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Innovative Work Behavior in Public Sector HRM: Perceived Corruption, Unethical Behavior, and Love of Money

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Abstract: This study analyses the impact of perception of corruption and unethical behaviour on innovative work behaviour of civil servants, with the material orientation factor (love of money) as a mediator. Using a quantitative approach and cross-sectional survey design, empirical data were collected from 140 government employees. Data were analyzed by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results of the study showed the impact of corruption and unethical behaviours on innovative work behaviour was significant, whether directly or indirectly. Love of money was found to be an important mediating variable, which explained the indirect impact of corruption on workplace innovative behaviours. The results indicated that ethical work culture and organizational integrity, along with financial motivation (love of money) played critical roles in shaping employees' innovations within the government. Finally, the results of the study enrich the body of knowledge of public sector human resource management and offer recommendations to the end users on practical steps to promote an ethical, innovative and productive work culture in the public service.

Keywords: *Perceived Corruption; Unethical Behavior; Love of Money; Innovative Work Behavior; Government Employees*

Abstrak: *Studi ini menganalisis dampak persepsi terhadap korupsi dan perilaku tidak etis terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif pegawai negeri, dengan faktor orientasi material (kecintaan pada uang) sebagai mediator. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan desain survei potong lintang (cross-sectional), data empiris dikumpulkan dari 140 pegawai pemerintah. Data dianalisis dengan metode pemodelan persamaan struktural kuadrat terkecil parsial (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling/PLS-SEM). Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa korupsi dan perilaku tidak etis memiliki dampak signifikan terhadap perilaku kerja inovatif, baik secara langsung maupun tidak langsung. Kecintaan pada uang ditemukan sebagai variabel mediasi penting yang menjelaskan dampak tidak langsung korupsi terhadap perilaku inovatif di tempat kerja. Hasil penelitian ini mengindikasikan bahwa budaya kerja etis dan integritas organisasi, bersama dengan motivasi finansial (kecintaan pada uang), memainkan peran krusial dalam membentuk inovasi pegawai di lingkungan pemerintahan. Akhirnya, hasil*

studi ini memperkaya khazanah pengetahuan mengenai manajemen sumber daya manusia di sektor publik serta memberikan rekomendasi bagi para pemangku kepentingan terkait langkah-langkah praktis untuk mendorong budaya kerja yang etis, inovatif, dan produktif dalam pelayanan publik.

Kata kunci: *Persepsi Korupsi; Perilaku Tidak Etis; Kecintaan terhadap Uang; Perilaku Kerja Inovatif; Pegawai Pemerintah.*

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources play a crucial role in government institutions. Effectiveness and innovation in service depend on the capabilities and attitudes of employees (Susanto, 2020). Many studies have focused on the financial behavior of individuals and institutions, while studies on human resources in government institutions have been limited. The love of money has been associated with innovative work behavior of public employees (Susanto, 2020; Ditta, 2023), and this behavior is also associated with unethical behavior (Tang & Chiu, 2003; Rahman, 2020). Perceived corruption strengthens this behavior of employees in the public sector (Maksum & Ningtyas, 2022). Other research has isolated these variables and focused on their relationship with innovative work and unethical behavior of employees. Therefore, this study contributes to research by employing an integrated approach to examine love of money, unethical behavior, perceived corruption, and innovative work behavior of employees in the Indonesian Public Sector. Integrity and ethical challenges associated with the public sector in Indonesia can be identified through case studies on misconduct and maladministration by civil servants in the public service. Some of the violations reported in 2025 included cases of discipline violations by civil servants (i.e., breaches of integrity), including abuse of power and authority, falsification of documents, and bribery. During the same period, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia reported over 10,000 complaints for maladministration.

Corruption is recognized at the international level as one of the major challenges to good governance. Effective corruption prevention relies on strong systems of integrity and ethical standards within the public sector, transparency, and accountability of public institutions. World Bank's Governance Indicators point to control of corruption and the quality of governance as key aspects of effective governance. From these perspectives, corruption is both an institutional issue and has the potential to affect the attitudes and behavior of public sector employees (OECD, 2020; World Bank, 2024). Transparency International stresses that corruption perceptions reflect citizens' assessment of the government institutions' integrity and accountability (Transparency International, 2024). The available cases help illustrate that ethical issues persist in the Indonesian public sector and provide rationale for considering the unethical behavior of government officers. Theoretically, it helps fill the gap on the psychological mechanism through which an institutional flaw alters employee innovation. The combined effect of corruption and

a materialistic (love of money) mindset is likely to alienate employees' motivation to produce public innovations.

Factors such as perceived corruption, unethical behavior, and love of money affect the way HR operates, including its capacity for innovation. Perceived corruption demotivates employees to engage in innovation. On the other hand, unethical behavior destroys workplace integrity and collaboration (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019; Tang & Chen, 2008). Finally, love of money affects the relationship between perceived corruption or unethical behavior and innovation at work. Ultimately, it influences the overall performance of the organization (Susanto, 2020). To resolve this conceptual ambiguity, this research employs modern mediation theory that acknowledges "competitive mediation" (or inconsistent mediation) where direct and indirect effects act in opposite directions (Hair et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2010). In a corrupt environment, trust is eroded, and employees' working collaboration is negatively impacted. Consequently, an environment of love of money is fostered. Driven by a high financial orientation, employees may channel their innovative behavior towards activities geared towards rewards and performance bonuses. Thus, competition for rewards and bonuses fosters an innovative environment. This theory supports the real-world paradox of unethical integrity.

Management science defines management as the art of integrating structures and processes with people. With people as the focus of an organization, understanding human behavior is particularly important to developing an effective, ethical, and innovative management system. This is in line with Tran et al. (2022) and Wynen et al. (2019), which provide a logical basis to link internal ethical standards to external innovation. This shows that ethics and innovation are not in tension with each other. Rather, ethics acts as an integrative shield for the more creative side of public administration. The model presents an engaging behavioral puzzle. For this study, a government institution relevant to the research context and with a proven commitment to adopting transparent, accountable, and ethical governance was selected. Based on the foregoing, this context is appropriate for testing the relationship between perceived corruption, unethical behavior, love of money, and innovation work behavior. From an academic viewpoint, research in this field contributes to the existing body of knowledge on financial conduct and public service personnel administration. The results, however, are relevant to leadership in the public service to develop a work environment with integrity and creativity (Ahmad et al., 2023; Bedi et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2021; Saeed et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceptions of Corruption and Innovative Work Behavior

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) posits that employment relationships are formed through reciprocal exchanges. Through these exchanges, trust and a sense of fairness, along with mutual obligations, are created. Employees tend to engage in positive workplace behaviors, including innovative behavior, when they perceive their organization as providing a fair, supportive, and trustworthy environment. If employees perceive the organization as acting unethically or unfairly, social exchange suffers and undermining employees' inclination to go beyond the call of duty. In the public sector, corruption is perceived as a breakdown of an organization's integrity, transparency, and accountability, leading to a lack of trust and confidence among employees. Perceptions of corruption among employees create feelings of injustice

because employees believe that organizational resources, rewards, and acknowledgment are not given to deserving employees. Perceptions of corruption may make employees feel unjustly treated. Employees may believe that organizational rewards and advancement opportunities are not based on merit. Employees' perceptions of unfairness may alter their expectations of reciprocity. Therefore, they may believe that the organization has not upheld fairness and mutual obligation in a positive exchange relationship and, as a result, is not entitled to expectations of a positive exchange relationship.

The Social Exchange Theory focuses on the psychological relationship between employees and the organization and explains the association between perceived corruption and innovative work behavior. Negative perceptions of corruption undermine trust and fairness, and a sense of reciprocal exchange between employees and the organization, discouraging employees from behaving innovatively towards the organization. Triwibowo (2019) argues that the quality of public financial management is related to the level of corruption; hence, good governance can help achieve a 'clean' government and improve the quality of public financial management. The results further demonstrate that ethical climate conditions positively influence employees' inclination to be innovative. Ethical leadership and justice, combined with psychological safety, promote trust and fairness in the workplace and empower employees to take the necessary risks for innovation without the fear of negative consequences. This suggests that, in the context of perceived corruption, there is a negative impact on employees' willingness to contribute innovative ideas. According to Maksum & Ningtyas (2022), corruption within an organization negatively affects organizational performance, stifles the development of human resources, disrupts effective decision-making, and encourages unethical behavior and a lack of innovation.

Additionally, based on Ethical Climate Theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988), corruption portrays an unhealthy ethical climate and influences employees' beliefs regarding which organizational practices are acceptable. When corruption is perceived to be tolerated, employees are less likely to take the psychological safety net and support the endeavors that promote risk-taking, such as the generation of new ideas. This particularly pertains to the public sector, where employees' initiative and creativity must be encouraged to develop and advocate best practices, while sustaining the values of public service. Moreover, Kurniawan et al. (2021) positioned creative workforce practices as foundational within state agencies, because personnel should be able to initiate and implement changes that enhance the quality of service delivery within the organization. As suggested by the Social Exchange Theory and Ethical Climate Theory, this research supports that corruption weakens the positive relationship employees have with their organization. As a result, the following hypothesis was generated (Choi, 2020; Srirahayu et al., 2023; Usman et al., 2022). This emphasis on organizational ethical culture is also consistent with Kaptein (2008).

H1: Perceived corruption has a negative effect on innovative work behavior

Unethical Behavior and Innovative Work Behavior

Occupational non-compliance is shown by the following behaviors, such as wasting of organizational assets, larceny, intentional disruption of business operations, and deceit. Also included in this category are chronic absenteeism,

disengagement from one's profession and avarice (Nazaruddin et al., 2018). The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that an individual's behavior is a function of their attitude, their perception of what is required by their significant others, and the person's perception of behavioral control. Within the context of an organization, unethical behavior is brought about when the employees develop a positive attitude towards unethical acts and perceive that unethical behavior is acceptable. Such ethical decay brings about changes in an employee's behavioral intentions and decreases their commitment to positive workplace behaviors, e.g., commitment and innovation. Furthermore, deviance may also be considered as property deviance, and includes stealing and damaging organizational property.

Compromising actions are considered to be choice-related actions. The opposite of this is the work behavior that promotes innovativeness. The pattern is considered to require employees to develop, endorse, and implement new ideas that help improve the organization (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Therefore, unethical behavior may inhibit innovation because employees who engage in such behaviors can obstruct innovativeness. Employees may be stifling the organization's innovativeness by focusing on unethical activities. This implies that engaged employees may choose to work unethically and be less concerned about sustaining the organization's innovativeness. This behavior could erode the ethics of government employees and undermine their dedication to enhance innovative public services. From this point of view, the following hypothesis is proposed:
H2: Unethical Behavior has a negative effect on Innovative Work Behavior

The Role of the Love of Money in Mediating the Effect of Perceived Corruption on Innovative Work Behavior

This hypothesis is based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which describes that employee behavior is influenced by different motivational orientations, including both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Within a corrupt organization, in the presence of perceived systemic injustice, employees are likely to rely more on extrinsic motivation. This is especially true when employees perceive that the organization is insufficient and corrupt. According to Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019), corruption impacts multiple dimensions, including public institutional quality and integrity, honesty and trust of citizens and employees in the institutions, the decision-making process, and the advancement and evolution of society, and ultimately impacts a country's economy and well-being. Corruption weakens the trust of society and negatively impacts society's motivation. Corruption, money, and power in combination create an inhospitable workplace for the psychology of good. The presence of perceived corruption in an organization creates an obsession with money, as extrinsic motivation strengthens the Love of Money orientation.

Tang et al. (2018) suggest that Love of Money is associated with the monetary values people assign to things, and in a low-ethics environment, may be associated with dishonesty. However, in terms of Innovative Work Behavior, Love of Money may have a positive connotation. Ditta (2023) and Susanto (2020) show that Love of Money functions as an extrinsic motivator and pushes employees to enhance performance, generate more and better work-related ideas and suggestions, and adopt more effective and efficient work methods. Thus, Love of Money may function as an external motivator that clarifies how perceived corruption influences innovative work behavior. Although corruption negatively affects work-related

innovation by decreasing trust in the organization, it may bolster employees' financial orientation, which ultimately stimulates employees to take innovative actions to achieve personal rewards or performance outcomes. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Love of Money mediates the influence of Perceived Corruption on Innovative Work Behavior

The Mediating Role of Love of Money in Unethical Behavior on Innovative Work Behavior

In the context of self-determination theory, love of money is considered a de-motivating factor in organizational financial outcomes (Tang & Chen, 2008). In the presence of unethical behaviors in the workplace, employees are more inclined to achieve success through extrinsic means and thereby strengthening their materialistic orientations. Previous studies have typically stressed the negative consequences of love of money, including the development of unwholesome personal qualities such as greed (Tang & Chen, 2008). Financial incentives may push employees to modify their performance outcomes. Therefore, 'love of money' may show how unethical behavioral environments transform employees' motivational orientation. From this perspective, the next hypothesis is developed:

H4: Love of Money mediates the effect of Unethical Behavior on Innovative Work Behavior

RESEARCH METHOD

The above hypotheses and conclusions provide the foundation for the structural model of the research, which is illustrated in Figure 1.

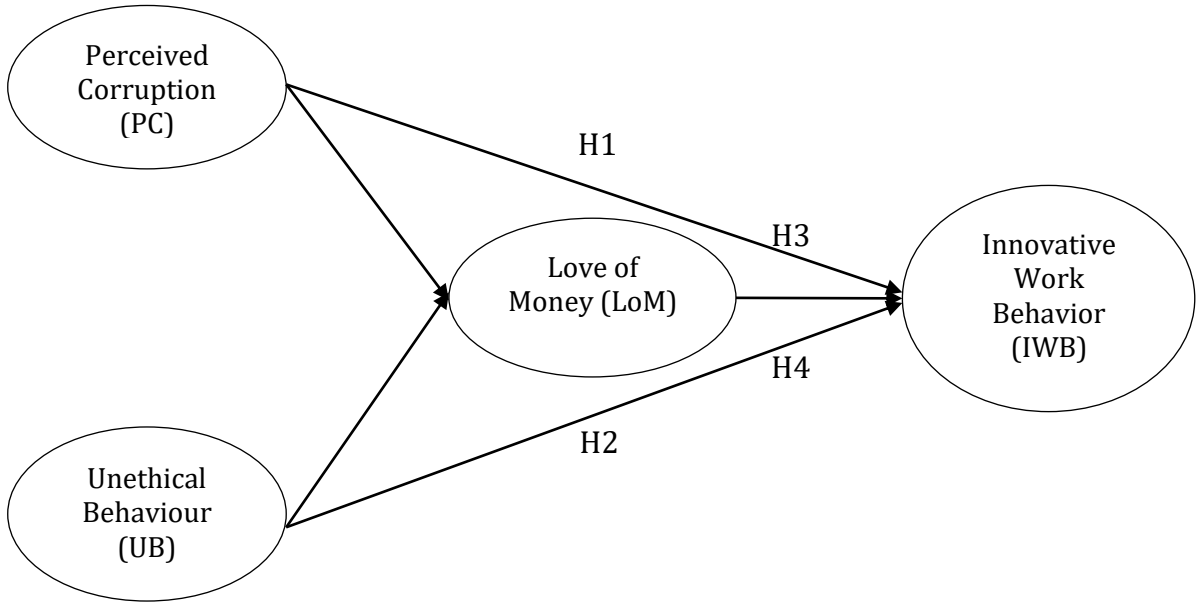


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This research implements a quantitative methodology in the form of a cross-sectional study to examine the influence of observed corruption on innovative workplace conduct; the influence of non-compliant behavior on innovative workplace conduct; the financial orientation as a mediator between observed

corruption and innovative workplace conduct; and the financial orientation as a mediator between non-compliant behavior and innovative workplace conduct (Hair et al., 2021). Use of a quantitative methodology enables statistical treatment of the data and facilitates the generalization of research findings to other small- to medium-sized enterprises. The population for this study comprised 220 public sector employees drawn from six administrative units: Badan Kepegawaian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia (BKPSDM), Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan dan Riset Daerah (BAPPERIDA), Badan Pengelolaan Keuangan Daerah (BPKD), Dinas Pemanaan Modal Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (DPMPTSP), Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil (Disdukcapil), and civil servants from other public offices. Civil servants were selected to illustrate the conflict between the principles of public service and economic realities. Ideally, public servants are expected to be self-motivated and not be inclined to external rewards. However, bureaucratic innovations in the public sector, which focus on stimulating self-motivation and professionalism among employees, employ a range of performance-related financial incentives. This creates a paradox. The research aims to differentiate between positive financial motivation, where the financial reward is fair compensation for effort, and the presence of negative, materialistic 'love of money' in the public service. Misdirecting financial desire towards self-reward, especially in a bureaucratic environment, can be harmful to the public interest, as it can stimulate employees to engage in self-serving behaviors and reward-oriented activities rather than orient their behaviors towards service to the public.

To capture this entire population, 220 formal questionnaires were distributed to the personnel at the target locations. A total of 155 questionnaires, or a gross response rate of 70.5% (155/220), were returned. Of the returned questionnaires, 15 were eliminated because of incomplete responses or failure to meet filtering criteria. The sampling strategy used in this study was purposive. This strategy, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2023) entails the researcher selecting subjects based on the extent to which the subjects are likely to provide relevant information about the research study. The participants of this study were required to be active civil servants, have one year or more of service in the target organization, and be engaged in administrative public services. Participants were required to have knowledge and experience in corruption, malpractices, financial, and creative workforce practices. After elimination, 140 completed questionnaires, or a net response rate of 63.6% (140/220), were available for analysis. As defined by Creswell and Creswell (2023), purposive selection is a qualitative sampling method where researchers choose participants and locations based on how much they are likely to aid in understanding a given research problem and the phenomena associated with it. According to the methodological framework employed in this study, the sample size of 140 is adequate for its purpose. The sample size concurs with the requirements stipulated by Hair et al. (2022) for structural equation modeling using partial least squares (SEM-PLS) to be valid and reliable. A structured questionnaire was used in data collection, and was based on the research model. Perceived Corruption, Unethical Behaviour, Love of Money and Innovative Work Behaviour were assessed through a 5-point Likert scale, with strong disagreement (1) and strong agreement (5). These scales were preceded by paragraphs, each inviting respondents to assess the extent to which they agreed with the statements articulated therein.

Perceived corruption was measured across 3 dimensions: observation of corruption practices, integrity of officials/staff, and trust in public institutions. The construct consisted of 6 measurement items developed to capture employees' perceptions regarding corruption practices, ethical integrity, and institutional transparency. The measurement items were adapted and contextualized from previous research on corruption perception by Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019) to reflect the organizational context of this study. Unethical Behaviour was measured through 3 dimensions, namely abuse of power, nepotism and favoritism, and misuse of organizational resources, consisting of 6 measurement items adapted from Kaptein (2008) and Lasthuizen et al. (2011). Love of Money was measured through 3 dimensions, namely rich, motivator, and important, consisting of 6 measurement items adapted from Tang et al. (2003). Meanwhile, Innovative Work Behaviour was assessed through 3 dimensions, namely idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization, consisting of 6 measurement items adapted from De Jong and Den Hartog (2010).

Consistency evaluations indicated Cronbach's alpha (α) values greater than 0.70 for all research constructs. (Hair et al., 2022) Because of the nature of the research design and the complexity of the research model, the authors preferred to employ the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach for analysis. This was described as suitable for research designs involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the types of research data (Hair et al., 2020) most prevalent in this field. To minimize method bias (CMB), full collinearity variance inflation factors (VIFs) were inspected. It was established that the VIFs were well below the recommended threshold of 3.3, suggesting that CMB was not a concern in this analysis (Kock, 2015). The SmartPLS 4.0 software was instrumental in the analysis. This involved two main steps: assessment of the measurement model (reliability, convergent and discriminant validity) and assessment of the structural model, using bootstrapping.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model Assessment

Convergent Validity

Prior to evaluating the structural model, the measurement model (outer model) must be assessed. This assessment evaluates how well each indicator captures and represents its corresponding latent variable in the research model. Analysis of the outer model of the PLS-SEM framework consists of assessing the outer loadings of each indicator. In evaluating convergent validity, these loadings must meet a set threshold. The results of this outer-loading analysis are described in the figure in the appendix. Results from the outer loading analysis indicated that all indicators for the respective research constructs met the 0.70 threshold.

These metrics confirm that each item represents the respective latent variable for which it was created. As such, they have met the empirical criteria to establish convergent validity. According to Hair et al. (2021), an outer loading value of 0.70 or higher, in the context of measurement model testing, indicates that the indicators being evaluated make a strong contribution to the constructs being measured and, as such, can be considered valid for further analysis. Consequently, all the indicators in this study are considered valid and can be further evaluated.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant Validity requires that each latent variable in the structural model be empirically distinct from the others. Thus, the objective of discriminant validity testing is to evaluate how well an indicator captures the variance of its associated latent variable and distinguish it from other competing constructs and variables in the model. Discriminant validity was assessed through three different methods in this study, namely the classic Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT, and analysis of the cross-loading matrix. Applying the classic Fornell-Larcker criterion, a measurement model shows adequate discriminant validity when the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for any given construct is higher than the correlations shared with that construct with others in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of the empirical test of the Fornell-Larcker criterion are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Innovative Work Behavior	Love of Money	Perceived Corruption	Unethical Behavior
Innovative Work Behavior	**0.921**			
Love of Money	0.801	**0.871**		
Perceived Corruption	0.532	0.690	**0.874**	
Unethical Behavior	0.470	0.582	0.639	**0.806**

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Results from the empirical test of the Fornell-Larcker criterion in Table 1 show that the square root of the AVE for Innovative Work Behavior (0.921), Love of Money (0.871), Perceived Corruption (0.874), and Unethical Behavior (0.806), is higher than the correlations shared between the respective constructs and others in the model. Consequently, this study confirms that each variable represented by its respective construct explains more variance than it shares with the other constructs in the model, thereby satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Also, to address the limitations of traditional discriminant validity assessments in variance-based Structural Equation Modeling, this study considered the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). According to Hair et al. (2019) and Henseler et al. (2015), discriminant validity is accepted when the HTMT values are less than or equal to the conservative threshold of 0.85 (or 0.90 for conceptually similar constructs). The results of the HTMT test for this study are contained in Table 2.

All HTMT values, as shown in Table 2, are less than the conservative threshold of 0.85, ranging from 0.506 (Unethical Behavior to Innovative Work Behavior) to 0.843 (Love of Money to Innovative Work Behavior). These results, therefore, indicate that the measurement model has four distinct constructs. In addition, the evaluation of the cross-loading matrix provides an additional means of verifying discriminant validity. The cross-loadings outlined in Appendix 2 confirm that every indicator loads on its intended latent construct and not any other. Thus, it indicates that each measurement item has a stronger statistical connection to its associated

latent variable than other concepts in the framework. This, therefore, validates that the structural model satisfies the requirement for discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (2019), it is acceptable to conclude that discriminant validity is satisfied if the loading value of an indicator on its associated construct is greater than the loading of that indicator on the other constructs.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Innovative Work Behavior	Love of Money	Perceived Corruption	Unethical Behavior
Innovative Work Behavior	—			
Love of Money	0.843	—		
Perceived Corruption	0.558	0.733	—	
Unethical Behavior	0.506	0.635	0.697	—

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Construct Reliability

This study assesses the stability and precision of the research instrument to determine whether the metrics yield consistent results across multiple administrations. Reliability will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Measurement scales are defined as reliable when both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability reach a value of 0.7, and AVE is equal to or greater than 0.5 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Perceived corruption	0.938	0.939	0.951	0.764
Unethical Behavior	0.892	0.892	0.917	0.649
Love of Money	0.936	0.937	0.950	0.759
Innovative Work Behavior	0.964	0.964	0.971	0.847

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Results from analyses of internal consistency demonstrate that Cronbach's alpha for each of the latent variables in this research surpasses the benchmark value of 0.70. As such, it can be inferred that the measurement items for each scale evaluated in this research demonstrate strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for Innovative Work Behavior was calculated to be 0.964, and for Unethical Behavior was calculated to be 0.892. As such, it can be stated that all of the constructs evaluated in this research are reliable. In addition, the results from the analysis of Composite Reliability, both for rho_a and rho_c, corroborate the results of this research and demonstrate that all the constructs evaluated are reliable. In particular, the Innovative Work Behavior construct was calculated to have a Composite

Reliability of 0.964 and 0.971, respectively, for rho_a and rho_c. This may indicate that the indicators for this construct may be close to overlapping and redundant. In addition, it is worth mentioning that values exceeding 0.95 should be viewed as problematic. Furthermore, the results for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all of the constructs in this research were above the benchmark of 0.50. This indicates that the constructs evaluated in this research satisfy the requirements of convergent validity and capture more than 50% of the variance for the respective measurement items. The Innovative Work Behavior construct once again captured the most variance, with an AVE of 0.847. The least amount of variance was captured by the Unethical Behavior construct, with an AVE of 0.649. It is worth mentioning that, even with this being the lowest score in the dataset, it still satisfies the requirements of validity. Taken together, these statistical results show that perceived corruption and unethical behavior, love of money, and innovative work behavior fulfill all requirements of reliability and convergent validity within the structural equation model. Therefore, all latent constructs are confirmed to be ready for further structural path analysis.

Table 4. Model Fit Criteria

Fit Summary	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.053	0.053
d_ULS	0.850	0.850
d_G	0.602	0.602
Chi-Square	511.346	511.346
NFI	0.862	0.862

Source: Processed Data (2026)

The assessments of model fit in Table 4 suggest an overall good fit for the structural model. Both the saturated and estimated models showed Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) at the 0.053 level and therefore, fall well below the threshold of 0.08, making the model fit residuals acceptable. Furthermore, unweighted least squares (d_ULS = 0.850), and geodesic (dG = 0.602) fit discrepancies were the same for both the saturated and estimated models. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) at 0.862, represents a good model fit and is approaching the desired threshold of 0.90. Given the above evidence and fit diagnostics, the structural model is acceptable for the next phase of hypothesis testing.

Common Method Bias Evaluation

As the primary data for this study were collected using a self-reported cross-sectional survey from 140 active government employees (civil servants/ASN), a full collinearity test was conducted to check for the presence of common method bias (CMB) and to determine whether CMB inflates or deflates the relationship among the various constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To prevent the effect of common method bias on the structural model, the fit of the inner model, that is, the full collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was evaluated based on the recommendations of Kock (2015) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Kock (2015), if the VIF value exceeds 3.3, it is evidence of pathological collinearity, and it could suggest that the model is impacted by common method bias. Contrarily,

if the inner model VIF values from a full collinearity test are less than or equal to 3.3, it can be concluded that the model is free from common method bias (Hair et al. 2019, Kock 2015). The results of the inner model collinearity statistics (VIF) are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Common Method Bias

Relationship Between Variables	Inner Model VIF
Perceived Corruption → Love of Money	1.691
Unethical Behavior → Love of Money	1.691
Perceived Corruption → Innovative Work Behavior	2.281
Unethical Behavior → Innovative Work Behavior	1.807
Love of Money → Innovative Work Behavior	2.040

Source: Processed Data (2026)

As indicated in Table 5, inner model VIF values for the latent constructs range between 1.691 to 2.281. These values are far less than the threshold of 3.3 suggested by Kock (2015), and also less than the threshold of 5.0 suggested by Hair et al. (2019), for standard multicollinearity. Predictors of Love of Money have inner VIF of 1.691 for both Perceived Corruption and Unethical Behavior, while the Predictors of Innovative Work Behavior have inner VIFs of 2.281 for Perceived Corruption, 1.807 for Unethical Behavior, and 2.040 for Love of Money. Hence, it can be concluded that neither multicollinearity nor common method bias poses a threat to the validity of the findings in this study.

Inner Model Assessment

Upon confirming that the measurement model was valid and reliable, the focus shifted to the assessment of the structural model using R2 coefficients. The R2 test measures the degree of variance in the endogenous latent variables that are explained by the exogenous variables within the research framework. (Hair et al., 2019) state that the R2 coefficient represents the degree of variance in the endogenous construct that is explained by the exogenous constructs that are predictors. In structural equation modeling, the general rule of thumb to assess the degree of explanatory power of a relationship is R2 = 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, which represent strong, moderate and weak relationships, respectively. The results obtained from the model are presented in the table below.

Table 6. R-Square

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Love of Money	0.643	0.636
Innovative Work Behavior	0.510	0.503

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Table 6 provides empirical results for the love of money variable. The model accounts for 64.3% of the variance in the love of money variable (R2 = 0.643), and the structural model accounts for 63.6% of the variance (adjusted R2 = 0.636). This means that the love of money variable is influenced by external factors by 35.7%,

which are not within the scope of this study. The same trend is observed for the innovative work behavior variable. The R2 score and the adjusted R2 score are 0.510 and 0.503, respectively. This indicates that the model accounts for 51.0% of the variation in innovative work behavior, with the remainder attributable to unmeasured variables. Based on the classification criteria of Hair et al. (2019), in which a coefficient of 0.50 indicates a moderate effect, the results above indicate that the structural model of the current study accounts for an acceptable portion of the variance in the two endogenous variables.

To evaluate the inner model of the current study in further detail, the research extends the analysis and reports the relevant effects (f^2) and the Predictive Relevance (Q^2) indices (Hair et al., 2021). The effect size for f^2 shows the impact of an independent variable on an endogenous variable that is not included in the structural model, and standardized thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The empirical distribution of these effect sizes is provided systematically in Table 7.

Table 7. F-Square

Antecedent Variable	Love of Money (f^2)	Innovative Work Behavior (f^2)
Perceived Corruption	0.349 (Medium)	0.003 (None)
Love of Money	—	0.930 (Large)

Source: Processed Data (2026)

F^2 metrics show Perceived Corruption has a medium effect size for Love of Money (f^2 = 0.349) but an insubstantial direct effect size for Innovative Work Behavior (f^2 = 0.003). Similar trends are seen for Unethical Behavior, which shows a small effect size for Love of Money (f^2 = 0.069) and an insubstantial direct effect size for Innovative Work Behavior (f^2 = 0.001). In accordance with the high path coefficient shown in the structural model, Love of Money has a large effect size for Innovative Work Behavior (f^2 = 0.930). Hence, Love of Money is the dominant mediating variable in this model.

The integrated model was assessed for overall predictive validity using a PLS predict procedure and the Stone-Geisser Q^2 coefficients. An endogenous variable is deemed to have predictive relevance when the associated Q^2 metric is strictly above the value of zero. The structural model demonstrated an average Q^2 value of 0.370 for the Love of Money construct and an average Q^2 value of 0.241 for Innovative Work Behavior. Since both computed coefficients are above the value of zero, the structural model illustrates a high degree of predictive accuracy and strong predictive relevance in describing innovative employee work behaviors in the public sector of X Regency.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coeff.	T Stat	P Values	Notes
H1. PC → IWB	-0.052	2.455	0.001	Supported
H2. UB → IWB	0.024	3.127	0.001	Not Supported
H3. PC → LoM → IWB	0.442	5.857	0.001	Supported
H4. UB → LoM → IWB	0.196	2.850	0.004	Supported

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Results of hypothesis testing, detailed in Table 8, show that the pathways for perceived corruption and unethical behaviors to Innovative Work Behavior are indirect and statistically significant. The direct path from perceived corruption to innovative work behavior has a path coefficient of -0.052 ($t = 2.455$, $p < 0.001$). The negative sign on the path coefficient indicates that higher perceptions of corruption are associated with lower levels of innovative work behavior. The path coefficient indicates a small direct effect. A positive and highly significant direct effect of unethical behavior on innovative work behavior was estimated, with a path coefficient of 0.024, a T-statistic of 3.127, and a P-value of 0.001. It should be noted that the positive path coefficient for unethical behavior is in opposition to the negative directional effect reflected in H2. Hence, H2 is not supported in its hypothesized direction. Several reasons may account for a positive relationship between unethical behavior and innovative work behavior in a public sector organization. First, employees may find different ways to operate unethically towards a predefined objective within the work setting even if the work objective is not in line with the organization's objectives. For example, employees may set personal financial objectives (e.g., to become wealthy), or work-related objectives (e.g., to win awards or to get a work-related title) and work unethically to achieve such objectives. Employees may also work unethically to achieve a work objective that is not intended by the organization. Overall, a positive relationship may reflect the coexistence of unethical behavior and innovative work behavior in an organization. The indirect effect of the love of money construct also suggests a positive relationship.

The indirect pathway from perceived corruption to innovative work behavior, mediated by the love of money, displays a path coefficient of 0.442 ($t = 5.857$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, perceived corruption affects innovative behavior through financial motivation channels. Likewise, unethical behavior has a significant indirect effect on innovative work behavior, mediated by the love of money, and generates a path coefficient of 0.196 ($t = 2.850$, $p = 0.004$). Overall, the results indicate that both perceived corruption and unethical behavior influence innovative work behavior through both direct and indirect effects. In the end, the results of the structural model indicate that the effects mediated by financial motivation are more preponderant.

More precisely, the model's structural configuration reveals a critical and unique mediation typology. According to the established PLS-SEM methodological frameworks, the love of money (indirect effect = +0.442) serves as a mediating variable to 'undo' the effect of perceived corruption (direct effect = -0.052) on innovative work behavior. Hence, the relationship is operating in opposite directions. In this framework of competitive mediation, the love of money serves as an opposing mechanism that mitigates the initially negative impact of the organizational dark side on employees' creative work behavior. Recognizing this competitive mediation is mathematically relevant to show that the love of money does not function as a facilitating factor. Rather, it acts as a prominent countervailing force that shifts the behavioral trajectory of public officials in the bureaucratic system.

Discussion

Direct Effects Analysis

Results from the empirical research showed that perceived corruption had a negative and significant effect on the innovative work behavior of civil servants in the

X Regency Government. The path coefficient indicated that corruption perceptions and innovative work behavior were inversely related, such that higher perceptions of corruption were associated with lower levels of innovative work behavior. The effect was small. This means that when employees of an organization feel there are corruption practices within that organization, employees are likely to become unwilling to develop, encourage, and implement new ideas. This finding is in line with previous research which pointed out the negative influence of perceived corruption on employees' organizational trust, commitment, and proactive work behavior. Ciziceno and Travaglino (2019) showed how perceptions of corruption negatively impact trust in institutions, while Maksum and Ningtyas (2022) showed how perceptions of corruption affect an organization's effectiveness and positively impact employees' workplace behaviors. If employees believe there are corrupt practices and that other employees are rewarded for actions that go against the organization, employees' innovation efforts become even more demotivated.

Negative perceptions of corruption will likely impact employees' perceptions of their discretionary behavior for innovation and work, and this can be explained with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). This theory supports that employees' positive discretionary behaviors are impacted by the nature of the relationships they have with their organization, e.g. fair and positive exchanges. When employees believe their organizations make decisions based on corruption, trust and an exchange relationship are broken. Employees believe that additional efforts (discretionary behavior) are unlikely to result in positive outcomes. This makes it difficult for employees to trust that their innovation efforts will be supported and recognized. When an employee believes there are corrupt practices occurring in an organization, they are less likely to engage in discretionary behaviors to support and innovate the organization.

In the case of Indonesian civil servants (*Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN), this* relationship is particularly applicable as they are required to take initiative and propose and accept uncertainty in administrative processes to propose improvements. However, the presence of bureaucratic environments that are perceived to be lacking in integrity may cause psychological barriers to innovation, as employees focus more on compliance, self-protection, and risk avoidance rather than innovation. This may be more prevalent in the case of government organizations, since innovation is largely controlled top-down and employees largely depend on the leadership's approval to undertake new initiatives.

The results suggest that public sector innovation does not rely only on employee competencies and IT infrastructure. Government agencies also need to enhance transparency, fairness, and ethical governance systems. The findings suggest that employees are willing to expend their psychological resources on innovative tasks when they perceive that rewards and promotions in an organization are based on merit and integrity rather than favoritism. Thus, public sector reforms that focus on the reduction of corruption perceptions may help to create a positive climate in which public sector employees feel safe to provide their ideas and improve public services.

Direct And Mediated Effects o*n Innovative Work Behaviour*

The results suggest that perceived corruption and unethical behavior affect innovative work behavior through direct and indirect (through love of money)

effects. The results show that employees' perceptions of unethical conditions in an organization may help to understand the motivational orientation of employees. This ultimately effects the propensity of employees to be innovative at work. This outcome aligns with Susanto (2020), who pointed out the importance of Love of Money in formulating innovative work behaviour in the public sector. This study builds on this by demonstrating how financial orientation may be formulated toward perceived organizational conditions. Employees may experience the public sector environment, for example, as one in which integrity and fairness are questionable. This may lead them to focus on achieving external outcomes such as personal financial achievement and recognition. These may ultimately influence their inclination to be innovative. This may be explained by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), in that public sector employees exhibit varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In a well-functioning public sector environment, it is reasonable to assume that innovation and improvement in the services would come about as a result of public service employees' intrinsic motivations to fulfil their urge for self-actualization, and less as a result of extrinsic factors. However, in a public sector environment perceived to be lacking integrity and fairness, it may be reasonable to assume that extrinsic motivations would become more dominant, such as, for example, financial and other rewards and benefits, which in turn may also affect employees' innovative behaviour.

For Indonesian civil servants (ASN), this demonstrates the complexity of innovation behavior within bureaucratic systems. Employees are encouraged to design new solutions to enhance service quality. However, motivation is also influenced by various organizational systems, including reward and recognition structures and mechanisms, as well as career development. Perceptions of corruption and unethical behavior can, therefore, lead employees to view the "value" and "purpose" of workplace innovation in a different light. It is, therefore, critical for the government to devise innovation systems integrating ethical governance and public service values. Use of rewards, while important to motivate and integrate innovative behavior in the workforce, should not replace the emphasis on public service values and ethics. In order to achieve sustainability, workforce members should be motivated to innovate for the improvement of the public service system beyond the rewards offered.

CONCLUSION

Results of the study confirmed the close relationship between the perceptions of corruption and unethical behaviors and employees' innovative work behavior. The "Love of Money" served as the mediating variable. The results pointed to the view that employees' innovative behavior is not only influenced by external factors (i.e., job demands and employee competencies), but also by the state of organizational ethics and the employee's internal motivations. The study confirmed "Love of Money" as the key factor that closes the gap between an unethical work environment and employee innovation in a public administration system.

Corruption in government agencies creates a lack of faith among employees in the organization. Employees adapt to cover their backs, and this leads to a lack of trust between employees. Innovation is largely group-oriented and requires the involvement of a number of individuals. Therefore, if innovations are sustained and selfish as a means to cover one's back and protect one's interests, this can help build

a better work culture. For this to be sustained, the focus should be on creating a culture based on integrity and fairness, clear career paths, and an open reward system to encourage innovation in line with the values of public service. This study has several limitations, including a cross-sectional research design, reliance on self-reported data, and being conducted within a single government region in Indonesia. In the future, researchers should examine other government regions, incorporate ethical leadership, and incorporate psychological safety to build on the foundation created by this study.

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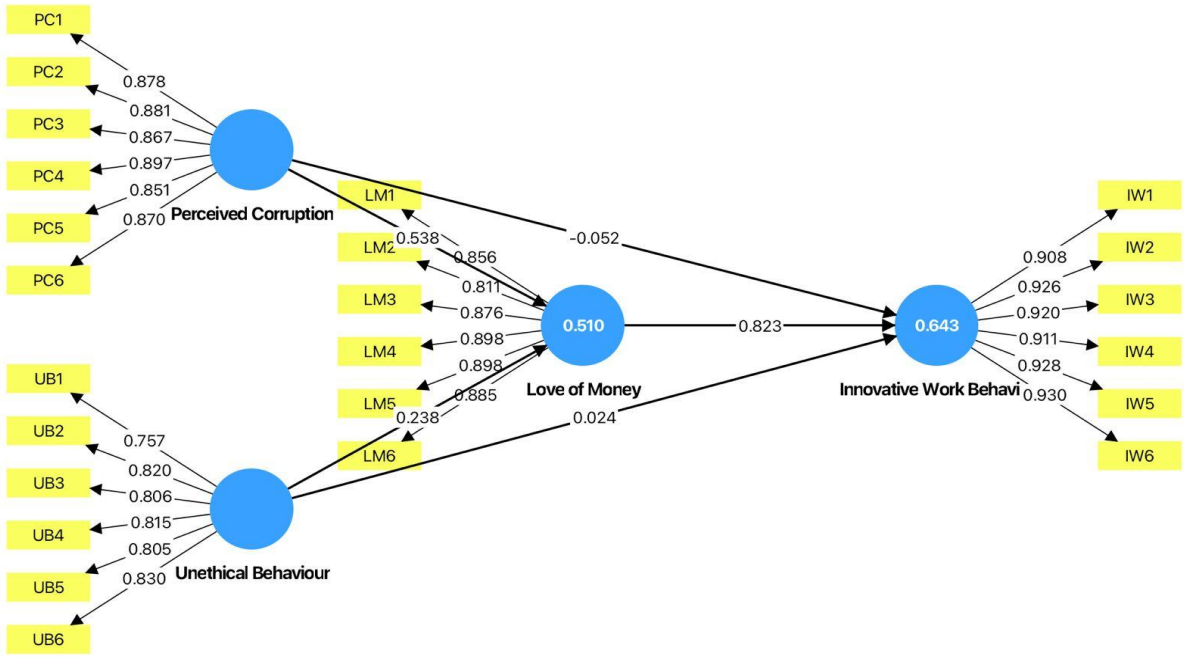
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Appendix 1. Outer Loading



Appendix 2. Cross Loading

Indicators	Variable			
	Perceived corruption	Unethical Behavior	Love of Money	Innovative Work Behavior
PC1	0,878	0,588	0,649	0,495
PC2	0,881	0,570	0,615	0,467
PC3	0,867	0,567	0,589	0,428
PC4	0,897	0,528	0,587	0,438
PC5	0,851	0,512	0,559	0,478
PC6	0,870	0,583	0,614	0,477
UB1	0,439	0,757	0,466	0,378
UB2	0,537	0,820	0,462	0,365
UB3	0,552	0,806	0,469	0,370
UB4	0,536	0,815	0,490	0,432
UB5	0,477	0,805	0,446	0,371
UB6	0,548	0,830	0,478	0,350
LM1	0,525	0,448	0,856	0,689

Indicators	Variable			
	Perceived corruption	Unethical Behavior	Love of Money	Innovative Work Behavior
LM2	0,693	0,562	0,811	0,644
LM3	0,572	0,472	0,876	0,701
LM4	0,652	0,563	0,898	0,713
LM5	0,636	0,509	0,898	0,707
LM6	0,515	0,479	0,885	0,732
IWB1	0,482	0,431	0,758	0,908
IWB2	0,480	0,424	0,745	0,926
IWB3	0,540	0,431	0,736	0,920
IWB4	0,498	0,437	0,730	0,911
IWB5	0,522	0,480	0,734	0,928
IWB6	0,414	0,393	0,721	0,930

Source: Processed Data (2026)