

Individual Characteristics and Their Influence on Organizational Behavior: A Case Study in the Indonesian Public Sector

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the contribution of individual characteristics—including capabilities, needs, expectations, and beliefs—to organizational behavior in the public sector, using a case study of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, West Java. The urgency of this research rests on the premise that the effectiveness of public organizations is strongly influenced by individual behavior, making the management of employees' personal characteristics a key factor in improving performance and the quality of public services. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with leaders and employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, observations of institutional work dynamics, and a review of official documents. The findings reveal that individual capabilities and experiences strengthen communication, collaboration, and organizational productivity. The fulfillment of physical and spiritual needs enhances employees' motivation and loyalty, while individual expectations foster achievement orientation and long-term vision. Beliefs serve as the foundation that reinforces communication, collaboration, and a harmonious organizational climate. Overall, individual characteristics directly contribute to shaping organizational behavior that is more adaptive, responsive, and service-oriented. The implications of this study underscore the importance of managerial strategies that strengthen individual characteristics—through continuous capacity building, incentive provision, and the internalization of organizational values—in order to further optimize the quality of public services. The originality of this research lies in its focus on highlighting the micro-level dimension of individual characteristics in shaping organizational behavior in Indonesia's public sector—a perspective that has been relatively underexplored in prior academic studies.

Keywords: Individual characteristics; organizational behavior; public sector; work motivation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi karakteristik individu—meliputi kapabilitas, kebutuhan, pengharapan, dan kepercayaan—terhadap perilaku organisasi pada sektor publik, dengan studi kasus di Kantor Kementerian Agama Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat. Urgensi penelitian ini didasarkan pada pandangan bahwa efektivitas organisasi publik sangat dipengaruhi oleh perilaku individu, sehingga pengelolaan karakteristik personal pegawai menjadi kunci peningkatan kinerja dan kualitas pelayanan publik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pimpinan dan pegawai Kementerian Agama Kota Bandung, observasi terhadap dinamika kerja kelembagaan, serta telaah dokumen resmi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kapabilitas dan pengalaman individu memperkuat komunikasi, kerjasama, serta produktivitas organisasi. Pemenuhan kebutuhan jasmani dan rohani meningkatkan motivasi dan loyalitas pegawai, sementara pengharapan individu menumbuhkan semangat berprestasi dan orientasi jangka panjang. Kepercayaan terbukti menjadi fondasi yang memperkuat komunikasi, kolaborasi, dan iklim kerja harmonis dalam organisasi. Secara keseluruhan, karakteristik individu berkontribusi langsung pada pembentukan perilaku organisasi yang lebih adaptif, responsif, dan berorientasi pelayanan publik. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya strategi manajerial berbasis penguatan karakteristik individu, baik melalui pembinaan berkelanjutan, pemberian insentif, maupun internalisasi nilai organisasi, agar kualitas pelayanan publik semakin optimal. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada fokusnya yang menyoroti kontribusi dimensi mikro berupa karakteristik individu dalam membentuk perilaku organisasi.

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sektor publik di Indonesia—sebuah perspektif yang relatif jarang dieksplorasi dalam kajian akademik sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci: Karakteristik individu; perilaku organisasi; sektor publik; motivasi kerja.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*), as a public institution, plays a central role in maintaining the quality of religious and educational services in Indonesia (Jinan, 2015). These services include the evaluation of religious education textbooks, the management of the *Kantor Urusan Agama* (KUA), and the provision of interprovincial religious services. Data indicate that the quality of public services under the Ministry of Religious Affairs is considered relatively high, although several critical points remain for improvement. For instance, the 2023 *Indeks Kepuasan Masyarakat* (IKM) survey on textbook services reported an average score of 88.4%, categorized as “very good.” Nevertheless, several service dimensions—such as completion time, service products, system applications, and staff competence—were still rated as “good,” and thus require improvement to exceed the 90% benchmark. This finding indicates that while the public services delivered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs have been effective, they are not yet fully optimal (Rheka H., 2023).

In addition to textbook services, the 2024 IKM survey on KUA services also revealed several important dynamics. Public satisfaction with KUA services scored 85.09, which falls into the “very high” category. However, a notable finding emerged when comparing revitalized KUAs with those that had not yet undergone revitalization: the difference in satisfaction levels was not significant. This suggests that the revitalization program has not yet produced a substantial impact on service quality from the public’s perspective. Moreover, the survey showed a low level of public awareness regarding the proposed one-stop service for interfaith marriage registration, with only 36.60% of respondents familiar with the concept. Nevertheless, the majority (74.97%) expressed support for the idea, thereby opening opportunities for future reforms in religious services (*Pusat Informasi Kebijakan Balitbang Kemenag RI*, 2025).

Specifically, in the West Java region, the performance of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs continues to face challenges in achieving its targets. The 2022 Performance Report recorded an average achievement of 91.78% of the 100% target. Although relatively high, this figure reflects a decline due to unmet indicators, one of which was the *desa sadar kerukunan* (harmony-aware village) program, which achieved 0% realization due to budget blockages (Mustajam et al., 2022). This condition illustrates that the effectiveness of public organizations depends not only on the capacity of individual employees and the quality of management but also on external factors such as budgetary policies and infrastructural support.

Overall, these data show that the public services provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including those in Bandung City and West Java, fall within the “good” to “very good” categories but still require continuous improvement (Subag Tata Usaha, 2022). This phenomenon underscores the importance of re-examining the contribution of individual employee characteristics—including ability, motivation, experience, belief, and expectation—as key factors in determining the effectiveness of public organizations. Thus, studying organizational behavior in the public sector, particularly within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, becomes crucial to understanding the extent to which individuals contribute to organizational success in delivering services to the public.

Research on organizational behavior in Indonesia's public sector has developed in several directions. First, many studies focus on bureaucratic reform and organizational culture change in the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis. Wihantoro et al. (2015) demonstrated how the Directorate General of Taxation experienced shifts in administrative styles, emphasizing efficiency and accountability, while Wahyurudhanto (2020) highlighted the importance of good governance through human resource performance and community participation in public administration. These studies suggest that Indonesia's bureaucracy continues to adapt to modernization demands, albeit while still facing cultural and structural constraints.

Second, another strand of research examines the role of leadership and employee participation in shaping public organizational behavior. Widyanti et al. (2020) emphasized that transformational leadership faces challenges due to the strong paternalistic culture, whereas Firmansyah et al. (2025) added that digital leadership does contribute to performance but is insufficient to moderate the relationship between intellectual capital and organizational outcomes. Similarly, Irawanto (2015) and Yuliansyah & Khan (2017) stressed the importance of employee participation in decision-making and budgeting, which has been shown to increase motivation, self-confidence, and performance. These findings suggest that public organizational behavior in Indonesia is inseparable from the dynamics of leadership styles and active employee engagement.

Third, other research focuses on organizational innovation and public service. Maqdlilian & Setiawan (2023) found that innovation in public organizations is influenced by internal control systems and organizational culture, although transformational leadership is not always significant. Pratiwi et al. (2024) revealed that innovation in local public services, particularly in the health sector, can emerge from both staff and leadership initiatives, with varying degrees of success. These findings emphasize that innovation in Indonesia's public sector often results from a combination of community needs, bureaucratic support, and local cultural adaptation.

Although these studies have enriched the literature on organizational behavior in Indonesia's public sector, most have emphasized structural reforms, leadership, and organizational innovation at the macro level. Research that specifically highlights the contribution of individual employee characteristics—such as ability, needs, experience, and expectations—toward public organizational behavior remains relatively scarce. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how individual characteristics directly contribute to organizational behavior at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bandung City, as one of the strategic public institutions providing religious services in Indonesia.

Based on this background, this study seeks to analyze the contribution of individual characteristics—including ability, needs, beliefs, experience, and expectations—toward organizational behavior at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bandung City. This study addresses the limitations of previous research by offering a more micro-level analysis of the role of individuals in public organizations and provides practical contributions to strengthening human resource management in the bureaucracy.

This research builds on the argument that public organizational behavior is strongly influenced by the individual characteristics that constitute it. The more positive the characteristics of an employee, the more effective the organizational behavior in supporting institutional goals. This view aligns with Robbins (2003), who emphasized that organizational behavior results from the interaction among individual, group, and structural factors, in which personal characteristics—such as ability, motivation, perception, and experience—are key variables determining organizational performance. Similarly, Thoha (2012) explained that organizational behavior reflects individual behavior within a system, making organizational

quality essentially a reflection of the quality of its members. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is that individual characteristics—including ability, needs, beliefs, experience, and expectations—make a significant contribution to organizational behavior at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bandung City. This argument strengthens the causal link between individual behavior and overall public organizational effectiveness, in which strengthening employees' personal characteristics will directly enhance bureaucratic performance and the quality of public services.

RESEARCH METHODS

The unit of analysis in this study is the organizational behavior of the public sector as manifested in the performance of employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, West Java. The research focuses on the contribution of individual characteristics—including ability, needs, beliefs, experience, and expectations—in influencing organizational behavior. The Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City was selected as the *locus* of the study because its typology and institutional characteristics are considered representative of Ministry of Religious Affairs offices across West Java.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method (Lune & Berg, 2017; Sugiyono, 2017). The choice of method was based on the research objective, which emphasizes in-depth exploration of social and organizational phenomena that cannot be reduced to mere numerical data. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows for a comprehensive examination of meaning, perception, and experiences of research subjects, thereby making it suitable for analyzing the contribution of individual characteristics to organizational behavior in the public sector.

The data sources for this study consisted of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including the Head of Office, the Head of the Administrative Subdivision, Section Heads, a Human Resources Analyst, and several employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Secondary data were collected from official institutional documents, performance reports, internal archives, and relevant literature supporting the analysis of public sector organizational behavior in Indonesia.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, conducted repeatedly at least two to three times with each informant to ensure the depth of information obtained. In addition to interviews, participatory observation of organizational work dynamics and documentation of institutional archives were also employed as complementary techniques. Observations were conducted at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, located at Jl. Soekarno-Hatta No.498, Batununggal, Bandung Kidul District, Bandung City, West Java. The main research instrument consisted of a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed flexibility in exploring data according to the context of discussions with informants.

Data analysis followed the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (2013), which involves four main stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validation was conducted through source and method triangulation to ensure the credibility of findings. By applying this analysis, the data obtained were systematically mapped, enabling a deeper understanding of the contribution of individual characteristics to organizational behavior in the public sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contribution of Individual Capabilities and Experiences to Organizational Behavior

Individual capabilities and experiences are essential aspects that shape organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Based on the interviews, the Head of the Office emphasized that the contribution of individuals lies not only in their personal capacity but also in how their abilities support the organizational system as a whole. He stressed that the abilities and competencies of employees significantly contribute to organizational behavior, both in terms of conceptual and systemic aspects as well as human resources (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

To ensure that this contribution functions optimally, the leadership consistently encourages employees to improve their competencies through various development programs. The Head of the Administrative Subdivision (*Kasubag TU*) elaborated on the steps taken in human resource development. He stated,

First, personnel or employees receive internal development to enhance their competencies in line with their respective areas of responsibility. Second, employees are sent to various orientations and training programs. Third, routine development activities are conducted weekly at both the unit level and the city office level of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bandung (Irwan Nurjaman, Interview, July 3, 2024).

These programs demonstrate a systematic pattern of competency development. They are not limited to technical aspects of work but also directed at strengthening interpersonal skills such as communication, collaboration, and team solidarity. The researcher found that workplace interactions became more conducive when employees had adequate communication skills, thereby fostering a dynamic organizational climate.

Field observations revealed that most employees had received sufficient development and orientation. Weekly development activities held within each unit effectively strengthened constructive interactions among employees, both formally and informally. This finding illustrates the close relationship between individual capabilities and the effectiveness of organizational behavior.

Nevertheless, several challenges were identified. Some employees showed low awareness of the need to enhance their capacities, particularly in facing the challenges of administrative digitalization. The government's push for digital transformation has not been fully matched by individual readiness to utilize new applications and systems. The researcher noted that some employees still preferred to rely on conventional work patterns that they perceived as safer and more familiar.

In addition to individual awareness, another challenge stems from limited budget allocations for human resource development. Insufficient funding has prevented training programs from reaching all employees equally. This condition has delayed adaptation to system changes and reduced overall organizational productivity.

Despite these challenges, continuous efforts to enhance employee capabilities remain in place. The Head of the Office emphasized that every employee is expected not only to be competent in technical areas but also to possess strong interpersonal abilities. According to him, communication, collaboration, and solidarity are the key foundations for building a healthy organization (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

Beyond capabilities, experience also plays a significant role. The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City explained that employees in the institution have diverse backgrounds. He stated,

Some employees have only recently been appointed as civil servants but had prior experience as contract workers. Others have served for periods ranging from 5 to 57 years. However, in terms of job quality, the decisive factors are education, professionalism, and work ethic (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

Field data indicate that employees with long tenures tend to demonstrate greater stability in performing their duties, while younger employees contribute adaptability, particularly in digital technologies. The combination of these two groups enriches organizational behavior: senior employees provide continuity, while younger employees inject innovation.

The Head of the Administrative Subdivision further noted that each employee is instilled with organizational values from the beginning of their tenure through *diklat prajabatan* (pre-service training). He explained that individual experience significantly influences employee characteristics and that pre-service training serves to instill the values of the Ministry before employees formally assume their duties (Irwan Nurjaman, Interview, July 3, 2024). Through this process, the values of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are internalized, ensuring that employees' professional experiences align with the institution's vision.

The reinforcement of these values is further strengthened by the Code of Ethics for Ministry of Religious Affairs Employees, as stipulated in Ministerial Decree No. 421 of 2010 (Rachmad et al., 2024). The code emphasizes five core principles: upholding national unity, prioritizing service to society, working with honesty and integrity, performing duties with discipline and professionalism, and fostering organizational solidarity. Field observations showed that the code of ethics is not merely symbolic but serves as a practical guide for employees' daily conduct.

Thus, individual experience—both in terms of tenure and the internalization of organizational values—contributes to shaping organizational behavior that is stable, disciplined, and oriented toward public service. Senior employees with long years of service tend to exhibit loyalty and comfort in their work, whereas younger employees demonstrate adaptive initiative toward change, despite facing limitations in training facilities.

The researcher concludes that the combination of continuously refined capabilities through development programs and accumulated experience over years of service creates a conducive organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Although challenges remain in the form of budgetary constraints and digital gaps, these two aspects remain essential foundations for building an effective and competitive public organization.

To provide a clearer understanding of how individual characteristics shape organizational behavior in the public sector, this study highlights the role of employees' capabilities and experiences within the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. These aspects, when developed through structured programs and accumulated over years of service, form the foundation for effective communication, collaboration, and organizational productivity. The details of these contributions, including their impacts and the challenges encountered, are systematically presented in table 1.

Table 1. Contribution of Individual Capabilities and Experiences to Organizational Behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City

Aspect	Key Findings	Impact on Organizational Behavior	Challenges Encountered
Capabilities	Employees' technical and interpersonal competencies are improved through routine development programs, orientations, and training.	Strengthens communication, collaboration, team solidarity, and productivity.	Some employees show low awareness of the need to enhance their capacities, particularly in relation to administrative digitalization.
Development Programs	Weekly internal development, participation in training and orientation, and tiered development at the city office level.	Creates a dynamic work climate and fosters constructive interactions among employees.	Limited budget prevents equal access to training for all employees.
Work Experience	Senior employees with long tenure tend to be stable and loyal, while younger employees are more adaptive to digital technology.	The combination of experience and innovation ensures continuity while simultaneously driving organizational change.	Younger employees still face limited access to development facilities.
Internalization of Organizational Values	All employees attend <i>diklat prajabatan</i> (pre-service training) to instill ministry values.	Shapes employees' character in line with institutional vision, reinforcing discipline and public service orientation.	A gap remains between the internalization of values and their practical application in daily work.
Code of Ethics of the Ministry of Religious Affairs	Based on Ministerial Decree No. 421 of 2010, emphasizing national unity, service to society, honesty, discipline, professionalism, and organizational solidarity.	Serves as a daily behavioral reference, strengthening work ethic and integrity.	Not all employees consistently implement the code of ethics in practice.

The table 1 demonstrates that individual capabilities and experiences significantly contribute to shaping organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Employees' capabilities are enhanced through systematic development programs, both internally and externally, which strengthen communication, collaboration, and overall organizational productivity. Nevertheless, some employees exhibit resistance to digital transformation, primarily due to limited skills and readiness in utilizing new systems and applications. Work experience also plays a critical role. Senior employees with long tenure tend to display stability, loyalty, and discipline, whereas younger employees demonstrate strengths in adapting to digital technologies. The combination of these two groups produces balanced organizational behavior, where the continuity and stability of senior employees blend with the innovative drive of younger employees.

Furthermore, the internalization of organizational values through *diklat prajabatan* and the enforcement of the Code of Ethics of the Ministry of Religious Affairs serve as vital instruments in building integrity and reinforcing public service orientation. However, challenges remain, particularly in terms of limited training budgets and the gap between the internalization of organizational values and their consistent application in practice. Overall, these findings indicate that when individual capabilities and experiences are managed through continuous development and value reinforcement, they can foster organizational behavior that is adaptive, competitive, and oriented toward public service.

Contribution of Individual Needs and Expectations to Organizational Behavior

The fulfillment of individual needs is inseparable from organizational behavior, as these needs fundamentally relate to both the physical and spiritual aspects of employees. The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City emphasized that support for personnel needs directly influences institutional performance. He stated,

Support for employees' needs at the individual level has direct implications for organizational behavior as a whole. Material needs to support work activities are essential, as their fulfillment leads to optimal performance. When employees work optimally, it enhances productivity, reduces absenteeism, and improves job satisfaction (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

At the technical level, fulfilling employees' needs falls under the responsibility of the Head of the Administrative Subdivision. In the interview, he explained that meeting individual needs can affect organizational activities and task implementation. If needs remain unmet, organizational activities may be disrupted. Therefore, fulfillment is carried out gradually according to urgency and organizational capacity, with adjustments to budget allocations (Irwan Nurjaman, Interview, July 3, 2024). This statement highlights that budgetary constraints remain the main challenge, forcing the organization to meet employees' needs in stages rather than simultaneously.

Beyond physical needs, the fulfillment of spiritual needs also receives serious attention. The Head of the Islamic Education Section emphasized that while meeting employees' physical needs is important, spiritual needs are equally significant, especially since one of the Ministry's key tasks is to optimize the role of religion. Religious and moral values serve as a crucial foundation for improving the quality of organizational interactions (Iman Aminudin, Interview, July 4, 2024). Similarly, the Head of the Islamic Community Guidance Section stressed the importance of spirituality in daily work. He explained that fulfilling spiritual needs is no less important than physical ones. The Ministry's motto, *Ikhlas Beramal* ("Sincerely Serving"), is deeply internalized by employees in carrying out their duties, ensuring that each individual's behavior adds value to the organization (Abdul Hanan, Interview, July 4, 2024). These findings

show that the fulfillment of spiritual needs is perceived as a moral energy that sustains organizational behavior.

Field observations revealed that meeting both physical and spiritual needs significantly contributes to creating a more conducive work environment. Adequate facilities, such as office spaces, places of worship, and religious development programs, emerged as key elements influencing employee motivation and organizational commitment. Thus, needs are understood not only in material terms but also in immaterial dimensions. However, challenges persist. Not all employee needs can be fully met due to budget limitations. Some employees noted that work facilities are not yet fully modernized, particularly in relation to digital technologies. These gaps ultimately affect work quality, as employees are required to adapt to limited resources.

In addition to needs, individual expectations also play a vital role in shaping organizational behavior. The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City underscored that expectations serve as a driving force that must be instilled in every employee. He stated,

Every employee must have the expectation to improve and achieve. If today one accomplishes something, tomorrow it must be more. Religion teaches that today must be better than yesterday, and tomorrow must be better than today. These expectations will influence organizational behavior and overall performance (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

The Head of the Administrative Subdivision also highlighted employees' growing expectations in line with organizational policies that provide space for appreciation. He explained that employees' expectations continue to rise, and those with strong attendance, performance, and achievements receive performance allowances and other rewards. In this way, strong individual performance positively influences organizational outcomes (Irwan Nurjaman, Interview, July 3, 2024).

Nevertheless, not all employees share the same level of expectation. The Head of the Islamic Community Guidance Section acknowledged that some employees lacked high expectations, which reduced their performance. He noted that when Islamic religious instructors exhibited low expectations and suboptimal performance, the office implemented guidance, supervision, and, if necessary, sanctions according to the level of misconduct (Abdul Hanan, Interview, July 4, 2024). This statement reinforces that individual expectations strongly determine performance quality and require organizational intervention when expectations are weak.

The Head of the Islamic Education Section further explained that individual expectations are managed through regular development activities, such as weekly flag ceremonies and monthly meetings. These activities aim to motivate employees to maintain strong work ethics and high expectations, thereby enhancing their contributions to organizational behavior (Iman Aminudin, Interview, July 4, 2024).

Internalized expectations among employees demonstrably exert a positive influence on organizational outcomes. Employees with strong motivation and expectations tend to be more disciplined, innovative, and service-oriented. Conversely, employees with low expectations are more prone to stagnation and resistance to change.

These findings align with expectancy theory proposed by Victor Vroom in Anoraga (1997), which posits that individual work behavior is determined by anticipated outcomes of their actions. In other words, if employees believe that hard work will yield rewards or recognition, they are more likely to perform better. Similarly, Nawawi (2001) emphasized that expectations are the primary driver of work activity. According to him, expectations serve as the motivation to achieve desired outcomes, and work efforts in an organizational setting are guided by specific expectations. In the context of the Ministry of

Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, this is reflected in the close relationship between employee expectations and organizational performance levels.

In addition to capabilities and experiences, employees' needs and expectations also play a pivotal role in shaping organizational behavior. The fulfillment of both physical and spiritual needs, alongside the management of employee expectations, directly influences motivation, loyalty, and service orientation within the institution. These dimensions highlight how organizational performance is not only determined by technical competencies but also by the extent to which the organization responds to the personal and professional aspirations of its employees. A detailed overview of these contributions and their associated challenges is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Contribution of Individual Needs and Expectations to Organizational Behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City

Aspect	Key Findings	Impact on Organizational Behavior	Challenges Encountered
Physical Needs	Fulfillment of employees' physical needs (workspaces, facilities, allowances) influences productivity and job satisfaction.	Increases motivation, reduces absenteeism, and strengthens employee loyalty.	Budget constraints prevent work facilities from being fully modernized and evenly distributed.
Spiritual Needs	Fulfillment of spiritual needs through worship facilities, religious development programs, and internalization of the motto <i>Ikhlas Beramal</i> .	Serves as moral energy that strengthens a harmonious work climate and improves the quality of interactions among employees.	Not all employees consistently internalize spiritual needs in daily practices.
Employee Expectations	Aspirations for progress, achievement, and appreciation through performance allowances and organizational rewards.	Enhances discipline, innovation, and orientation toward public service.	Not all employees have high expectations; some show stagnation and resistance to change.
Management of Expectations	Routine development through flag ceremonies, monthly meetings, and direct supervision by leadership.	Motivates employees to develop strong work ethics and increase contributions to organizational performance.	Some employees still require intervention through guidance, supervision, or sanctions.

Table 2 demonstrates that the fulfillment of individual needs and expectations significantly contributes to organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. The fulfillment of physical needs—such as workspaces, facilities, and allowances—has been proven to increase motivation, reduce absenteeism, and strengthen employee loyalty. However, budget limitations remain a barrier, resulting in work facilities that are not fully modernized or evenly distributed.

In addition to physical needs, spiritual needs also receive considerable attention. The provision of worship facilities, religious development programs, and the internalization of the motto *Ikhlas Beramal* serve as sources of moral energy that strengthen a harmonious organizational climate. These factors positively affect the quality of employee interactions, although implementation is not yet fully consistent across all employees.

Meanwhile, individual expectations play a key role in shaping motivation and organizational performance. Employees with high expectations tend to be more disciplined, innovative, and service-oriented. By contrast, those with low expectations often experience stagnation and show resistance to change. To address this, the organization manages expectations through routine development, close supervision, and the provision of rewards and sanctions, ensuring that employees remain motivated and aligned with organizational goals.

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, it can be concluded that the fulfillment of needs and expectations significantly contributes to organizational behavior. The fulfillment of both physical and spiritual needs fosters enthusiasm and improves the quality of interactions, while strong expectations reinforce motivation, discipline, and a service-oriented mindset. The combination of these factors has made organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City more productive, adaptive, and responsive to the demands of society.

Contribution of Individual Trust to Organizational Behavior

Individual trust represents a fundamental aspect in shaping organizational behavior. In the context of public organizations, trust is understood as the recognition and confidence in the truth and integrity of individuals in carrying out their duties. At the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, trust serves as a critical foundation that sustains interactions among employees while simultaneously supporting the achievement of organizational goals.

The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City emphasized that trust must be possessed by every employee in order for the organization to function effectively. He stated,

Trust is an aspect that must be held by every employee, such as those at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. With trust, task delegation can be carried out optimally, enabling employees to complete their duties and workloads, which in turn contributes to the achievement of the organization's main tasks and functions (Abdurrohim, Interview, July 3, 2024).

The importance of trust was also highlighted by the Head of the Islamic Community Guidance Section, who stated in an interview that trust is the key to communication, success, and access, including in carrying out tasks within the institution. Without mutual trust, suspicion and mistrust arise, leading to a non-conducive organizational climate (Abdul Hanan, Interview, July 4, 2024). These findings indicate that trust is not only about the relationship between leaders and subordinates but also concerns horizontal relationships among employees.

To foster trust, the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City has implemented several strategic steps. First, it instills honesty and fairness in performing duties. Second, it internalizes the motto *Ikhlas Beramal* as a moral guide, emphasizing that every task constitutes worship. Third, it strengthens

mutual trust among employees to ensure cooperation without suspicion. Fourth, it underscores professional contributions in task execution as a means of maintaining trust. Fifth, it encourages innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration based on trust and *simbiosis mutualisme* (mutual symbiosis).

The researcher's observations revealed that trust among employees creates a more open work environment. Employees who feel trusted tend to show higher loyalty, greater responsibility, and stronger efforts to maintain the institution's reputation. Trust also serves as social glue that reinforces solidarity among employees, particularly when facing heavy workloads or external challenges. Conversely, when trust is absent, disharmony emerges in the form of suspicion, resistance to new policies, and declining internal communication quality. This indicates that trust is not merely an abstract value but a concrete factor determining the effectiveness of organizational behavior.

The statements of leaders and field observations align with the views of Moordiningsih (2010), who asserted that building trust in others is not an easy task. Trust is formed through a sequence of behaviors between trust-givers and trust-receivers, and the process requires consistent collaborative experiences. Without positive experiences, trust is difficult to establish and can easily collapse when betrayal or breaches of commitment occur.

In the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, long-term collaborative work has strengthened bonds of trust among employees. Senior employees with long service are typically entrusted with key roles, while younger employees who demonstrate integrity are given opportunities to assume responsibilities. This pattern illustrates organizational regeneration sustained by a culture of mutual trust.

Trust also directly impacts collaboration and innovation. Employees who are trusted by their leaders feel more confident in expressing ideas, taking initiatives, and experimenting with new approaches to accomplish tasks. This fosters organizational creativity and enhances responsiveness to societal demands. Hence, trust functions as *social capital* that facilitates innovation in the public sector.

The findings further indicate that trust affects the quality of communication. Employees who feel trusted are more open in sharing information with both superiors and colleagues. Such transparency reduces potential conflicts and accelerates decision-making. Conversely, the absence of trust hinders communication and creates uncertainty.

The collected data affirm that individual trust constitutes one of the key pillars of organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Trust contributes to effective task distribution, healthy communication, productive collaboration, and sustainable innovation. Ultimately, trust not only strengthens individual behavior but also shapes an organizational culture that is more harmonious and oriented toward public service.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that individual characteristics—including capabilities, needs, expectations, and trust—make a significant contribution to organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. The improvement of capabilities through development programs, *diklat* (training), and work experience has been shown to strengthen a conducive organizational climate. The fulfillment of both physical and spiritual needs positively impacts work spirit and loyalty, while individual expectations drive achievement motivation and enhance discipline. At the same time, trust proves to be a fundamental foundation for organizational communication, collaboration, and innovation. These findings affirm that public organizational behavior cannot be separated from the contribution of individual characteristics that shape the institution's internal dynamics.

The reasons behind these results can be explained through organizational behavior theories advanced by Robbins (2003) and Thoha (2012). Robbins emphasized that individual behavior in organizations is influenced by ability, motivation, perception, and experience, all of which shape work behavior. In the context of this study, employees' technical and interpersonal skills determine organizational effectiveness. Thoha (2012) further asserted that organizational behavior is essentially a reflection of individual behavior through interactions. Capabilities, needs, trust, and expectations combine to form collective work patterns, which in turn affect organizational productivity and stability. Therefore, the contribution of individual characteristics in this study aligns with theoretical frameworks that position human beings as the center of organizational dynamics.

Compared with prior studies, this research offers a new perspective. Wihantoro et al. (2015) and Wahyurudhanto (2020) focused more on structural reform and good governance, whereas this study demonstrates that organizational effectiveness is also determined by micro-level aspects such as individual characteristics. Likewise, Widyanti et al. (2020) and Firmansyah et al. (2025) highlighted the role of leadership and digital leadership, but this study adds an important dimension by showing that employee motivation and expectations also serve as internal factors influencing organizational behavior. The studies of Irawanto (2015) and Yuliansyah & Khan (2017) emphasized employee participation, consistent with this study's findings that active employee involvement—particularly in the areas of needs and trust—improves organizational performance. Meanwhile, Maqdliyan & Setiawan (2023) and Pratiwi et al. (2024) emphasized organizational innovation and public service, while this research complements them by highlighting the role of individual characteristics as the foundation for innovation and high-quality service. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of individual-level analysis into the study of organizational behavior in Indonesia's public sector.

From a historical perspective, the findings reveal that Indonesia's public bureaucracy—often characterized as rigid and hierarchical—is also shaped by individual factors such as work experience and loyalty. This suggests that although bureaucracy is built upon formal structures, strict regulations, and impersonality, as described by Weber, in practice organizational behavior is strongly influenced by the personal dynamics of individuals within it. Recent studies reinforce this argument. Matheson (2007) and Moore (2017) argued that bureaucracy with hierarchical structures and rigid rules tends to create employee alienation. However, individuals with strong loyalty can mitigate these negative impacts.

Furthermore, research by Li & Dong (2010) demonstrated that individual factors, including public service motivation, significantly affect the performance of government organizations. This finding is consistent with the results at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, where employee spirit and loyalty directly contribute to organizational stability. Tabiu (2019) added that job autonomy and effective communication practices strengthen public service motivation and, consequently, improve employee performance. In other words, the greater the autonomy afforded to individuals, the greater their contribution to shaping effective organizational behavior.

Personality factors also prove relevant. Schirmer et al. (2025) found that dimensions of the *Big Five Personality*, particularly conscientiousness and openness, influence decision-making behavior. In the context of Indonesia's public bureaucracy, employees who are diligent, open-minded, and cooperative are key to building a harmonious organizational climate. Cooper (2020) further revealed that public sector employees with positive personality traits tend to experience higher job satisfaction, which in turn reinforces loyalty.

Organizational management also plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between bureaucracy and individuals. Moynihan & Pandey (2005) showed that management practices

emphasizing goal clarity and decentralization enhance organizational performance. Similarly, Han & Hong (2019) found that strong accountability in performance evaluation, when balanced with employee autonomy, can drive improvements in public sector productivity. In the context of this study, this is reflected in the routine development activities and reward systems at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City, which reinforce employee trust and loyalty.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. Labolo (2013) reminded us that Weberian bureaucratic characteristics are still relevant in Indonesia but require adaptation to avoid rigid administrative practices. Additionally, Akinyele et al. (2023) warned that performance-based incentive schemes, if not carefully designed, may trigger personal interests that undermine public service orientation. This is relevant to the field findings, where some employees still show low motivation due to limited facilities or unevenly distributed incentives.

Socially, the findings of this study reveal that interactions among employees in bureaucracy are strongly shaped by mutual trust, support for individual needs, and collective aspirations for progress, thereby reinforcing organizational solidarity. Trust within public organizations has been shown to influence affective commitment, communication, and work effectiveness. Albrecht & Travaglione (2003) asserted that trust in senior management reduces cynicism and turnover intentions, while Bentzen (2023) demonstrated that trust-based leadership at the individual, team, and organizational levels enhances cooperation and effectiveness in public institutions.

Organizational solidarity also emerges from a work culture that emphasizes togetherness and collective goals. Frémeaux et al. (2023) argued that solidarity develops through gradual processes: constructing a solidarity mission, sharing it, and disseminating it until it becomes organizational culture. In the context of public bureaucracy, solidarity is strengthened when there is clarity of shared goals and consistent values of trust. Agamagomedova & Gamidullaeva (2025) further highlighted that public trust positively correlates with social solidarity, which in turn reinforces innovation and cohesion in institutional development. Thus, trust and solidarity are mutually reinforcing and constitute essential foundations for the sustainability of effective and adaptive public organizations.

Ideologically, this study affirms that religious values such as *ikhlas beramal* ("sincerely serving") function as a driving force that internalizes trust, expectations, and work ethic within faith-based public organizations. Religious values have been proven to shape ethical and moral frameworks of leadership. For instance, Ng & Rivera (2023) demonstrated in the Philippines that religious beliefs strengthen organizational governance through ethical leadership. Similarly, King (2007) highlighted that spirituality in public administration encourages ethical behavior and more responsible decision-making. In the Indonesian context, Sapta et al. (2021) found that spiritual leadership strengthens organizational commitment among public sector employees through the mediating role of workplace spirituality.

Religiosity also influences employee attitudes toward change and innovation. Talukder et al. (2022) showed that Islamic values such as *itqan* (excellence), *ta'awun* (cooperation), and *shaffaf* (transparency) significantly contribute to the adoption of digital systems in the Saudi Arabian public sector. In Malaysia, Ab. Wahab (2017) found that Islamic work values promote sustainable work behavior and energy efficiency, demonstrating that religiosity contributes to environmentally responsible organizational practices. These findings reinforce that religious values not only shape ethical behavior but also influence innovation and sustainability in public organizations.

Moreover, Zehavi (2017) showed in Israel that rising religiosity within society affects the religionization of public institutions—including the military, healthcare, and education—at varying intensities depending on the religious composition of the organization. This is consistent with Sami et al.

(2016), who emphasized that religious values strengthen ethical culture, ultimately enhancing public value. Thus, the results of this study contribute not only practically to strengthening human resource management in faith-based public institutions but also theoretically to enriching academic discourse on how religious values can be internalized within bureaucracy to create public organizations that are more ethical, innovative, and oriented toward societal welfare.

A reflection on these findings reveals both functions and dysfunctions. Functionally, positive individual characteristics—refined capabilities, fulfilled needs, strong expectations, and established trust—create organizational behavior that is productive, adaptive, and conducive. However, dysfunctions remain, including skill gaps in addressing digitalization, budget constraints in human resource development, and the persistence of employees with low motivation and limited expectations. These conditions risk generating performance stagnation and hindering organizational innovation if left unaddressed. These findings align with Subramaniam et al. (2024) and Engkus (2025), who reported that digitalization in the public sector often faces employee resistance due to fear of job loss, low digital literacy, and insufficient organizational commitment to digital transformation. Similarly, Manana & Mawela (2022) and Nair (2019) noted that digital skill gaps, particularly concerning advanced technologies such as big data and IoT, present serious obstacles to innovation. Meanwhile, outdated infrastructure and budgetary limitations further slow modernization processes, as Mihaila (2024) observed in her study on civil service competency frameworks.

To address these challenges, other studies have emphasized the need for systematic human resource development strategies. Şat (2025) and Çubuk (2025) stressed that continuous training programs should focus on strengthening both basic digital competencies and soft skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. Ebnezer & Rajini (2024) further found that employee motivation and engagement play a significant role in accelerating digital skill adoption, especially when supported by appropriate incentives and recognition. Moreover, Yildirim (2023) and Welby & Ubaldi (2023) underscored the critical role of digital leadership in creating a clear vision for transformation, overcoming resistance, and mobilizing limited resources. Therefore, the weaknesses of public bureaucracy in facing digitalization lie not only in budgetary constraints but also in the lack of integrated strategies for visionary and adaptive human resource development.

Based on this reflection, several action plans can be proposed. First, strengthen programs to enhance employees' digital competencies in response to the challenges of bureaucratic modernization. Second, allocate dedicated budgets for continuous development, including training on soft skills, work ethics, and public service management. Third, establish more equitable reward and incentive systems to sustain employees' aspirations for growth. Fourth, reinforce a culture of trust through transparent communication, employee involvement in decision-making, and internalization of organizational values. With these action plans, the contribution of individual characteristics can be maximized to shape public organizational behavior that is effective and oriented toward excellent service delivery.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that individual characteristics—including capabilities, needs, expectations, and trust—make a significant contribution to organizational behavior at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City. Individual capabilities and experiences form the foundation of competencies that enhance communication, collaboration, and organizational productivity. The fulfillment of both physical and spiritual needs creates motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn foster employee loyalty and discipline. Meanwhile, individual expectations drive achievement orientation and forward-looking

perspectives, while trust serves as a vital foundation that strengthens communication, collaboration, and a harmonious work climate. Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that public organizational behavior is determined not only by structures and policies but also by the contributions of individuals who shape the institution's internal dynamics.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in its integration into the scholarship on public sector organizational behavior in Indonesia by emphasizing the micro-level dimension of individual characteristics. Whereas previous research has primarily focused on bureaucratic reform, leadership, or institutional innovation, this study shows that individual factors are equally fundamental in explaining the effectiveness of public organizations. Accordingly, this research enriches the literature on organizational behavior in Indonesia's public bureaucracy, where explorations of the link between personal capabilities, motivation, expectations, and trust with organizational behavior remain relatively scarce.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. First, the scope of the research was restricted to a single institution—the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Bandung City—so generalizing the findings to other public institutions must be approached with caution. Second, this study employed a qualitative approach with a focus on interviews and observations, thereby not providing quantitative measurements that could reinforce the significance level of the variables' contributions. For future research, comparative studies across different public institutions or *mixed-methods* approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative data are recommended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of individual characteristics in shaping organizational behavior in Indonesia's public sector.

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