural environment are decisive in the development of attitudes towards employees with disabilities. This supports the idea that the influence of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors occurs not directly, but indirectly through attitudes. Within this framework, hypothesis H2 is formulated:

H2: Attitudes towards employees with disabilities mediate the influence of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors.

Although the relationship between stereotype content and inclusive behaviors has been examined particularly by Nelissen et al. (2016), the present study differs from that research in several aspects. Firstly, this study was conducted in the air transport sector, which

requires high safety awareness, intense teamwork, and interdependence. Thus, it differs from previous research conducted in general organizational contexts. This sectoral structure offers a unique context that can differentiate the impact of competency perceptions on organizational behaviors. Secondly, in terms of model structure, while Nelissen et al. (2016) considered job pressure as a moderating variable, in the present study, attitudes towards employees with disabilities were examined within a multidimensional mediating mechanism framework encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Thirdly, from an evidential perspective, contrary to the direct effect assumption frequently reported in the literature, this study found no direct significant effect of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors, but revealed a strong indirect effect through attitudes. Finally, in terms of theoretical contribution, this research offers a more explanatory model for the formation of inclusive behaviors by showing that even if stereotypes do not automatically transform into organizational behavior, the process occurs through a psychological attitudinal mechanism. In this respect, the study expands the existing literature in a sectoral context and provides a holistic theoretical contribution to the inclusivity literature.

On the other hand, this study contributes to the literature in three fundamental ways. Firstly, by examining the relationship between stereotypes towards disabled employees and inclusive behaviors within the context of the air transport sector, which requires high safety and intensive teamwork, it provides a sectoral and contextual expansion to the literature. Secondly, by addressing attitudes towards disabled employees within a multidimensional mediating mechanism framework encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, it reveals the underlying psychological process of inclusive behaviors in a more explanatory manner. Finally, by demonstrating that stereotypes do not have a direct effect on inclusive behaviors but exert a strong indirect influence through attitudes, it offers a critical contribution to the direct effect model frequently assumed in the literature. In addition, this study clarifies its distinction from Nelissen et al. (2016) by focusing on a high-safety, teamwork-intensive sector and by conceptualizing attitudes as a multidimensional mediator, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of how stereotypes translate into inclusive behaviors. In this respect, the research proposes a more holistic and explanatory theoretical framework regarding the formation of inclusive behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the research were gathered using a survey. The research data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. Initially, validity and reliability analyses were conducted, followed by hypothesis testing. SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses (H1, H1a, H1b, H2). In this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was preferred because it allows for the simultaneous testing of direct and indirect relationships between variables. SEM is considered a powerful method, especially in the analysis of mediating effects. Furthermore, the classical approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used as the basis for testing mediating effects. This method allows for a systematic examination of how the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable changes when the mediating variable is included in the model.

Sample of the Research

The participants in this study consists of employees working in both leadership and non-leadership roles in organizations within the air transport sector. In this context, considering size and operational intensity, organizations operating or providing services at two airports in Istanbul (Istanbul and Sabiha Gökçen) were included in the study. The prepared questionnaires were sent to the e-mail addresses of the participants via Google Forms. Therefore, the data were collected through a web-based survey. The web-based questionnaires provide an effective way of reaching respondents who are directly related to the research topic in terms of its power to bring together subjects who directly represent or are close to the subject being investigated, if the target population is well defined (Corbitt et al., 2003). Out of 356 questionnaires sent out for this study, 321 responses were received, and after preliminary evaluation, 316 questionnaires were deemed suitable for analysis. Considering the questionnaires included in the analysis, the response rate was 90%. In the literature, response rates of 60% and above are considered sufficient for online surveys. In this context, the obtained rate is quite satisfactory. According to Kline (2013), a sample size of more than 300 is considered sufficient for SEM to ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings.

Among the participants who completed the questionnaire, 52.8% were women and 47.2% were men. When the participants were evaluated in terms of education level, 59.5% were undergraduate, 19% were associate degree, 18% were graduate and 3.5% were secondary education graduates. 4.4% of the participants

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Findings of the Scales

Scales	Number of Items	Average(M)	Cronbach'a(â)
Stereotypes	12	3.860	.937
Attitude towards Disabled Employee	11	2.158	.700
Inclusive Behaviors	8	4.909	.875

were 60 years and older, 53.5% were between 20–40 / 41–60 years old. When the service periods of the participants in their institutions were examined, 58.9% stated that they had worked for 5-10 years, 22.8% for 10 years or more, 12.3% for 3-5 years, and the remaining 6% for less than three years.

Data Collection Tool

The survey employed in this research is divided into four sections: demographic data, inclusive behavior scale, stereotype scale, and attitude scale towards individuals with disabilities.

Inclusive Behavior Scale: The inclusive behavior scale applied in this study was created by Organ (1988). The Inclusive Behavior Scale consists of 8 statements. There are *5 items related to* altruism and 3 items related to *courtesy* in the scale. Basım and Şeşen (2006) carried out a study to adapt the scale to Turkish and confirmed its appropriateness for a two-factor structure, with the reliability index of the scale being 0.86.

Altruism: It is the voluntary and extra-role behaviors of the employees to help other employees in organizational tasks and problems related to the organization.

Courtesy: It is the preventive behavior of employees to avoid potential problems from arising.

Stereotype Scale: The Stereotype Scale used in this study was originally developed by Fiske et al. (2002) and subsequently adapted to Turkish by Demirdağ (2021). The Turkish version's validity and reliability were assessed, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The scale comprises 12 items across two factors: competence and warmth.

Warmth: It refers to the degree to which a person likes a disabled individual.

Competence: It refers to the degree of respect a person has for the disabled individual. Although positive competency perceptions might theoretically enhance inclusion, literature suggests they can also trigger negative expectations (Fiske, 2015).

Attitude Scale Towards Disabled Employees: The attitude scale toward individuals with disabilities in working life was developed by Akardere (2005). The scale is made up of 11 items and 3 factors. The reliability level of the scale is 0.95.

Evaluation of the Validity and Reliability of the Scales Used in the Study

Before testing the hypotheses, the study assessed the validity and reliability of the scales utilized. To evaluate construct validity, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results were analyzed. AVE and CR values were measured for convergent and discriminant validity. Cronbach's Alpha value was examined in determining the reliability levels of the inclusive behavior scale, stereotype and attitude scales towards disabled employees used in the study. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha values for the scales utilized in the study.

The reliability values for each scale—stereotyping, attitudes toward working individuals with disabilities, and inclusive behaviors—were calculated separately and are presented in Table 1 along with descriptive statistics. The reliability analysis, based on Cronbach's Alpha (α) values, indicated that the stereotyping scale had a mean (M) of 3.860 with α = .937, the attitude scale toward working individuals with disabilities had M = 2.158 with α = .700, and the inclusive behaviors scale had M = 4.909 with α = .875. The findings indicate that the scales show high consistency within the structure, suggesting that the questions within each survey are well-aligned and consistent with each other.

To assess whether the factors identified through factor analysis for the inclusive behavior scale, stereotype scale, and to verify that the attitude scale toward disabled employees was adequately correlated and capable of explaining the model, CFA was performed using structural equation modeling. Additionally, CR and AVE values were computed to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales. The findings of the factor analysis for the inclusive behavior, stereotyping, and attitude scales shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor Analysis and Normality Test Findings

Variables	Number of Items	AVE	Cr. Alpha (â)	CR	Skewness	Kurtosis
INCBEH	8	0.76	0.87	0.82	0.98	0.16
WARSTER	7	0.89	0.94	0.88	0.58	0.63
COMSTER	5	0.85	0.92	0.85	0.58	0.63
CATDE	4	0.78	0.70	0.80	0.61	0.72
EATDE	3	0.74	0.71	0.82	0.73	0.72
BATDE	4	0.77	0.70	0.81	0.56	0.72

* AVE: Average Variance Extracted, Kurtosis, CR: Composite Reliability, Skewness, INCBEH: Inclusive Behavior, WARSTER: Warmth Stereotype, COMSTER: Competency Stereotype, CATDE: Cognitive Attitude towards Disabled Employees, EATDE: Emotional Attitude towards Disabled Employees, BATDE: Behavioral Attitude towards Disabled Employees

In research, a reliability coefficient of 0.70 is typically considered the threshold. To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha (α) values are first calculated. As shown in Table 2, these values range between 0.70 and 0.94, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (0.70–0.94 > 0.70). Additionally, research indicates that the composite reliability (CR) value should exceed 0.70 (Brown & Moore, 2012). The results of this study show that the CR values for the variables fall between 0.80 and 0.88, exceeding the 0.70 threshold and closely aligning with the Cronbach's Alpha (α) values.

In evaluating convergent validity, Mean Explained Variance (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values were examined. Literature suggests that AVE values should be above 0.50 and CR values above 0.70 (Kline, 2013). In this study, it was observed that the AVE values for all variables ranged from 0.74 to 0.89, and CR values were above 0.80.

To assess whether discriminant validity was achieved, it was examined whether the square root of the AVE of each construct was higher than its correlations with other constructs (Brown & Moore, 2012). The findings show that the AVE value of each variable is higher than its correlation values with other variables, indicating that discriminant validity is achieved.

These results validate that the scales employed in the study are both reliable and valid. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to assess the normality of the variables. In the literature, skewness and kurtosis values within the ±1.5 range are considered acceptable limits for a normal distribution (Kline, 2013). As shown in Table 2, the skewness and kurtosis values of all variables fall within these limits, and it was concluded that the data meet the assumption of a normal distribution.

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Status of the Scales Used in the Research

Variables	CMIN/DF	AGFI	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	IFI	NFI
INCBEH	2.12	.83	.87	.95	.05	.91	.91
STER	2.87	.85	.89	.96	.05	.90	.92
ATDE	2.35	.87	.85	.95	.05	.90	.92

*INCBEH: Inclusive Behavior, STER: Stereotype, ATDE: Attitude towards Disabled Employees

As can be seen from Table 3, in the light of the above information, the IFI values of the scales used in the research show good fit, GFI acceptable fit, and CMIN/DF value ≤ 3, that is, good compliance. Since the NFI values are 0.94 - 0.90 and the CFI values are ≥ 0.95, an acceptable model fit is observed. However, it is generally desirable that these values are close to 1 (excluding AGFI), and in this case, the factor analysis of the model indicates goodness of fit. The RMSEA value 0.05 ≤, indicating a good fit according to the result obtained.

FINDINGS

Using structural equation modeling, the study tested whether attitudes toward disabled employees mediate the relationship between stereotypes and inclusive behaviors. Within the framework of the mediation analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the effect of stereotypes (independent variable) on inclusive behaviors (dependent variable) was first examined. The fit indices derived from the analysis indicate that the measurement model is supported (CMIN/df = 4.124; CFI =

Table 4: CFA Results and Fit Metrics for Assessing the Impact of Stereotypes on Inclusive Behaviors

CMIN/DF	AGFI	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	NFI	IFI
4.12	.85	.87	.95	.06	.90	.90

0.95; RMSEA = 0.06). However, although the hypothesized pathway was estimated, the results indicate that stereotypes do not have a statistically significant effect on inclusive behaviors (β = .307; p = .077). Therefore, hypotheses H1, H1a, and H1b are not supported.

As illustrated in Table 4, the CFI and IFI values indicate acceptable model fit. Similarly, GFI, AGFI, and NFI values also fall within acceptable limits. In addition, a CMIN/DF value below 5 indicates an acceptable level of model fit. Ideally, these values should approach 1, which indicates better model fit. Furthermore, an RMSEA value of 0.08 or lower also suggests an acceptable model fit. The findings of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, which help clarify the impact of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors within the proposed research model, are presented in Table 5.

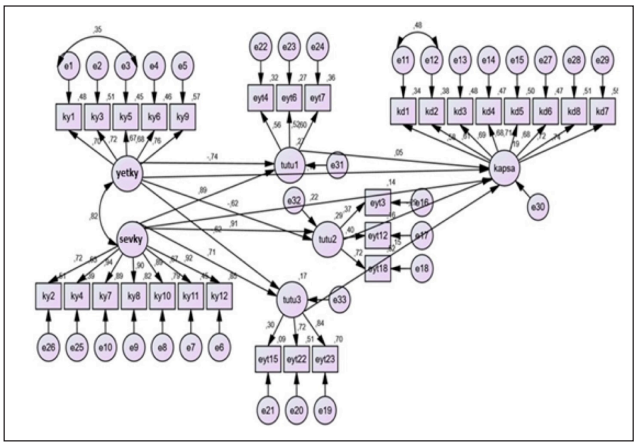

Figure 2. Structural Model of the Research

When the model was examined, it was found that the effect of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors was not statistically significant (β = .307; p = .077 > 0.05).

Table 5: SEM Findings to Explain the Impact of Stereotypes on Inclusive Behaviors

Structural Equations			Stan. Reg. Coeff. (β)	Reg. Coeff. (β)	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	R^2	t	P	Hyp.	Hyp. Results
INCBEH	←	STER	.307	.204	1.151	.091	8.22	.077	H1	Reject
INCBEH	←	WARSTER	.224	.165	1.127	.076	6.67	.260	H1a	Reject
INCBEH	←	COMSTER	.191	.172	1.050	.092	6.21	.294	H1b	Reject

Table 6: SEM Results on the Mediating Role of Attitudes Towards Employees with Disabilities in Explaining the Effect of Stereotypes on Inclusive Behaviors

Structural Equations				S.R.C. (β)	R.C. (β)	Critical Rate (C.R.)	R^2	t	P	Hyp.	Hyp. Results
INCBEH	← ATDE ←	STER		.902	.343	1.115	.513	9.34	***	H2	Acceptance

Table 7: Results from Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Mediating Role of Attitudes Toward Employees with Disabilities in Explaining the Impact of Stereotypes on Inclusive Behaviors, Along with Goodness of Fit Parameters

CMIN/DF	AGFI	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	IFI	NFI
2.18	.84	.86	.93	.05	.93	.85

Similarly, the effect of the warmth stereotype dimension on inclusive behaviors (β = .224; p = .260 > 0.05) and the effect of the competence stereotype dimension (β = .191; p = .294 > 0.05) were not found to be statistically significant. Since the p-values were greater than the 0.05 significance level, hypotheses H1, H1a, and H1b were rejected. This finding aligns with prior studies suggesting that competency-based stereotypes may not directly translate into inclusive behaviors, and their effects can be mediated by attitudinal processes (Nelissen et al., 2016).

As shown in Figure 2, according to the structural equation modeling results, attitudes (with their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions) were found to play a significant mediating role in the relationship between stereotypes and inclusive behaviors (β = .902; p < 0.01). While the direct effect of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors was not statistically significant, the inclusion of the attitude variable in the model made the indirect effect significant, indicating that attitudes play a full mediating role in this relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

According to the model results, the structural model explains 51.3% of the variance in the endogenous variable (R^2 = .513). This indicates that the model has a relatively strong explanatory power. The remaining 48.7% of the variance may be explained by other variables not included in the model.This finding supports the idea that attitudes play a strong structural role in the relationship between stereotypes and inclusive behaviors.

When the fit indices of the structural model are examined (CMIN/df = 2.18; CFI = 0.933; RMSEA = 0.051), it can be seen that the obtained values fall within the limits accepted in the literature. A CMIN/df value below 3, a CFI value above 0.90, and an RMSEA value below 0.08 indicate that the model has a good fit with the data (Kline, 2013). These findings show that the proposed structural model is supported by empirical data.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of attitudes towards employees with disabilities in the influence of stereotypes on inclusive behaviors. The findings indicate that stereotypes alone do not directly determine inclusive behaviors, but influence them indirectly through employees' attitudes. These results reveal that inclusive behaviors are shaped not only by cognitive stereotypes but also by the attitudinal transformation of these stereotypes.

The research findings note that stereotypes do not have a direct and significant effect on inclusive behavior. This indicates that the preconceived notions individuals hold at the mental level may not always directly translate into behavior. Particularly in an organizational context, employees may exhibit behavior in accordance with corporate norms, ethical guidelines, and professional role expectations, regardless of their personal stereotypes. Therefore, it can be said that cognitive stereotypes alone are not sufficient to determine inclusive behavior.

This finding can be explained within the framework of social psychology literature. This situation is consistent with the approach frequently emphasized in the social psychology literature, which suggests that cognitive evaluations do not always directly translate into behavior (Krueger and Funder, 2004). Individuals' cognitive categories and stereotypes often undergo an attitudinal evaluation process before they can influence behavior (Mendoza and Yan, 2025). Especially in organizational settings, individuals exhibit behavior based both on their personal beliefs and in accordance with organizational norms, professional roles, and social expectations. Therefore, it is argued that the influence of stereotypes on behavior often occurs through an indirect mechanism (Lu et al., 2025). The findings indicate that stereotypes influence inclusive behaviors indirectly, through attitudes, supporting the cognition–attitude–behavior chain and the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002).

The findings indicate that in organizations within the air transport sector, the competence stereotype toward disabled employees is more dominant than the warmth stereotype. In other words, according to employees in these organizations, colleagues with disabilities are intelligent, effective, reliable, talented, resourceful, or competent enough to perform their duties. Therefore, their attitudes towards them are also more cognitively and behaviorally positive, and much less emotionally effective. This finding can be interpreted using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). The relationship between

attitude and behavior can be considered complementary and mutually supportive. In this context, cognitive and behavioral attitudes coincide with the stereotype of high competence. If the stereotype of warmth prevailed, positive emotional attitudes could also be more effective.

This result is important in explaining how the stereotype content model operates within the context of organizational behavior. The research findings show that individuals' mental categories do not automatically translate into organizational behavior, but rather are reflected in behavior through an attitudinal evaluation process. In this respect, the study provides an explanatory contribution to the literature by revealing the psychological mechanism that explains the formation of inclusive behaviors.

Consistent with Nelissen et al. (2016), positive attitudes facilitate inclusive behaviors and team integration, highlighting the importance of attitudinal processes (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). Unlike Nelissen et al. (2016), this study examines employees with disabilities specifically in the air transport sector and highlights the mediating role of attitudes, providing sector-specific insights not previously addressed. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the findings will offer theoretical insights while also having practical implications for organizational practices.

The research findings also offer important managerial implications for organizations. Firstly, developing inclusive behaviors should not be limited solely to policies aimed at changing employees' cognitive stereotypes. Instead, training programs, awareness campaigns, and inclusivity-focused human resources practices should be developed to improve employees' attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Especially in sectors with high teamwork intensity, supporting an inclusive organizational culture can strengthen collaboration among employees and enable more effective participation of employees with disabilities in organizational life.

An examination of the literature reveals that prior research focused on disabled employees; largely dependent on mandatory costs, physical environmental conditions and adaptation (Sanclemente et al., 2024), legal regulations on working life, and an egalitarian approach (Mullin et al., 2023) or the problems experienced in the process of recruiting disabled employees (Bellucci et al., 2023). The absence of earlier studies in the same context, field, and scope highlights the originality and valuable contribution of this study to the existing literature. Moreover, this represents a crucial step for future studies, going beyond merely addressing a research problem and the gap it presents.

From a theoretical perspective, this result is remarkable because, in general, research results show that high warmth (mostly emotionally based) and low competency stereotypes are common for employees with disabilities (Fiske et al., 2002). In the end, this results in the enhanced inclusion of employees with disabilities in work teams. Such an approach has ensured that the behavior of all employees towards each other is based on cooperation to a greater extent, especially in sectors and organizations that require widespread teamwork, such as air transportation, and moreover, it has created suitable and necessary conditions for disabled employees to reveal their true potential like other employees in the organization. In this context, a significant amount of research highlighting the importance of inclusive organizations (Gould et al., 2020; Mullin et al., 2023; Sanclemente et al., 2024; Randel et al., 2025; Kar et al., 2025; Gandía et al., 2025) makes these findings meaningful.

Indeed, the relationships between stereotypes, attitudes, and inclusive behaviors may differ, particularly across sectors with different organizational cultures and business practices. This sector-specific focus limits the generalizability of the findings, and caution should be exercised when extending the results to other industries.

Another important limitation is that the data used in this research was collected using a self-report survey method. This approach may introduce self-report bias, as participants could overstate their attitudes or behaviors, which might affect the accuracy of the observed relationships. This carries the risk of potential measurement errors such as social desirability bias and common method bias. The possibility that participants may tend to overestimate their attitudes and behaviors toward employees with disabilities should not be overlooked. Therefore, it is recommended that future research utilize different data collection methods (e.g., multi-source data, observational measurements, or experimental designs).

Moreover, the sample in this study includes both managers and other employees within the organization. However, understanding how employees with disabilities perceive their position within the organization is of great importance. One suggestion for future research is to conduct the study considering the perspective of employees with disabilities. Subsequently, the perspective on the subject can be enriched with a comparative analysis. This can also be groundbreaking in terms of designing different research projects.

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