

# The dark side of perceived corruption: Mediating mechanism between love of money and evil behavior

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## Abstract

Many studies about unethical behavior (evil behavior) in the workplace have underlying various research related to love of money and perception of corruption as in this research. One of the main ideas that emerged is "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" Timothy, 6:10. In most studies, there is a gap and lack of prior research involving the mechanism of indirect effect between the love of money behavior and unethical behavior in public sector institutions. In this research, we focus on the role of mediation between the perception of corruption and love of money toward unethical behavior. The researcher spread the questionnaire for obtained 149 respondents who are an employee from the public sector institution. Meanwhile, the research method that we use is a quantitative study, which allows for doing the study with a fast time and broad generalizability. We find that perception of corruption could partially mediate the effect between the love of money and unethical behavior in public sector employees. This study proves that employees who work in public sector institutions have a corruption perception that can trigger evil behavior. employees who have a strong orientation towards money are more likely to try to earn more money to enrich themselves, and then employees engage in unethical behavior.

## Keywords

love of money; perception of corruption; evil behavior

## INTRODUCTION

Corruption has understood as an abuse of power to enrich oneself or a group. Corruption has eroded trust, weaken democracy, hinder economic development and more exacerbate inequality, poverty to the environmental crisis (Suyatmiko, 2021). Every year Transparency International, a global non-governmental organization issued a survey on corruption. The results released annually are known as the Corruption Perception Index (hereinafter referred to as CPI). The CPI score is a description of the situation and condition of corruption at the level of country or territory.

Indonesia is one of the most corrupt countries among other G20 countries with a score of 37 on a scale of 0-100, down 3 points from the previous score. The score 0 is very corrupt and a score of 100 is very clean. Russia is the G20 country with the lowest index, which is 30 or very corrupt (Transparency International Indonesia, 2021).

Corruption behavior has occurred in various sectors, including in the public sector and private sector. The existence of corruption behavior that arises in an

organization could cause a negative impact on organization performance. As in theory, corruption is a barrier to human resource development in an institution. The blocked development of human resources can decrease the quality of institutions and economics (Tan, Liu, Huang, Zhao & Zheng, 2016). Not only that, corruption that occurs in institutions could bother the process of public decision making, hinder innovation and investment (Zheng, Liu, Huang & Tan, 2016). We assume that corruption behavior not only has a negative impact on institutions but also can impact to individuals themselves (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019). Prior study indicates that a high level of corruption could be connected with the tendency to do unethical behavior (evil behavior) (Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner, 2008).

We state that not much research that discusses perceptions of corruption and causes as well as impact to individuals in institutions in the public sector. We also emphasize that still low attention to the perception of corruption in the literature review (Whu & Zhu, 2016). The main reason for the theme of corruption with evil behavior does not receive much attention in scientific

literature is its sensitive nature to be examined in depth in public sector institutions. Indonesia is a country that has many public sector institutions with bureaucratic systems. Thus, it is interesting when researchers can capture the phenomenon of corruption perception and its impact on Evil Behavior that is still sensitive and has not been explored (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019) within the public sector institution in Indonesia.

The level of corruption in Indonesia from 2020 to 2021 has increased. Indonesia is a country that is ranked 96th out of 180 countries in the world that has a CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) score in various fields including in the public sector institution of 38 points that increased 1 point in 2021 from 37 points in 2021 to 38 to 38 Points (100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt), which means the level of perception of corruption in Indonesia is still relatively high (Transparency, n.d.). Thus, we are interested in doing a study about the perception of corruption and find the answer about 'What mechanism can explain the association the perception of corruption?' and 'Is the love of money could be the reason that emerges the unethical behavior (evil behavior)?' We hope this research could give a new outlook to academics about the association between perception of corruption, as well as make a reference of policymaking by practitioners and reduce the impact of negative behavior such as corruption for institutions and individuals (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019).

This study encloses "the love against money" as an independent variable. Love against money be the reason that emerges the corruption behavior and, in the end, could impact unethical behavior (evil behavior). The manager usually uses money as a tool for seeking attention, sustaining and motivating employees to reach the institution's performance (Tang & Chiu, 2003). Money is a reference framework from somebody for fulfilling daily life needs. Thus, there is a clear reason about the importance of money as a purpose career for an individual in a public sector institution, and money becomes an important topic that can be linked with corruption and unethical behavior.

When the institutions make a downsizing, restructuring and global competition, employees not only face the pressures that can trigger the stress but also can increase

the possibility of making money and enjoying every product and service (Tang & Chiu, 2003). Logically, individuals who experience pressure and stress tend to be involved in unethical behavior (evil behavior). Love of money is the root of unethical behavior where someone who experiences pressure and stress in their job environment will tend to think about how to earn more money to fulfill their daily life. With the emergence of desire for earning more money, then an individual could own perception for doing corruption in the workplace, as well they can get involved in unethical behavior (Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner, 2008).

This study refers to general understanding and references in the scriptures that state "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy, 6:10). Not only that, this research aims to test and analyze the mediation mechanism in the perception of corruption toward the love of money and unethical behavior. We guess that love of money is a root of an employee's unethical behavior through the mediation mechanism toward the perception of corruption (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019). This study uses the positivist paradigm that examines the causality effect between each research variable (Siswanto, Masyhuri, Maksum & Murdiansyah, 2020). This study examines the direct effect between the love of money to unethical behavior, also this study examines the indirect effect of perception of corruption between the love of money and unethical behavior. Respondents that we use in this study are employees who work in public sector institutions with the status 'Civil Servant' or permanent employee who works full time.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **The love of money**

Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner (2008) explained that love of money is behavior somebody to money, desire as well as aspirations somebody against money. Money has become the main commodity because most countries especially in America consider the success could be seen from how much money they have as well as the big income they earn (Elias, 2010). Most of the prior literature emphasizes that love of money can trigger a

negative impact in institutions or to the individual itself such as a greed feeling (Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner, 2008). A high level of love for money in a person could increase the unethical behavior and can make employees decrease their performance significantly.

The first question that appears from our thought is not 'how we could measure love against money?' but more on questions about 'what is the love of money?'. This study refers to general understanding and references in the scriptures that state that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy, 6:10). The love of money has a different conceptualization with an 'obsession' (Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner, 2008). Obsession is related to the assumption that somebody owns a strong belief and is obsessed by all aspects with money related. The prior research found that the love of money has a negative impact on individuals. The high level of a person's love can increase the tendency of corruption and also increase unethical behavior (evil behavior) (Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda, 2018).

### **Perception of corruption**

Ko & Weng (2011) explain that corruption is a power abuse for gaining profit for private. Conceptually, corruption can have a strong impact on the social environment, decreasing the quality of public policies and increasing criminal activity. Moreover, on a broader scale, high levels of corruption can disrupt the efficiency of resource allocation, disrupt government performance, slow down economic growth and reduce the efficiency of private and public institutions (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019). In this study, researchers agree that corruption can have a negative effect on institutions and individuals. This research focuses on the implications of corruption at the individual level of analysis, not at the structural level (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019). Research indicates that there is a negative relationship between subjective experiences of corruption and a person's level of unethical behavior.

### **Unethical behavior**

Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner (2008) state that there are many forms of unethical behavior (evil behavior) such as evil thoughts, obscenity, theft,

murder, adultery, malice, deception, envy, slander, pride, ignorance and deviant behavior in the workplace. Deviant behavior in the workplace itself such as wasting institutional resources, stealing, sabotaging, lying and withdrawing from work, and being greedy for something (Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda, 2018). The previous research literature supports that the highest percentage that causes an institution to suffer financial losses is caused by employees who steal. Thus, the researcher agrees that unethical behavior is the most reasonable outcome if it is associated with the love of money and corruption.

### **Love of money and unethical behavior**

Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018) explain that greed can be associated with an individual's high orientation towards money. Logically, someone who has a high level of love for money, then they are more likely to engage in greed. Greed is a form of unethical behavior. Thus, someone who has a high love of money orientation will tend to have high unethical behavior as well. Vice versa, someone who has a low level of love for money tends to have a lower level of unethical behavior.

Referring to previous research conducted by Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018) which found that the love of money has a positive effect on increasing unethical behavior, managers generally tend to use money as a tool to attract attention, retain and motivate their employees to perform better in achieving institutional goals. In theory, an individual's high "love of money" construct can be the cause of "greed" in the workplace. In addition, Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018) also support the notion that the love of money is the main cause of unethical behavior. The results show that employees in Hong Kong who have a high money orientation make them more likely to engage in unethical behavior. The previous research literature supports that the highest percentage that causes an institution to suffer financial losses is caused by employees who steal. Thus, researchers agree that unethical behavior is the most reasonable outcome if it is associated with the love of money.

*H1: The love of money has the positive effect in unethical behavior*

## Perception of corruption as mediator

The initial emphasis raised in the background of this research is that the love of money can have a direct or indirect effect on unethical behavior. Shinghapakdi, Vitell, Lee, Nisius & Grace (2013) state that the love of money can trigger a person to engage in ethical crisis behavior for several reasons. First, managers always use money not only to attract new employees in an institution, but also to use it to retain and motivate existing employees. Second, employees feel the drive to maximize wealth by encouraging executives to take unethical decisions to achieve organizational goals. As a result, an employee who has a high money orientation will be more likely to seek ways of maximizing their personal wealth through corruption so that in the end they will engage in unethical behavior such as greed in the workplace.

Love of money is related to personal greed which is assessed by individual values, desires and meanings and the importance of money for personal (Shinghapakdi, Vitell, Lee, Nisius & Grace, 2013). A high level of love for money indicates that a person has a strong desire to be rich, uses their money carefully, and considers that money is a major symbol of an employee's success. Theoretically, an individual with a high level of money-loving orientation will pursue more monetary wealth and be more likely to seek opportunities to earn more money through corrupt activities, and ultimately engage in unethical behavior

(Tang, Sutarso, Davis, Dolinski, Ibrahim & Wagner, 2008). Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019) support that corruption can be an indirect complement to the testing mechanism between the love of money and unethical behavior

*H2: Perceptions of corruption mediate the effect of the love of money on unethical behavior*

## METHODS

We collected data by integrating several social media platforms, such as via email, whatsapp, twitter and instagram. Furthermore, we distributed questionnaires based on the snowballing sampling technique. Meanwhile, to avoid bias in the results, the researcher included screening questions at the beginning of the questionnaire which aims to find out that the respondents who filled out the questionnaires had met the criteria that the researchers wanted, and also to find out whether the data that the respondents had filled in was categorized as feasible or not suitable for use in this study.

The questionnaire used in this study has been developed and validated by previous researchers (Tang & Chiu, 2003; Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). The adopted questionnaire consisted of question items that were in English and then translated into Indonesian to suit the research context in Indonesia. Questionnaires were distributed to 149 respondents.

This research using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) with SmartPLS software as a data analysis. In PLS Path Modeling there are 2 models, that is the outer model and the inner model. In the evaluation of the outer model, convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability tests will be carried out to assess the validity and reliability of the items used, while in the inner model evaluation, a specification of causal relationships between latent variables will be carried out.

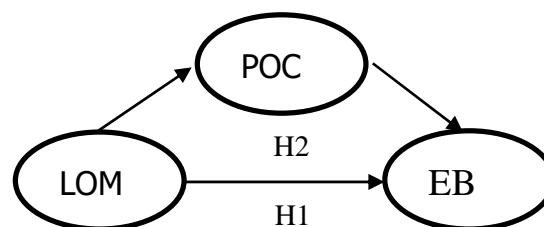


Figure 1.  
Conceptual framework

## **Sampling**

We conducted the research based on positivistic research methods using a deductive quantitative approach. Research based on positivism emphasizes more on causality testing between variables involved in research (Maksum, Handoko, & Fikriah, 2020). The use of cross-sectional data is the main key in this study. Cross-sectional data is data collected in the field over a certain time which aims to analyze phenomena in the field. Research with cross-sectional data also aims to confirm the research hypothesis proposed in this study (Cooper & Schindler, 2004).

In line with previous research, the researcher emphasized the use of a purposive sampling approach in this study. Researchers set as many as 149 respondents and also set certain criteria to avoid research from bias in the results caused by errors in determining respondents. The criteria set by the researcher are full-time employees with civil servant status (PNS) or non-PNS permanent employees who work in public sector institutions. The basis for setting these criteria is that full-time employees who work in the public sector are theoretically more likely to engage with deviant behavior in the workplace. Thus, it is relevant when the researcher establishes the characteristics of the respondent as a full-time employee who works in a public sector institution.

Previous research from Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019) confirmed that the criteria for respondents who work full time with a status of a civil servant and non-civil servant in public sector institutions are better able to explain the phenomenon of the love of money and its impact on unethical behavior through corruption. It can be concluded researchers are consistent in setting respondent criteria similar to previous studies to re-examine the direct and indirect effect of the love of money variable on unethical behavior.

## **Measurement**

We use a five-point Likert scale to measure the variables. The Likert-scale ranks from the lowest point, namely point 1 which means strongly disagree to the highest point, namely point 5 which means strongly agree. The study involved three research variables, namely love of money, corruption

and unethical behavior. The items we use are attached in below.

### ***Love of money***

The love of money of in this study was measured using ten measurement items adopted and modified by Tang & Chiu (2003) and also validated and used in previous research by Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018). Respondents are required to rate how deeply they feel the love of money with a score of 1 to a score of 5 according to their level of love for money. In addition, the researcher included several examples of question items used to measure the love of money variable, namely, "I am highly motivated by money", "Money is a representation of my accomplishments" and "Money is a symbol of my success". The reliability adequacy score in this study reached 0.857 (Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda, 2018). Higher scores on reliability tests may indicate a higher level of love for money among employees of private sector institutions when compared to lower scores.

### ***Perception of corruption***

The corruption perception in this study was measured using three measurement items that were adopted and modified by Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019). Respondents are required to assess their perception of and involvement with corrupt behavior by choosing between a score of 1 to 5 according to their perception and intensity of the respondent's involvement with corrupt behavior. In addition, the researcher includes several examples of question items used in this study to measure employee corruption perceptions, namely, "Corruption is a very common phenomenon in my country and occurs in almost all institutions", "Most people who have the opportunity to be corrupt are usually eventually will also commit corruption" and "Most of the Civil Servants and politicians in my country commit corruption". Moreover, the reliability adequacy score in this study reached 0.72 (Ciziceno & Travaglino, 2019). In theory, a higher adequacy score could indicate a higher level of respondents' perceptions of corruption among employees in public sector institutions when compared to a lower score.

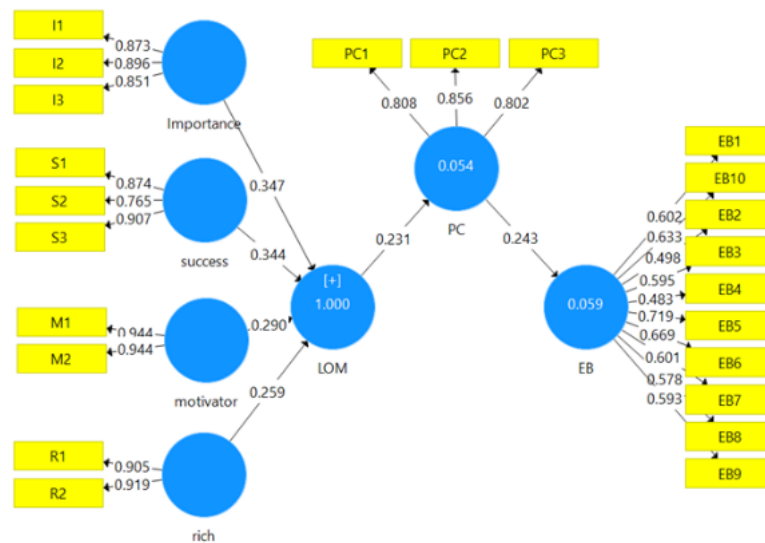


Figure 2. Outer-loading item value

### Unethical behavior

We measure the unethical behavior variable by using eleven indicators adopted from Robinson & Bennett (1995). Respondents are required to provide an assessment of the respondent's perception and involvement with unethical behavior by choosing a score between 1 to 5 according to their perception of unethical behavior. In addition, the researcher also included examples of question items used by the researcher in measuring unethical behavior, namely, "I use office facilities for personal purposes (phone, printer etc.)", "I use office resources wastefully (turning on the air conditioner while opened the window)" and "I was late for work and left early". In general, high reliability scores can indicate a higher level of perceived unethical behavior among employees in private sector institutions when compared to lower scores.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To strengthen the validity of this study, we used validity and reliability tests to examine whether the instrument we used could measure precisely what we wanted to study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

### Convergent validity

The initial stage to test convergent validity is to construct a path diagram. In accordance with the research procedure, items that have a loading factor < 0.5 will be eliminated from the measurement model and after that will be deleted (See Figure 2). Items that have a loading factor value of < 0.5 will be removed from the model then we run the data again. Items that have a loading factor value between 0.5 and 0.7 are retained in the model with the consideration that the item has a value and AVE > 0.5.

### Discriminant validity

In the next stage, we tested the discriminant validity by looking at the cross-loading value of each item. The criteria are met if the loading value of each item on the construct is greater than the cross-loading value. EB101 indicator where the loading value is 0.704 which is greater than the cross-loading to other constructs, namely -0.038 to I; -0.086 to LOM; 0.155 to PC; -0.047 to M; -0.133 to R and -0.072 to S. Likewise with all other indicators where the value of

**Table 1.**  
**Discriminant validity**

	<b>EB</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>LOM</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>
EB10	0.704	-0.038	-0.086	0.155	-0.047	-0.133	-0.072
EB5	0.785	0.020	0.046	0.142	0.035	0.034	0.058
EB7	0.651	0.033	-0.013	0.122	-0.044	-0.036	-0.006
EB8	0.730	0.012	0.067	0.112	0.062	0.061	0.085
EB9	0.763	-0.061	0.026	0.133	0.054	0.069	0.039
I1	-0.011	0.873	0.628	0.220	0.331	0.433	0.340
I1	-0.011	0.873	0.628	0.220	0.331	0.433	0.340
I2	0.003	0.896	0.682	0.159	0.383	0.480	0.397
I2	0.003	0.896	0.682	0.159	0.383	0.480	0.397
I3	-0.023	0.851	0.696	0.228	0.428	0.498	0.431
I3	-0.023	0.851	0.696	0.228	0.428	0.498	0.431
M1	-0.004	0.413	0.782	0.203	0.944	0.549	0.648
M1	-0.004	0.413	0.782	0.203	0.944	0.549	0.648
M2	0.029	0.414	0.784	0.222	0.944	0.614	0.603
M2	0.029	0.414	0.784	0.222	0.944	0.614	0.603
PC1	0.104	0.267	0.199	0.788	0.127	0.122	0.108
PC2	0.197	0.166	0.192	0.869	0.201	0.169	0.093
PC3	0.146	0.147	0.179	0.808	0.224	0.081	0.121
R1	-0.036	0.552	0.706	0.166	0.468	0.905	0.420
R1	-0.036	0.552	0.706	0.166	0.468	0.905	0.420
R2	0.019	0.438	0.762	0.116	0.648	0.919	0.536
R2	0.019	0.438	0.762	0.116	0.648	0.919	0.536
S1	0.045	0.484	0.750	0.083	0.515	0.511	0.874
S1	0.045	0.484	0.750	0.083	0.515	0.511	0.874
S2	0.066	0.252	0.579	0.185	0.466	0.351	0.765
S2	0.066	0.252	0.579	0.185	0.466	0.351	0.765
S3	-0.041	0.383	0.767	0.081	0.694	0.467	0.907
S3	-0.041	0.383	0.767	0.081	0.694	0.467	0.907

Source: Authors' own

loading to one construct > cross loading to another construct (See Table 1).

### Reliability

Then, we perform reliability test for ensure that the indicators in variables are fulfil condition reliability. Variable generally could said reliable if refers to the score Cronbach's Alpha is greater than or equal to 0.6 and the Composite Reliability score is greater than or equal to 0.7. If the value of Cronbach's Alpha about 0.5, it's indicating that the reliability of a construct is in the poor category, but can still be used in the next level of analysis. Meanwhile,if the value

ranging from 0.6 to 0.7, it is included in the fairly good category, while the value is 0.8 or more, it can be categorized as very good (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). For detailed reliability test results can be referred to in table 3.

Referring to table 3, all the variables involved in this study have been declared reliable, ias in the minimum Cronbach's Alpha score is 0.6 or more and Composite Reliability score of 0.7 or more (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt , 2014). In addition, the evil behavior variable obtained a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.778 and composite reliability of 0.849.

**Table 2.**  
**Inner model**

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted
EB	0.034	0.028
PC	0.053	0.047

Source: Authors' own

While the variable perception of corruption obtained a score of 0.761 and 0.862 on the composite reliability score. Furthermore, the love of money variable obtained a score of 0.893 and 0.913 for the composite reliability score. Thus, each measurement item can consistently and reliably measure each research variable in different contexts.

### Inner model

Then, we conducted the Inner Model test as a procedure stage in testing the research hypothesis. Testing of structural models or hypotheses is carried out by researchers to observe and confirm how a research construct can relate to each other based on existing theories. Researchers refer to the assessment of the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) and p-value, as well as the value of the coefficient of determination (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). If the path value is positive, it means that the exogenous variable is positively related to the endogenous variable, and vice versa. Researchers set the conditions for the support of the research hypothesis if, p-value < 0.01 (significant at the 1% level), p-value < 0.05 (significant at the 5% level), and p-value < 0.1 (significant at the 5% level). 10% rate). The results of the Inner Model testing in this study can be referred to in table 2.

Referring to the Inner Model test listed in table 4, it can be seen that the R-Square on

the unethical behavior is 0.034, which means that the magnitude of the influence of the love of money variable on the unethical behavior variable is 3.4% and the rest can be influenced by other variables which were not included in the research model. Furthermore, the variable perception of corruption obtained an R-Square score of 0.053 which means that the magnitude of the influence of the love of money variable on the perception of corruption is 5.3% and the rest can be influenced by other variables not included in this study.

### Hypothesis testing

In this study, the research hypothesis was then tested which refers to the mechanism for testing the moderation-mediation hypothesis which was developed and validated by Baron & Kenny (1986). Referring to the results of hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant effect between the love of money variable and the perception of corruption. This effect can be proven with a p-value of less than 1%. The influence of the perception of corruption toward unethical behavior also has a positive and significant effect, as evidenced by the p-value of less than 1% (See Table 5).

**Table 3.**  
**Reliability**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
EB	0.778	0.849
PC	0.761	0.862
LOM_	0.893	0.913
<i>Importance</i>	0.845	0.906
Motivator	0.878	0.943
<i>Rich</i>	0.798	0.908
<i>Success</i>	0.809	0.887

Source: Authors' own



**Table 4.**  
**Specific indirect effect**

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values
rich -> LOM_ -> PC -> EB	0.011	1,731	0.084
importance -> LOM_ -> PC -> EB	0.015	1,680	0.094
motivator -> LOM_ -> PC -> EB	0.012	1,690	0.092
success -> LOM_ -> PC -> EB	0.015	1,676	0.094
rich -> LOM_ -> PC	0.060	2,766	0.006
Importance -> LOM_ -> PC	0.080	2,584	0.010
motivator -> LOM_ -> PC	0.067	2,666	0.008
success -> LOM_ -> PC	0.079	2,678	0.008
LOM_ -> PC -> EB	0.043	1,676	0.094

Source: Authors' own

For mediation testing result shown in Table 6. We assume, in testing the mediating effect, the output of the significance test parameter refers to the Total Effect table, not to the coefficient table. The reason is that the mediating effect not only considers testing the effect between independent variables on the dependent variable directly but also has to consider testing through mediating variables (indirect effect) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus, the Total Effect is better if it is used to confirm and predict the influence of direct and indirect effects between research variables. Referring to the Total Effects table, the T-Statistic value gets a score lower than 1.96, which means that the variable perception of corruption does not fully mediate (partial mediation) the indirect effect between the love of money variable on the evil behavior variable. With the T-Statistic value reaching 1.676 and *P-Value* 0.094, the mediating role of corruption perceptions has been supported at a significance level of 10%.

#### **Direct effect between love of money and evil behavior**

The results of the current study state that there is a significant direct and indirect effect between the love of money and unethical behavior (evil behavior). Furthermore, the results of this study support the notion that excessive love of money can be the cause of unethical behavior in the work environment, but money is not included in the cause of unethical behavior (Tang & Chiu, 2003). The researcher responds to the understanding of Westerners and religious viewpoints which state that "The love of money is the root of evil" (Bible: 1 Timothy, 6:10), and is proven empirically from several data on permanent employees who work in the public sector. Research from Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018) states that someone who has a sense of greed can trigger an increase in their orientation towards money. A high sense of orientation towards money can lead a

**Table 5**  
**Specific direct effect**

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
I-> LOM	0.346	12,979	0.000	Significant
M -> LOM	0.290	17,780	0.000	Significant
R -> LOM	0.259	18,219	0.000	Significant
S-> LOM	0.344	16.034	0.000	Significant
LOM_ -> PC	0.230	2,663	0.008	Significant
PC -> EB	0.185	2,687	0.007	Significant

Source: Authors' own

person to engage in unethical behavior in the workplace.

Tang & Chiu (2003) found that most employees who work in Hong Kong companies have an excessive love of money, and this results in high levels of unethical behavior in this group of employees. While the research conducted by Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda (2018) found that someone who has a love of money can increase unethical behavior. This study explains that most bosses use money as a tool to motivate employees in achieving institutional goals. Thus, the existence of this interaction pattern can make employees have more attention to money, because money is the main goal in their work environment. In conclusion, empirical data taken from various public sector institutions and various previous studies (Tang & Chiu, 2003; Nazaruddin, Rezki & Rahmanda, 2018) have proven the research hypothesis that the love of money can have a positive effect on unethical behavior (evil behavior).

#### **Indirect effect of perception of love of money and evil behavior through perception of corruption**

This research is based on the idea that the love of money can have a direct or indirect effect on unethical behavior. Based on the data taken from the field, it proves that the perception of corruption can partially mediate the influence between the love of money and unethical behavior. Researchers found that employees who work in public sector institutions are more likely to have a love of money. The love of money can trigger perceptions of corruption and can eventually engage in unethical behavior. Shinghapakdi, Vitell, Lee, Nisius & Grace (2013) support the results of this study by stating that the love of money can trigger a person to engage in an ethical crisis. The ethical crisis in question is the use of money as a tool to attract employees' attention and the tendency of someone to look for ways to maximize their personal wealth through corruption, and in the end, they can engage in unethical behavior such as greed in their respective workplaces.

Shinghapakdi, Vitell, Lee, Nisius & Grace (2013) also emphasized that the love of money is related to personal greed which is judged by individual values, desires and meanings and the importance of money for personal use. Logically, someone who has

an excessive love of money then they can also have a strong sense of enriching themselves. With a strong feeling for money, then someone always thinks that money can be the main symbol of an employee's form of success. Thus, based on the results of the current study and previous research on the love of money proposed by Ciziceno & Travaglino (2019), supports the notion that an employee who has a strong money orientation is more likely to fulfill their wealth in monetary terms, and also are more likely to seek opportunities to make more money through corruption, and they are subsequently also involved in unethical behavior.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In general, this research can contribute to the various literatures related to the mediating role of corruption perceptions to explain the path of influence of the love of money on unethical behavior (evil behavior). This research can explain the phenomenon that causes a person to engage in unethical behavior. This study proves that the perception of corruption can partially mediate the effect of the love of money on unethical behavior. The results of this study explain that employees who have a strong orientation towards money are more likely to try to earn more money to enrich themselves, and then employees engage in unethical behavior. The high orientation of employees towards money can harm institutions, especially public sector institutions. Thus, practitioners are expected to avoid the risk of unethical behavior in their employees by reducing the use of money as a tool to attract attention and a tool to motivate employees in achieving institutional goals.

However, the current research still has limitations so that it needs improvement in the future research agenda. The first drawback is the limited use of research samples that only cover employees in public sector institutions, it is hoped that future research will cover a wider sample involving private sector institutions or organizations to make the results of this research more comprehensive and diverse. Second, the researcher only uses the mechanism of the role of mediating the perception of corruption, it is hoped that the research agenda will further consider the moderating role of organizational commitment to confirm

its effect on unethical behavior. Third, this research has limitations on the research methodology that uses quantitative methods as the main paradigm in conducting research. Quantitative methods allow for extensive data collection and faster processing and wider generalization but are still less relevant when used to capture sensitive phenomena such as corruption and unethical behavior in the workplace. Thus, future research agendas are expected to use experimental methods to produce better research outputs. Experimental methods make it possible to simulate phenomena, so that research results can be more accurate.

### Implications

Public sector institutions are institutions managed by the government that must provide their best performance and also provide excellent service to the community. This study indicates that the high level of love of money can have an influence on the perception of corruption, and ultimately can trigger unethical behavior (evil behavior). Therefore, it is important for the institution leaders to emphasize the love of money in an ethical way. The important role of leaders in making policies aimed at improving employee ethics is needed. Every public sector institution needs to develop and develop effective policies to suppress unethical behavior in the institution's environment involving academics based on relevant research results. Effective policy can control employees to be involved in sensitive behavior (love of money, corruption perception and evil behavior). Institutional leaders must work hard to prevent and improve the character of employees in the institutional environment. Effective policies are expected to reduce the negative impact of love of money and corruption perceptions, and on an ongoing basis can also reduce evil behavior in employees in public sector institutions.

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