

Disability-Inclusive Employment and Company Value Proposition Enactment: A Qualitative Framework from a Sri Lankan Service-Sector Case

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study develops a contextually grounded framework explaining how disability-inclusive employment may contribute to company value proposition enactment within a high-contact service organisation in Sri Lanka. It shifts attention from compliance or symbolic representation to the organisational mechanisms through which inclusion enters service routines and stakeholder interpretation.

Design/methodology/approach: The study uses an interpretive qualitative single-case design. The dataset comprises participants: 12 employees with disabilities, six peers and subordinates, five supervisors and managers, and four customers. Data were collected between April 2023 and January 2024 through semi-structured interviews and stakeholder group discussions. Iterative coding, constant comparison, descriptive code co-occurrence review, an interpretive relational map, and a theory-led directed acyclic graph were used to develop and audit the framework. The visual and co-occurrence analyses are supplementary qualitative devices; they do not estimate network parameters or causal effects.

Findings: Five interrelated mechanisms were identified: task-environment fit, ethical consistency, capability signalling, adaptive innovation, and internal marketing effects. These mechanisms appeared to connect inclusive work arrangements with service reliability, perceived authenticity, employee advocacy, and process learning. Their operation was conditional on leadership commitment, supervisory capability, accessibility infrastructure, staffing pressure, and repeated service interaction.

Originality: The study reframes disability-inclusive employment as a potentially market-facing organisational capability when rights-based inclusion is enacted through accessible systems, supported performance, and consistent service routines. It integrates the social model of disability, the capability approach, service-dominant logic, signalling theory, internal marketing, and service-quality scholarship.

Implications: Managers should connect inclusive hiring with accessible job design, supervisor training, employee voice, and service-process evaluation. Business-value arguments should complement, not replace, the ethical, legal, and human-rights basis for inclusion.

Keywords:

disability-inclusive employment; value proposition enactment; service-dominant logic; signalling theory; internal marketing; Sri Lanka

Research limitations: Evidence comes from one Sri Lankan organisation and includes only four customers. Customer facing interpretations are therefore exploratory, and the framework supports analytical transferability rather than statistical generalisation. Comparative, multi-site, longitudinal, and larger-customer studies are required.

Introduction

Disability-inclusive employment is simultaneously a rights issue, an organisational-design challenge, and a question of how workplaces convert human capability into meaningful participation. Rights-based approaches reject the treatment of persons with disabilities as passive recipients of organisational benevolence, while the social model redirects attention from individual deficit to disabling barriers in physical, social, technological, and managerial arrangements (Oliver, 1990; United Nations, 2006; World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011). Yet organisational and marketing accounts often remain divided. One stream emphasises equality, accessibility, and non-discrimination; another emphasises reputation, workforce diversity, or business benefits. The division risks either treating inclusion as detached from core operations or instrumentalising rights solely for commercial return.

The marketing problem is especially relevant in service organisations. Value propositions are not delivered as fixed packages; they are offered, enacted, and evaluated through resource integration, frontline behaviour, organisational routines, and beneficiary experience (Grönroos, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016). Workforce arrangements can therefore influence the reliability, responsiveness, authenticity, and consistency through which stakeholders interpret an organisation's promises. However, existing research on disability and work has concentrated mainly on hiring, accommodation, discrimination, organisational climate, retention, and employee outcomes (Beatty, Baldridge, Boehm, Kulkarni, & Colella, 2019; Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2014; Schur, Kruse, Blasi, & Blanck, 2009; Stone & Colella, 1996; Vornholt et al., 2018). It has provided less explanation of the mechanisms through which inclusive employment becomes visible within service encounters and may shape the enactment of a company value proposition. This gap is important in lower- and middle-income settings, where disability-related employment disparities coexist with uneven accessibility, resource constraints, and differences between formal policy and workplace practice (International Labour Organization, 2015; Mitra, 2006; Mizunoya & Mitra, 2013). South Asia is not a homogeneous institutional or cultural region, and evidence from one country cannot establish a regional pattern. Accordingly, the present study treats Sri Lanka as the empirical setting and South Asia only as a possible domain for later analytical comparison. Sri Lanka has a statutory rights framework for persons with disabilities and is a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but formal protection does not by itself explain how inclusion is enacted in everyday organisations (Government of Sri

Lanka, 1996; United Nations, 2006). The focal case, Pizza Hut Sri Lanka, offers an information-rich high-contact service setting in which standardised routines, peak-time pressure, frontline interaction, and disability-inclusive employment intersect.

The study therefore asks:

Research question: How is disability-inclusive employment translated into company value proposition enactment within a high-contact service organisation in Sri Lanka, and under what organisational and contextual conditions do these mechanisms appear to operate?

The study has three objectives:

1. to identify organisational and service-interaction mechanisms through which disability-inclusive employment may contribute to value proposition enactment in the focal organisation;
2. to examine the organisational, stakeholder, and contextual conditions that enable or constrain these mechanisms; and
3. to develop a contextually grounded framework that can guide future comparative research in Sri Lanka and comparable South Asian service settings.

The contribution is deliberately bounded. The paper does not estimate causal effects, claim that inclusive employment automatically creates customer trust, or generalise from four customers to a market. Instead, it develops mechanism-oriented propositions from a qualitative single case. It also uses relational mapping and a directed acyclic graph (DAG) as transparency and bias-audit devices, not as substitutes for network measurement or causal identification.

Theoretical background and critical literature review

Disability-inclusive employment: from individual deficit to socially produced barriers

Medical or individual models located disability primarily in bodily or cognitive impairment and tend to frame organisational response as treatment, adjustment, or exceptional assistance. The social model instead distinguishes impairment from disability and argues that exclusion is produced when environments, systems, and norms are designed around an assumed non-disabled worker (Oliver, 1990, 1996). Within employment, such barriers may include inaccessible premises and technologies, rigid task allocation, communication routines, performance standards that ignore different ways of working, managerial assumptions, stigma, and restricted access to customer-facing or developmental roles.

This shift is important for the present study because it changes the analytical question. Rather than asking whether a worker's impairment permits contribution to service quality, the study asks whether organisational arrangements enable or obstruct contribution. Inclusive employment is therefore more than recruitment. It includes accessible job design, accommodation pathways, meaningful task allocation, employee

voice, equitable development, and the routinisation of support within ordinary management practice.

The social model should not, however, be treated as complete. Critics note that a strict barrier-only account can understate embodied impairment effects, pain, fatigue, care needs, and differences among impairments, while universal claims can obscure intersections with gender, class, education, and location (Mitra, 2006; Shakespeare, 2006). A relational interpretation is therefore more suitable: work participation emerges from the interaction among personal characteristics, resources, organisational arrangements, and wider institutions. This interpretation prevents both individual blame and an overly simple assumption that removing one barrier produces equivalent outcomes for all workers.

Capability approach and substantive opportunities at work

The capability approach distinguishes resources from the substantive freedom to achieve valued ways of being and doing (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Formal access to employment, an assistive tool, or an accommodation policy is not itself a capability. Resources must be converted into real opportunities through personal, social, and environmental conversion factors. In a workplace, these factors include accessible technology, supervisor competence, scheduling, transport, job redesign, team cooperation, communication support, training, and freedom to exercise voice.

Applied to disability, the approach explains why the same nominal resource may produce unequal results (Mitra, 2006). A workstation adjustment may enable one employee to work accurately but remain ineffective if the surrounding workflow, performance feedback, or customer interface is inaccessible. Similarly, employment may be formally inclusive while employees are confined to peripheral tasks and denied opportunities to demonstrate competence. Substantive inclusion therefore concerns whether organisational resources become capabilities and functionings: reliable task performance, participation in service interaction, learning, progression, and influence over work design.

The capability approach also disciplines the business-value argument. Organisational value cannot be inferred merely from the presence of employees with disabilities. A market-facing contribution becomes plausible only when resources are converted into supported capabilities and those capabilities enter service and organisational processes. This logic underpins the first mechanism examined in the study, task–environment fit, and also places employee agency before external branding claims.

Service-dominant logic and value proposition enactment

Service-dominant logic (SDL) views service—the application of competences for another’s benefit—as the fundamental basis of exchange. Actors integrate resources within institutional arrangements, while value is realised in use and evaluated by beneficiaries rather than embedded unilaterally by the firm (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008,

2016). Employees are not merely delivery channels; their knowledge, judgement, communication, and adaptive action are operant resources within a service ecosystem.

This perspective is useful but requires critical extension. SDL can describe resource integration without specifying how ableist assumptions, unequal power, inaccessible systems, and employment hierarchies restrict whose resources are recognised. Disability studies and the capability approach address this omission by asking whether organisational arrangements enable employees to exercise competence. Conversely, SDL clarifies how enabled capabilities may enter a value proposition: through handoffs, response to service failures, customer communication, process adaptation, and the consistency between organisational promises and experienced service.

The paper uses value proposition enactment to describe this process. A firm may communicate fairness, reliability, or social responsibility, but these remain propositions until stakeholders encounter practices consistent with them. Disability-inclusive employment may contribute to enactment when accessible arrangements support dependable performance, when supervisors respond consistently, when employees participate in process improvement, and when external signals are grounded in ordinary service practice. Inclusion does not automatically create value; poorly designed or tokenistic practices can generate role segregation, coordination failures, or scepticism.

Signalling, employer branding, and internal marketing

Signalling theory addresses decision-making under information asymmetry. Observable signals allow stakeholders to infer otherwise difficult-to-observe qualities, but credibility depends on signal cost, consistency, observability, and the relationship between the signal and the underlying attribute (Akerlof, 1970; Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011; Spence, 1973). In the present context, a policy statement or isolated promotional image is a low-cost inclusion cue. It may attract attention but does not demonstrate whether the organisation has accessible systems, competent supervisors, equitable work allocation, or sustained employee participation.

Routinised practices may provide more credible signals because they are harder to imitate without organizational investment. Repeatedly observed task support, fair supervision, visible competence, and consistent service can signal ethical consistency and operational capability. The receiver remains active: customers, employees, and other stakeholders may interpret the same practice differently depending on prior attitudes, direct experience, service outcomes, and perceived authenticity. Signalling theory therefore supports a conditional, not automatic, relationship between inclusive employment and market-facing interpretation.

Employer branding concerns the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits associated with employment and the development of a distinctive employer identity (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The original manuscript cited this work as 2019, but the publication and DOI correspond to 2004; the reference has been corrected. Employer

branding is not only external recruitment communication. It depends on whether employee experience supports the promised identity. Internal marketing similarly treats employees as internal stakeholders whose understanding, capability, and commitment affect external service delivery (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Inclusive communication, supervisor support, and organisational fairness may strengthen identification and advocacy, while inconsistency between public inclusion claims and internal practice can damage credibility.

Service quality as an experienced, context-dependent outcome

Service-quality scholarship offers a vocabulary for connecting organisational arrangements with customer experience. SERVQUAL identifies reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as prominent dimensions of perceived service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The mechanisms proposed in this study intersect especially with reliability, responsiveness, and assurance: task–environment fit may reduce avoidable breakdowns; adaptive work practices may improve responsiveness; and consistent supervision may support assurance and perceived fairness.

SERVQUAL is not used as a measurement model in this study. Its expectation–perception gap, dimensional stability, and cross-context transferability have been extensively questioned (Buttle, 1996). The present data do not contain a validated service-quality scale or a representative customer sample. Service quality is therefore treated as a sensitising domain for interpreting participant accounts, not as a quantified construct. This distinction is essential because four customer participants cannot substantiate population-level claims about loyalty, repeat patronage, or brand performance.

Sri Lankan setting and cautious South Asian relevance

Research across developing countries documents persistent disability-related employment gaps and the importance of environmental and institutional conversion factors (Mitra, Posarac, & Vick, 2013; Mizunoya & Mitra, 2013). Evidence from India also illustrates how disability, location, job structure, and labour-market conditions interact rather than producing a single uniform employment experience (Mitra & Sambamoorthi, 2008). In Sri Lanka, the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act provides a formal rights framework, while broader global commitments locate employment within equality and participation rights (Government of Sri Lanka, 1996; United Nations, 2006). Ethnographic work further cautions that disability meanings and responses are culturally and institutionally situated (Liyanage, 2017).

The focal case sits within a multinational quick-service format but operates through local labour, infrastructure, management, and customer interaction. This combination makes imported standardisation and local adaptation analytically relevant. Global South management scholarship warns against treating theories developed in dominant

Western settings as context-free and encourages attention to institutional plurality, uneven resources, and local knowledge (Alcadipani, Khan, Gantman, & Nkomo, 2012). The paper therefore does not claim a singular “South Asian culture.”

Instead, it identifies conditions that comparative studies should examine: enforcement of disability rights, accessibility infrastructure, labour-market informality, managerial hierarchy, service format, organisational resources, urban–rural location, impairment type, and customer-contact intensity.

Critical synthesis and sensitising framework

The literature reveals a fragmented explanation. Disability-employment research identifies barriers, accommodation, culture, and employee outcomes but rarely traces market-facing service mechanisms. SDL explains resource integration and value proposition enactment but under-specifies disability, accessibility, and power. Signalling theory explains credibility under information asymmetry but not how employee capability is produced. Employer branding and internal marketing connect internal experience with external identity but may overemphasise communicated identity. Service-quality research names experienced dimensions but does not explain why inclusive employment would affect them. No single lens is sufficient.

Table 1 and Figure 1 integrate these perspectives. The framework begins with organisational arrangements that reduce disabling barriers. Resources and accommodations must then be converted into capabilities. Capabilities enter service interactions and internal processes, producing possible intermediate outcomes such as reliability, process learning, and employee advocacy. Repeated and observable enactment may then inform stakeholder interpretation. Contextual and organisational conditions can enable, weaken, or reverse each link. The model is a sensitising framework for qualitative analysis, not a pre-tested causal model.

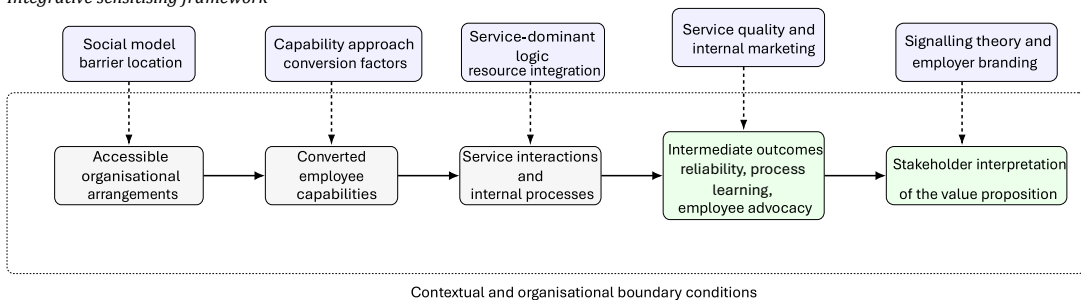
Table 1
Integration of theoretical lenses

Theoretical lens	Primary analytical role	Question directed to the case
Social model of disability	Locates exclusion in organisational and social arrangements rather than individual deficit.	Which workplace systems, routines, and assumptions enable or disable participation?
Capability approach	Explains conversion of resources and accommodations into substantive opportunities and agency.	Do supports create real opportunities to perform, participate, learn, and progress?
Service-dominant logic	Explains resource integration and value proposition enactment through interaction.	How do employee capabilities enter service routines and stakeholder experience?
Signalling theory	Explains credibility and interpretation of observable inclusion practices.	When are inclusion cues viewed as substantive rather than symbolic?

Employer branding and internal marketing	Links employee experience, identification, advocacy, and external brand consistency.	Does internal practice support or contradict the organisation's external promise?
Service-quality scholarship	Connects organisational practice with reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.	Which experienced service dimensions are plausibly implicated, without treating them as measured outcomes?
Contextual and Global	Specifies institutional and resource-related boundary conditions.	Which features of the Sri Lankan case may limit or support transferability?
South perspectives		

Note. The lenses are complementary sensitising devices; none independently establishes a causal effect.

Figure 1
Integrative sensitising framework



Researcher-generated theoretical figure; arrows represent propositions for qualitative inquiry, not estimated effects.

Methodology

Research design and case logic

The study is reframed as an interpretive qualitative single-case study supported by descriptive code co-occurrence review and visual analytical tools. It is not described as mixed methods because numerical code counts or binary coding do not constitute an independently designed quantitative strand. The case-study strategy is appropriate where the research question concerns how a contemporary organisational process is enacted within its setting and where boundaries between process and context are analytically important (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

Pizza Hut Sri Lanka was selected purposively as an information-rich instrumental case. The organisation combines high customer contact, standardised and time-sensitive service routines, multi-actor coordination, and the employment of persons with disabilities in frontline and operational roles. These features make visible the interface between accessible work design, employee capability, service processes, and stakeholder interpretation. The case is not treated as representative of the quick-service sector, Sri

Lanka, or South Asia. Its value lies in mechanism development and analytical transferability to settings with sufficiently similar conditions.

Case boundaries

The bounded case comprises Pizza Hut Sri Lanka outlets in urban and suburban locations, the period April 2023 to January 2024, and stakeholders directly involved in or repeatedly exposed to disability-inclusive service routines. The phenomenon of interest is the translation of inclusive employment practices into service and organisational processes. The unit of analysis is the organisational mechanism within the bounded case, rather than the individual participant or the Sri Lankan service sector as a whole.

The case permitted examination of food preparation, order coordination, counter service, scheduling, supervision, peer coordination, and customer interaction. The study did not collect comparative data from other companies or countries, objective outlet-performance records, financial outcomes, or a representative customer survey. These exclusions define the evidential boundary of the framework.

Participants, recruitment, and data collection

Data were collected from 27 purposively selected participants. The dataset comprised 12 employees with physical or sensory disabilities in frontline and operational roles, six peers and subordinates, five supervisors and managers, and four regular customers. Employees with disabilities participated in semi-structured interviews. Organisational stakeholders and customers participated in facilitated group discussions. Because the customer group contained only four participants, it is described as a small customer group discussion, not as evidence of an independently saturated customer focus-group strand.

Participants were selected for direct knowledge of the service routines under study. Employees provided accounts of task execution, adjustments, barriers, and customer interaction. Peers and subordinates contributed evidence on handoffs and teamwork. Supervisors and managers addressed task allocation, coaching, performance monitoring, and operational constraints. Customers offered a limited external perspective based on repeated encounters. Recruitment was designed for case-specific information richness rather than statistical representation.

The original study stated that data collection continued until thematic saturation. The revised interpretation uses the more cautious concept of information power (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The narrow case aim, role-specific sample, use of established theory, and recurrent dialogue across internal stakeholder groups supported overall case-level data sufficiency. However, information power varied by group. In particular, the four-customer subgroup cannot establish robust saturation of customer themes, and its evidence is treated as exploratory.

Interviews and group discussions were conducted in English or Sinhala according to participant preference, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed. Sinhala material was translated into English during transcription. Table 2 reports only characteristics contained in the supplied manuscript; no additional demographic or performance variables are inferred.

Table 2
Sample composition and analytical role

Participant group	<i>n</i>	Case-relevant characteristics	Analytical contribution and limitation
Employees with disabilities	12	Physical and sensory impairments; counter service, order coordination, food preparation, and related operational roles; tenure reported from one to five years.	Primary accounts of work design, supports, barriers, task performance, and service interaction.
Peers and subordinates	6	Daily operational interaction and shift-based coordination.	Evidence on handoffs, peer support, workload, and routine integration.
Supervisors and managers	5	Scheduling, task allocation, feedback, performance monitoring, and service-quality assurance.	Evidence on supervisory routines, constraints, and consistency of implementation.
Customers	4	Regular customers with repeated exposure to the focal service setting.	Limited illustrative perspective on external interpretation; insufficient for population inference or independent thematic saturation.
Total	27	One Sri Lankan quick-service organisation across urban and suburban outlets.	Supports case-level mechanism development, not statistical generalisation.

Interview and discussion guide

The semi-structured instruments explored role responsibilities, task execution, workplace supports, service speed and accuracy, customer interaction, teamwork, supervisory practice, operational constraints, and perceptions of organisational value. Customer prompts explored immediate service experience and whether inclusive

employment affected perceptions of the organisation. Because direct questions about trust or loyalty can invite socially desirable answers, such responses were not treated as behavioural evidence. The revised interview guide is reproduced in Appendix I.

Analytical strategy

Analysis proceeded in four linked stages. First-cycle descriptive and process coding captured reported practices, barriers, interactions, and outcomes. Second-cycle pattern coding integrated these codes into candidate mechanisms and boundary conditions, following established qualitative coding guidance (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2016). Constant comparison was used across stakeholder groups to identify convergence, divergence, and negative cases. The authors' prior self-citation has been removed because it was not necessary to justify a standard coding procedure.

Second, a descriptive co-occurrence review examined whether selected codes appeared within the same participant record or discussion transcript. Co-occurrence was used to direct interpretive attention; it was not treated as a statistical population association. The previously reported chi-square significance claims have been removed because the manuscript did not provide observed cells, expected frequencies, degrees of freedom, exact p values, or assumption checks, and the total of 27 records makes sparse cells likely. No hypothesis test is retained.

Third, an interpretive relational map represented recurrently described connections among employees with disabilities, peers, supervisors, support functions, service routines, and customers. Nodes and ties were derived from coded descriptions of interaction. No complete sociometric roster, edge-weight protocol, centrality statistic, or network-level test was available. The figure is therefore a qualitative relational map rather than a formal social network analysis.

Fourth, a DAG was constructed as a theory-led bias-audit device (Pearl, 2009; Tennant et al., 2021). It makes proposed ordering and possible contextual influences visible, helping distinguish mechanisms, outcomes, prior attitudes, repeated exposure, staffing pressure, and infrastructure. The DAG does not demonstrate direction, identify a sufficient adjustment set, or estimate a causal effect. Its purpose is to expose assumptions and constrain causal language.

Trustworthiness, positionality, and reflexivity

The research team brought management and human-resource perspectives to a topic that can easily be interpreted through a business-case lens. This positioning created a risk of privileging organisational value over the rights, agency, 270 and heterogeneous experiences of persons with disabilities. The revised analysis addresses this risk in three ways. First, the social model, capability approach, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are used as explicit counterweights to instrumental reasoning.

Second, participant accounts are separated from researcher-generated mechanisms, and the figures are labelled as interpretive. Third, negative cases and boundary conditions—including staffing shortages, infrastructure limitations, and the possibility of symbolic inclusion—are retained rather than treated as noise.

Access through the focal organisation may also have influenced recruitment and encouraged socially desirable accounts, particularly where participants discussed supervision or brand reputation. Hierarchical group discussions can inhibit dissent. These risks cannot be eliminated retrospectively and are acknowledged as limitations. The study does not claim that reflexive practice neutralised researcher influence; instead, it makes interpretive choices and evidential boundaries explicit, consistent with reflexive qualitative practice (Berger, 2015; Tracy, 2010).

Ethics, data availability, and use of generative AI

The study received approval from an institutional ethics review committee in Sri Lanka (ERN 07/2023). Participants received study information, participation was voluntary, written informed consent was obtained, and identifying details were removed from the analytical materials. Because the transcripts contain context-sensitive workplace accounts, they are not publicly available. An anonymised codebook, framework description, and figure-construction notes may be requested from the authors, subject to ethical and confidentiality constraints.

Generative AI tools were used only for language refinement and document formatting. They were not used to generate participants, quotations, data, coding, co-occurrence patterns, network ties, or causal findings. The authors remain responsible for all claims and must confirm that this disclosure complies with the journal's policy before submission.

Findings

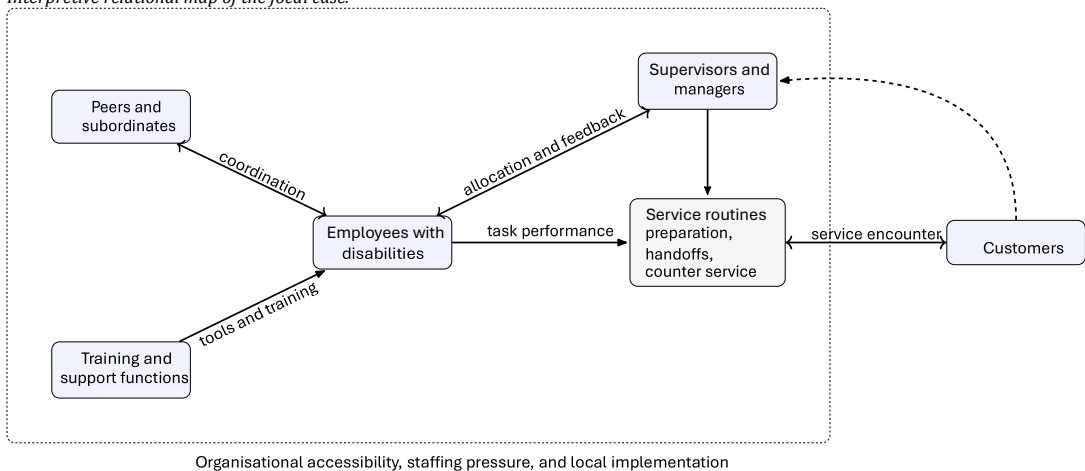
The findings are organised around the case's relational architecture and five mechanisms. The analysis distinguishes participant accounts from researcher interpretation and treats customer-facing claims as exploratory. Quoted extracts are labelled by broad stakeholder category because the supplied manuscript did not provide stable participant-level identifiers. They are illustrative extracts, not evidence of prevalence.

Relational architecture of the case

Participants described inclusion as embedded in interdependent service routines rather than located solely in the employee with a disability. Employees with disabilities interacted with peers through handoffs and workload coordination, with supervisors through task allocation and feedback, with support functions through training or tools, and with customers at the service interface. Figure II reconstructs these recurrent relationships. It does not claim measured centrality or complete network coverage.

The relational interpretation challenges a simple peripheral-placement account: the supplied data describe employees with disabilities performing counter service, order coordination, and food preparation. At the same time, placement in a core workflow did not guarantee inclusion. Service continuity depended on accessible work design, peer coordination, supervisor action, staffing, and infrastructure. The key analytical unit was therefore the configuration linking people, tasks, and routines.

Figure 2
Interpretive relational map of the focal case.



Nodes and ties summarise recurrent coded relationships; no sociometric centrality or edge-weight estimates are claimed.

Mechanism 1: task–environment fit

Workplace adjustments, task redesign, and spatial accessibility were repeatedly connected in employee and supervisor accounts with the ability to perform accurately under service pressure. One employee account stated, “After they changed my station and gave me more space, I stopped making mistakes during rush hours.” The extract supports a mechanism in which work design changes the compatibility between task demands and the employee’s way of working. The immediate analytical outcome is supported performance; service reliability is a plausible intermediate organisational consequence.

The mechanism was enabled by practical tools, scheduling, accessible space, clear sequencing, and supervisor willingness to adapt tasks. It was constrained by inadequate infrastructure, staffing pressure, and role allocation based on stereotypes rather than individual capability. The finding does not imply that adjustments always reduce errors or that disability status predicts performance. It indicates that, within the focal case, participants linked fit between task and environment with more stable execution.

Mechanism 2: ethical consistency

Participants distinguished occasional discretionary help from routine and predictable supervision. An illustrative employee extract noted, “My supervisor checks my workflow

every shift, not just when problems happen.” Consistent coaching, feedback, and problem resolution were interpreted as evidence that inclusion was embedded in ordinary management rather than granted as exceptional charity.

Ethical consistency operates at two interfaces. Internally, it affects whether employees experience fairness and dependable support. Externally, visible consistency may inform stakeholder perceptions of organisational authenticity. The second interface is weakly evidenced because only four customers participated. It is therefore framed as a proposition: where stakeholders repeatedly observe alignment between public commitments and routine managerial conduct, inclusive practice may become a more credible ethical signal. The mechanism can fail where support depends on a single supervisor, where accommodation is uneven, or where public claims exceed internal practice.

Mechanism 3: capability signalling

Visible employment alone did not provide sufficient evidence of organisational capability. Participants’ accounts instead emphasised employees performing ordinary service roles within the main workflow. One extract stated, “I am not doing side tasks; I am part of the main service line.” Another reported, “Customers see us working normally; no one treats it as special anymore.” These accounts suggest that routinised participation may signal both employee competence and the organisation’s capacity to design inclusive work.

The mechanism differs from symbolic representation. A campaign, policy statement, or isolated image can communicate intent, but credible signalling requires observable consistency between communication and practice. Signal interpretation is not controlled by the firm. Prior attitudes, direct service experience, visibility of disability, and service outcomes can alter reception. The data do not show that capability signalling increased brand equity, sales, or population-level trust. They support a bounded proposition that repeated, performance-grounded inclusion may reduce the ambiguity surrounding organisational inclusion claims.

Mechanism 4: adaptive innovation

Employees and supervisors described adjustments and workflow discussions that simplified sequences, redistributed tasks, or made service processes easier to navigate. This pattern is interpreted as adaptive innovation: inclusion creates occasions to question assumptions embedded in routine design and to identify bottlenecks that may affect more than one employee. The mechanism is consistent with the capability approach because employee voice is part of capability conversion, and with SDL because process adaptation changes how resources are integrated.

Evidence for customer outcomes was comparatively weak. The original manuscript itself described innovation effects as less consistent than reliability effects. The revised finding therefore stops at process learning and possible responsiveness. It does not infer improved customer experience without direct, broader evidence. Adaptive innovation

was constrained by standardised franchise procedures, time pressure, and the discretion available to local managers.

Mechanism 5: internal marketing effects

Inclusive communication and perceived fairness were associated in participant accounts with pride, peer advocacy, and brand-consistent behaviour. An illustrative extract stated, "Working here makes me proud; I tell others this is a fair company." This supports a mechanism in which internal experience informs how employees explain and enact the organisation's identity. Internal marketing is not treated as persuading employees to repeat a message; it concerns whether organisational systems make the message credible.

Positive internal effects were conditional. Where inclusion increased workload without adequate staffing, where peers lacked guidance, or where employees were showcased without meaningful participation, advocacy could weaken. The mechanism also should not be confused with retention or engagement effects, which were not measured. It is best understood as an interpretive link between experienced organisational consistency and voluntary brand-supporting behaviour.

Cross-mechanism synthesis and boundary conditions

Table 3 summarises the five mechanisms, evidence patterns, enabling conditions, and interpretive limits. Figure 2 shows their integration. The framework is non-linear: supervisory capability can influence task fit, ethical consistency, innovation, and internal marketing simultaneously; accessibility and staffing pressure can constrain all five; and stakeholder interpretation depends on repeated exposure and prior attitudes.

Table 3
Mechanism-evidence summary and interpretive limits

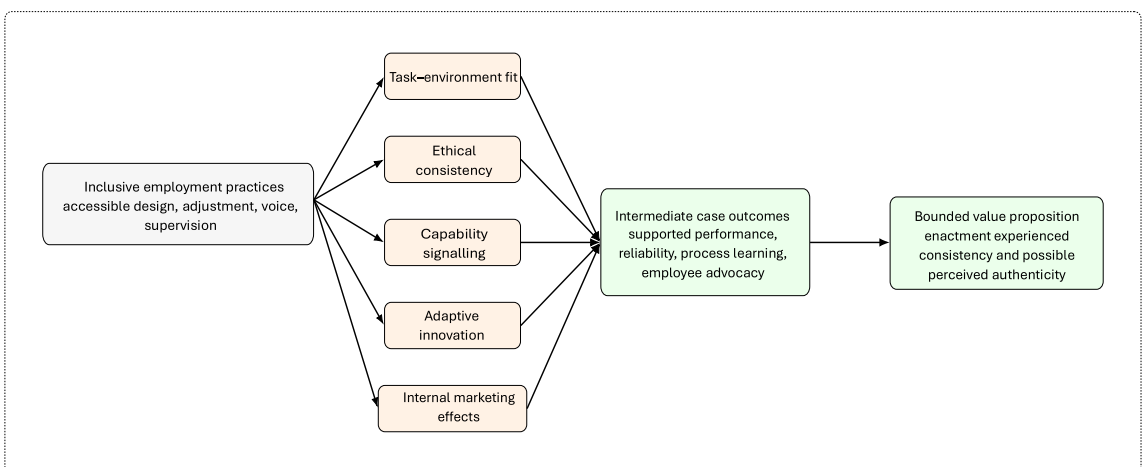
Mechanism	Pattern in the supplied qualitative material	Enabling and constraining conditions	Bounded value-proposition interpretation
Task–environment fit	Adjustments, task redesign, and accessible space were linked to supported performance and fewer reported work-flow difficulties.	Tools, scheduling, clear task sequence, supervisor responsiveness; constrained by infrastructure and overload.	May support service reliability; does not establish a disability-performance effect.
Ethical consistency	Routine coaching and predictable support were distinguished from discretionary or crisis-only assistance.	Leadership commitment, supervisor skill, fair implementation; constrained by	May strengthen perceived authenticity; customer inference remains exploratory.

		inconsistent managers and social desirability.	
Capability signalling	Employees described visible participation in core service roles rather than peripheral placement.	Routinisation, observable competence, communication-practice alignment; constrained by tokenism and prior stigma.	May make inclusion claims more credible; no evidence of brand-equity or sales effects.
Adaptive innovation	Inclusive participation prompted local workflow adjustment and process reflection.	Employee voice, discretion, learning climate; constrained by standardisation and time pressure.	Supports a proposition about process learning; customer-experience effects require testing.
Internal marketing effects	Accounts connected fairness and inclusion with pride and voluntary advocacy.	Consistent internal practice, peer support, equitable workload; constrained by burden shifting and symbolic promotion.	May support brand-consistent behaviour; retention and engagement were not measured.

Figure 3

Five-mechanism framework

The figure synthesises case-based interpretations and identifies conditions; it does not represent universal or statistically estimated pathways.



Boundary conditions: leadership, supervisor capability, accessibility, staffing pressure, service format, repeated exposure, prior attitudes

Descriptive co-occurrence review and rejection of inferential testing

The qualitative coding matrix indicated recurring joint discussion of selected practices and outcomes, summarised in Table 4. The table deliberately uses no counts, significance

labels, or effect sizes because the original submission did not provide the underlying cell frequencies needed for independent verification. Co-occurrence within a transcript can indicate that concepts were discussed together; it cannot establish independence, temporal ordering, a population association, or causation.

Table 4
Descriptive code co-occurrence interpretation

Code combination examined	Descriptive pattern in the supplied analysis	Permitted interpretation
Workplace adjustment / task alignment with service reliability	Recurred in employee and supervisor accounts.	Supports closer qualitative examination of task–environment fit; no hypothesis test or causal effect.
Supervisory practice with fairness/ ethical consistency	Recurred across internal stakeholder accounts.	Supports the ethical-consistency mechanism; may also reflect shared organisational narratives.
Visible, routinised inclusion with external credibility	Present in internal accounts and limited customer material.	Exploratory signalling proposition; insufficient for market inference.
Adaptive process change with customer experience	Less consistently articulated than reliability pathways.	Tentative process-learning proposition; requires wider customer and operational evidence.
Symbolic policy cues with trust	Policy statements alone were not described as sufficient for trust.	Supports distinction between symbolic and enacted inclusion, not a “non-significant” statistical result.
Inclusive communication with employee advocacy	Present in pride and advocacy accounts.	Supports an internal-marketing interpretation; does not measure engagement or retention.

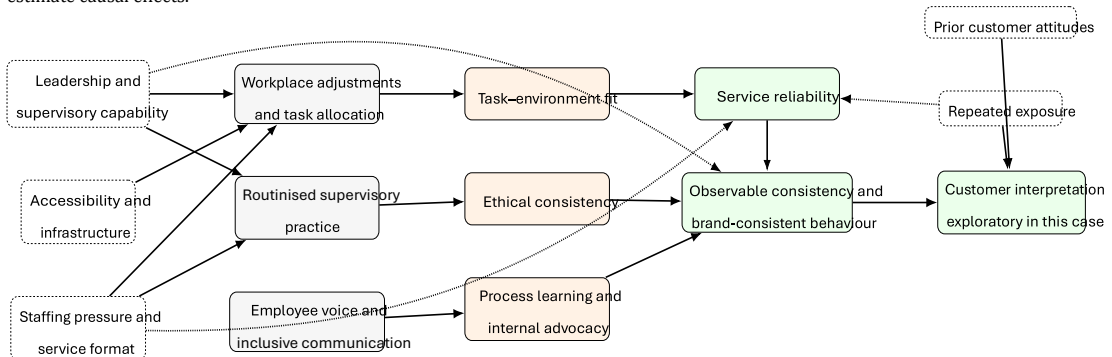
DAG as an assumption and bias-audit device

Figure 4 makes explicit that leadership, accessibility, staffing pressure, service format, prior customer attitudes, and repeated exposure may shape both the practices observed and the outcomes interpreted. The diagram prevents a direct leap from inclusive employment to customer trust. It also shows that service reliability and employee advocacy are intermediate organisational outcomes, while customer interpretation is downstream and only sparsely observed in this dataset.

Figure 4

Theory-led DAG for assumption and bias auditing

Solid arrows show proposed ordering; dotted arrows highlight potential alternative or confounding paths. The DAG does not identify or estimate causal effects.



Discussion

The research question asked how disability-inclusive employment is translated into value proposition enactment and under what conditions. The case suggests a layered answer. Inclusion first requires organisational arrangements that

385 reduce disabling barriers. Those arrangements must become substantive capabilities through task fit, supervision, communication, and employee voice. Capabilities then enter service routines, process adaptation, and internal organisational behaviour. Only after repeated and observable enactment might stakeholders interpret inclusion as evidence of reliability, authenticity, or organisational competence. The pathway is conditional and can break at every stage.

Theoretical contribution: linking rights, capability, service, and credibility

The first contribution is to connect disability-inclusive employment with value proposition enactment without making rights conditional on commercial return. The social model identifies the organisational production of barriers, while the capability approach explains why formal access and resources may not become substantive opportunity. SDL then explains how enabled capabilities enter service interactions. Signalling theory addresses how external stakeholders may interpret observable practice, and internal marketing explains how employee experience can support or contradict external identity.

This integration qualifies each theory. SDL's broad language of resource integration becomes more specific when accessibility and power are considered. Signalling theory is

prevented from reducing inclusion to communication because capability must be organisationally produced before it can be credibly signalled. Employer branding is grounded in employee experience rather than public messaging. Service-quality dimensions are treated as possible experiential domains, not automatically measured outcomes. The five mechanisms specify this cross-theory process at a level suitable for later comparison and testing.

Symbolic inclusion versus routinised enactment

The distinction between symbolic and enacted inclusion is central. Symbolic inclusion can involve policy statements, corporate-social-responsibility narratives, isolated hiring, ceremonial visibility, or promotional imagery. Such actions may express intent but reveal little about task allocation, accessibility, supervisor behaviour, career opportunity, or everyday service participation. Enacted inclusion requires accessible systems, supported performance, employee voice, equitable work, routine accommodation, and consistency between internal practice and external communication.

The case suggests that credible market-facing interpretation, where it occurs, is more likely to arise from repeated organisational investment than from low-cost claims. This is consistent with signalling theory's emphasis on observability and credibility (Connelly et al., 2011; Spence, 1973). It also complicates optimistic business-case narratives: inclusion can create coordination demands, expose inaccessible infrastructure, or be undermined by short staffing. These are not arguments against inclusion. They show that inclusion is an organisational capability requiring design and learning rather than a reputational shortcut.

Relationship with disability-employment research

Prior research demonstrates that workplace culture, accommodation, co-worker response, and managerial practice shape the employment experiences of persons with disabilities (Beatty et al., 2019; Schur et al., 2009; Stone & Colella, 1996; Vornholt et al., 2018). The present case supports this emphasis but extends it toward service processes.

Task-environment fit and ethical consistency show how accommodation and supervision may affect the stability through which a value proposition is enacted. Internal marketing effects extend employee-outcome discussions by proposing a link from experienced inclusion to voluntary advocacy and brand-consistent behaviour.

The findings also resist a uniformly positive account. Disability type, visibility, task demands, organisational hierarchy, and infrastructure may alter how mechanisms operate. The data include physical and sensory impairments but do not support conclusions about intellectual, psychosocial, or episodic disabilities. Nor can the case determine whether the reported mechanisms produce better employment outcomes than alternative arrangements. Future research should include negative and failed cases, not only organisations already recognised for inclusive practice.

Why the Sri Lankan context matters and where transferability stops

The case is analytically meaningful because a multinational service format is enacted through Sri Lankan labour relations, infrastructure, rights implementation, and local management. Formal legal commitment can coexist with uneven practical accessibility. Standardised service systems may support consistency but restrict local redesign. Resource constraints and staffing pressure may make informal adjustments common while leaving them dependent on individual supervisors. These features shape whether inclusion becomes routinised or remains discretionary.

The framework may sensitise research in comparable South Asian service settings, but transferability requires explicit comparison. National law, enforcement, labour informality, urban infrastructure, organisational ownership, customer-contact intensity, gender, class, education, impairment type, and cultural meanings of disability may differ substantially. The phrase “South Asian relevance” therefore refers to questions for comparative research, not evidence of regional generalisability.

Practical implications

For service-firm leaders, the findings suggest that inclusive hiring should be connected too perational design. Accessibility audits should examine the full service process, including digital systems, workstation layout, communication, scheduling, handoffs, emergency procedures, training, and performance feedback. Accommodations should be normalised through transparent procedures rather than depend entirely on individual goodwill.

Line supervisors are pivotal because they translate policy into task allocation, coaching, and problem resolution. Training should address disability awareness, accessible communication, job redesign, fair performance management, and how to avoid both under-expectation and unexamined burden shifting to peers. Employee voice should be incorporated into service-process improvement because persons using accommodations can identify design assumptions and bottlenecks that are otherwise overlooked.

Marketing and employer-branding teams should communicate inclusion only where claims can be substantiated by internal practice. Persons with disabilities should not be used as symbolic brand assets without agency and consent. Customer feedback can be monitored, but organisations should not infer loyalty or trust from favourable anecdotes. HR and marketing metrics should be linked cautiously with operational and employee-experience evidence. Policymakers and disability organisations can support employer capability through guidance, accessible infrastructure, supervisor education, and mechanisms for employee participation.

Business-value arguments must remain secondary to rights. Inclusion is not justified only when it produces measurable market return. The more defensible proposition is that rights-consistent organisational design may also strengthen service and organisational capability under appropriate conditions.

Limitations and theoretically grounded research agenda

The study has substantial limitations. First, it examines one organisation in one country and one high-contact service format. Organisational culture, franchise systems, and case-selection effects cannot be separated. Second, the total sample is small and the customer subgroup contains only four participants. Customer accounts are illustrative and cannot establish customer-theme saturation, trust formation, loyalty, repeat patronage, or market performance. Third, the cross-sectional, interview-based design is vulnerable to recall, social-desirability, gatekeeper, and common-narrative biases. Group hierarchy may have inhibited criticism.

Fourth, the study lacks objective service records, longitudinal observation, financial data, and a comparison case. Fifth, coding and mechanism construction are interpretive. Code frequency and co-occurrence do not indicate importance, independence, or prevalence. Sixth, the relational figure is not a measured social network, and the DAG is an assumption map rather than causal evidence. Seventh, the sample covers physical and sensory impairments and cannot represent the heterogeneity of disability. Eighth, translation from Sinhala to English may have altered nuance. Finally, the case cannot determine whether apparent value-proposition effects arise from disability-inclusive employment, the focal organisation's wider culture, customer familiarity, or other unmeasured conditions.

These limits define a research agenda. Multi-site studies within Sri Lanka should compare organisations with different inclusion maturity and include failed or contested cases. Cross-country South Asian research should test which institutional conditions alter the five mechanisms. Larger and more diverse customer samples could develop and validate measures of perceived authenticity, service assurance, and inclusion-signal credibility. Longitudinal studies could examine whether trust interpretations change with repeated exposure, while service records could test whether task redesign affects reliability. Experiments could compare symbolic and substantively evidenced inclusion communications without assuming that favourable attitudes translate into behaviour. Participatory studies involving persons with disabilities as co-researchers could refine capability and agency dimensions. Intersectional research should examine gender, class, education, location, and impairment type. These designs would resolve whether the mechanisms are case-specific, transferable, mediating, or contingent.

Contribution at three levels

The theoretical contribution is an integrated explanation of how rights-based inclusion may become a market-facing organisational capability through five mechanisms and explicit boundary conditions. The methodological contribution is modest: descriptive relational maps and DAGs can make qualitative assumptions traceable and audit causal overstatement when their limitations are clearly stated. The contextual contribution is a detailed Sri Lankan service case from an underrepresented setting, offering propositions for comparison rather than a regional conclusion.

Conclusion

This study reframes disability-inclusive employment as a rights-grounded organisational capability whose market-facing relevance depends on enactment. Within the focal Sri Lankan service case, accessible arrangements, task-environment fit, consistent supervision, employee voice, and routine participation were interpreted as mechanisms connecting inclusion with supported performance, service reliability, process learning, employee advocacy, and possible stakeholder perceptions of authenticity. These are contextually generated propositions, not universal causal laws.

The revision narrows the original claims in three important ways. Customer-facing evidence is explicitly exploratory because only four customers participated. Code co-occurrences are descriptive and no chi-square significance test is retained. Network and DAG figures are presented as interpretive and bias-audit tools rather than empirical proof of centrality or causality. The resulting framework supports analytical transferability to comparable settings only after readers assess differences in institutions, resources, service format, and disability experience.

For practice, the central lesson is that inclusion cannot be separated from job design, supervision, service systems, and employee agency. Organisations should not pursue disability inclusion as a promotional signal alone, and business-value arguments should never displace legal and human-rights obligations. Where rights-consistent practices are accessible, routinised, and open to employee influence, they may also strengthen the consistency with which an organisation enacts its value proposition.

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