

AUDITING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Love of Money, Machiavellian, and Fraud on Ethical Behavior: A Case Study at The Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Love of Money, Machiavellian traits, and Fraud on the ethical behavior of auditors at the Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province. Auditors were chosen as the research subjects because they play a strategic role in maintaining the integrity of financial reports and public accountability. This research employs a quantitative approach using questionnaires distributed to auditors, with measurement items developed from each variable's indicators. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, applying multiple linear regression to test both partial and simultaneous effects among the variables. The results indicate that Love of Money has a positive but not significant effect on auditors' ethical behavior. Meanwhile, Machiavellian traits have a negative yet insignificant effect, and Fraud also shows a negative but insignificant effect on ethical behavior. Simultaneously, the three independent variables collectively demonstrate a negative direction of influence on ethical behavior, although not statistically significant. These findings suggest that other factors, such as organizational culture, internal control systems, and professional commitment, may play a more dominant role in shaping auditors' ethical behavior compared to the psychological factors examined. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of behavioral accounting literature and practical contributions to strengthening ethical standards for auditors in the public sector.

Keywords: Love of Money, Machiavellian, Fraud, Ethical Behavior, Auditor.

JEL Code: M42, D63, M48, K42

I. Introduction

Ethical behavior is a fundamental aspect of every profession, reflecting integrity, moral responsibility, and commitment to established professional standards. In the field of accounting, the ethical behavior of auditors is especially critical, as they are responsible for ensuring the transparency and accountability of financial reporting, which forms the foundation for decision-making in the public sector. An auditor's integrity can be influenced by various factors, both internal to the individual and external, within the organizational environment in which they operate. Among these factors, three key variables—Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud—are significant to examine, as each has the potential to influence auditors'



ethical conduct. Love of Money refers to an individual's tendency to regard money as the primary goal in life, viewing it as a symbol of status, power, and personal identity. In the auditing profession, an excessive attachment to money can lead auditors to disregard ethical standards in pursuit of personal gain. Previous studies have shown that Love of Money can have either a positive or negative impact on ethical behavior, depending on an individual's orientation toward money and how they view integrity in their professional duties.

Machiavellianism, on the other hand, refers to a personality trait characterized by manipulative, opportunistic behavior and a lack of concern for moral norms in achieving personal goals. This trait is often linked to decision-making based solely on rational calculation, with little regard for ethics. Individuals with high Machiavellian traits are more likely to engage in unethical behavior, such as manipulating information or deviating from established audit standards, in their pursuit of personal objectives. Fraud is also a critical factor that influences ethical behavior. Fraud encompasses various forms of dishonesty, including the manipulation of financial statements, falsification of data, and abuse of authority. Auditors in high-pressure environments, who have opportunities to commit fraud, may be more susceptible to unethical practices, particularly if they are influenced by material incentives, Machiavellian traits, or an environment that enables fraudulent behavior.

This study aims to investigate the influence of Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud on auditors' ethical behavior, with a focus on auditors at the Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province. This institution plays a crucial role in overseeing and auditing the management of public finances, making it essential to ensure that auditors maintain high ethical standards in carrying out their duties. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of behavioral accounting literature and public sector auditing and practically to strengthening professional ethics among auditors. The objectives of this study are:

- a. To examine the effect of Love of Money on auditors' ethical behavior.
- b. To examine the effect of Machiavellianism on auditors' ethical behavior.
- c. To examine the effect of Fraud on auditors' ethical behavior.
- d. To examine the simultaneous effect of Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud on auditors' ethical behavior.

This research offers several contributions, both theoretical and practical. From a theoretical perspective, this study aims to enrich the behavioral accounting literature and public sector auditing by providing empirical evidence on the psychological factors that influence auditors' ethical behavior. From a practical perspective, the findings of this research may provide valuable insights for auditors, management at the Regional Inspectorate, and internal oversight practitioners on the importance of maintaining integrity and professional ethics in audit work. Additionally, from a policy perspective, the results of this study are expected to inform policymakers at the Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province in formulating strategies for preventing and enforcing ethical discipline, reducing the potential for unethical behavior in the public sector auditing environment.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theoretical Framework

a. Behavioral Accounting

Behavioral accounting is a branch of accounting that has seen significant growth over the past six decades. One of the leading journals discussing this topic is *Behavior Research in Accounting*, published by the American Accounting Association. As early as 1952, several accounting studies began to link accounting with behavioral aspects, starting with the work of Argyris. Behavioral accounting research is a relatively new

field that focuses on accounting and auditing information. In the context of auditing, this field has expanded rapidly, with literature increasingly focusing on specific behavioral attributes, such as cognitive processes, or discussing specialized topics in auditing from an analytical perspective. As a research area that has made significant contributions, behavioral accounting holds the potential to lay the foundation for future research.

Behavioral accounting can be defined as a structured field within accounting that studies various aspects of accounting through interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. This includes both quantitative and qualitative elements, with the main focus on human behavior. This field continues to evolve to support managers in the economic decision-making process (Lubis, 2017:20). As a dimension of accounting related to human behavior, behavioral accounting influences the design, development, and effective use of accounting information systems. Moreover, behavioral accounting considers the interaction between human behavior and accounting systems, reflecting the social dimensions of organizations, while also adding value to the financial information presented by accountants. Thus, behavioral accounting can be defined as the study of the behavior of accountants and non-accountants, influenced by accounting functions and reporting. The focus of behavioral accounting lies in the considerations and decision-making processes of accountants and auditors, the influence of accounting and auditing functions on behavior, such as the quality of judgment and decision-making by auditors, as well as the impact of accounting outputs, such as financial statements, on the decisions of their users.

Behavioral accounting studies how human behavior affects accounting data and business decisions, and how business decisions influence human behavior—a question that remains central to research. Behavioral accounting provides a framework that is structured around several techniques (Lubis, 2017:23):

- 1) To understand and assess the impact of business processes on individuals and organizational performance.
- 2) To measure and report behaviors and perspectives related to strategic planning.
- 3) To influence perspectives and behaviors to support the successful implementation of corporate policies.

In general, the scope of behavioral accounting can be classified into three main areas (Lubis, 2017:30):

- 1) The impact of human behavior on the design, construction, and use of accounting systems. This area of behavioral accounting is related to the attitudes and management philosophies that influence the nature of accounting control within an organization.
- 2) The impact of accounting systems on human behavior. This area deals with how accounting systems affect motivation, productivity, decision-making, job satisfaction, and collaboration.
- 3) Methods for predicting and strategies to change human behavior. This area focuses on how accounting systems are used to influence behavior.

b. Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP)

The Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) is a government agency tasked with conducting internal oversight within both the central and local government environments. APIP includes the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), the Inspectorate General/Inspectorates/Internal Oversight Units in ministries, non-ministerial government agencies, provincial/city/district inspectorates, and other government legal entities in accordance with applicable laws (Indonesian Government Internal Auditors Association, 2013:13). APIP auditors are civil servants assigned with the task of carrying out audits. In this context, government auditors can be likened to individuals whose right foot is bound by the rules of civil service, while their left foot is bound by professional regulations. This does not imply that the civil servant status is more important than the professional duties of auditors, but it underscores that the scope of the code of ethics to which government auditors must adhere is broader than those in other professions (Pusat Pendidikan, 2014:12).

Auditors in APIP—ranging from auditors in BPKP, ministry inspectorates, to provincial, district, and city inspectorates—are required to comply with the APIP Code of Ethics related to their status as civil servants, as well as follow the APIP Audit Standards, as outlined in Ministerial Regulations No. PER/04/M.PAN/03/2008 and No. PER/05/M.PAN/03/2008, dated March 31, 2008. With the establishment of the Indonesian Government Internal Auditors Association (AAIPI), the standards for internal audits now refer to the Code of Ethics for Government Internal Auditors (KE-AIPI) and the Indonesian Government Internal Audit Standards (SA-IPI) (Pusat Pendidikan, 2014:12). The APIP Code of Ethics applies to all auditors and civil servants assigned to carry out oversight duties. The APIP Code of Ethics consists of two components: ethical principles, which form the basis for auditor behavior, and behavior rules, which provide detailed guidelines for the application of these principles in practice (Pusat Pendidikan, 2014:16).

c. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), introduced by Icek Ajzen in 1991, builds on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) initially proposed by Ajzen in 1980. TRA posits that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is influenced by two factors: subjective norms and attitudes toward the behavior (Fishbein, 1975:16). In 1988, Ajzen added the factor of perceived behavioral control (PBC), which was incorporated into TPB. This theory was later expanded and revised by Ajzen and Fishbein. TPB is grounded in the belief perspective, which influences individuals to engage in certain behaviors through the combination of various characteristics, qualities, and attributes of specific information that form the intention to act.

The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that attitudes toward behavior are the primary factor in predicting action. However, when examining subjective norms and measuring behavioral control, individual attitudes still play a key role. If someone has a positive attitude, receives support from the environment, and perceives fewer obstacles to acting, their intention to act will be higher (Ajzen, 1991:182). In summary, TPB states that the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influences an individual's intention to perform a behavior, which is a determinant of actual behavior. Ajzen (1991:188-190) explains that an individual's intention to engage in a behavior is influenced by three main factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes toward behavior refer to how an individual evaluates a particular action as beneficial or harmful. The more positive an individual's evaluation of the behavior's outcome, the stronger the tendency to intend to perform it. Subjective norms refer to the social pressure felt by an individual from important others around them to either perform or refrain from a specific behavior. Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control relates to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior, based on past experiences and anticipated obstacles. These three components interact to form the intention, which ultimately drives actual behavior.

d. Ethical Behavior

Ethical behavior refers to actions or attitudes that align with moral principles, distinguishing right from wrong in terms of action. Ethics, as defined by Bertens (2013:82), is the critical reflection on morality, concerning what should be done by humans as moral beings. In the competitive working world, scandals resulting from unethical behavior by accountants have attracted attention, as some accounting professionals neglect the standards and ethics that should be applied in their work. Ethical behavior emerges from an individual's moral awareness when considering actions based on the principles of goodness and justice. It encompasses decisions and actions made in response to specific ethical dilemmas, particularly when facing ethical conflicts in professional practice. Ethical behavior can be assessed using several indicators, as identified by Martin Khomsatun (2016), including integrity in task execution, anti-bribery attitudes, objectivity, conflict of interest avoidance, confidentiality, protection of information, competence, accountability, and freedom from illegal actions.

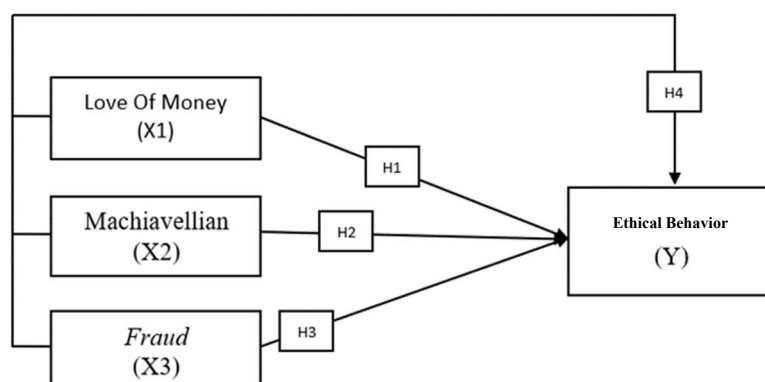


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.2. Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework that has been developed previously, the hypotheses to be tested in this study are as follows:

H1: Love of Money negatively affects Ethical Behavior.

H2: Machiavellianism negatively affects Ethical Behavior.

H3: Fraud negatively affects Ethical Behavior.

H4: Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud negatively affect Ethical Behavior.

III. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design, aiming to test the cause-and-effect relationships between Love of Money, Machiavellianism, Fraud, and Ethical Behavior. The research is conducted at the Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province, with data collected from 51 employees using a saturated sampling technique. Primary data is gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The study applies descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to analyze the data, with hypothesis testing conducted through t-tests and F-tests to examine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, a validity test is conducted by comparing r-count with r-table at a 5% significance level, while reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.50). Classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity, are also performed. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to assess how well the independent variables explain the variation in ethical behavior, confirming the robustness of the model and the relationships being tested.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Result of Research

a. Persian Test (t)

(Ghozali, 2018:179) explains that the partial t-test is used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. In this study, the hypothesis testing for each variable of professionalism, integrity, competence, and independence on audit quality uses the t-test statistic. The partial t-test is used to see the statistical significance of the effect of the independent variables partially with a significance level of 5% or a confidence level of 95%. The hypotheses formulated are as follows:

- 1) If $t_{count} < t_{table}$ and $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ then H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected, which means that one of the independent variables does not significantly influence the dependent variable.
- 2) If $t_{count} > t_{table}$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ then H_1 is accepted and H_0 is rejected, which means that one of the independent variables significantly influences the dependent variable.

Table 1. Persian t test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std.error	Beta		
(constant)	4,057	0.706		5,747	0,000
Love of Money (X1)	0,465	0.251	0,379	1,852	0.072
Machiavellian(X2)	-0.247	0,224	0,233	1,104	0,276
Fraud(X3)	-0.285	0.167	0,269	1,705	0.096

Based on the results of the t-test in table 4.8 above, it can be interpreted as follows:

- 1) Love of Money - Negative Impact on Ethical Behavior.

The partial test results show that the Love of Money variable has a positive regression coefficient of 0.465 with a significance value of 0.072. This means that the higher the respondents' orientation toward money, the higher their tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This condition indicates that orientation toward money is not always a determining factor in auditors' ethical behavior, but is still predominantly influenced by other factors such as organizational culture, professional commitment, and the internal control system applicable in the work environment of government auditors. This is in line with the view (Tang, 2024:127) which emphasizes that Love of Money can have a positive impact if managed healthily, namely used as work motivation without having to sacrifice ethical values.

This finding is also consistent with several previous studies that have produced varying conclusions. Research by (Istiqomah et al., 2024) For example, they found that love of money had no effect on auditors' ethical behavior, while Bulutoding (2020) actually showed that love of money had a positive effect on ethical behavior. (Yasa, 2023) confirms that the Love of Money negatively influences auditor dysfunctional behavior, meaning that the higher the orientation toward money, the lower the auditor's tendency to act dysfunctionally. These differences in results demonstrate that orientation toward money can have different impacts, depending on the organizational context and the individual's value system.

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izcek Ajzen, 1991:188-190), which states that a person's behavior is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Thus, even though auditors have a positive attitude toward money, social norms in the form of a professional code of ethics and internal oversight mechanisms can restrain them from deviant behavior. This is also in line with behavioral accounting (Lubis, 2017:21), which emphasizes that auditor behavior is not solely influenced by personal psychological factors, but also by the social environment and organizational systems. Furthermore, (Tang, 2024:300) added that a healthy view of money encourages a person to use it as a means to achieve the common good, rather than as a self-governing life goal. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive influence of Love of Money on auditors' ethical behavior in this study is weak and insignificant because there are still stronger external factors in shaping auditors' ethical behavior.

- 2) Machiavellian Negative Impact on Ethical Behavior

The partial test results show that the Machiavellian variable has a negative regression coefficient of -0.247 with a significance value of 0.276. This negative trend indicates that the higher the Machiavellian trait, the lower the auditor's tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This condition indicates that although Machiavellian traits are theoretically closely related to manipulative, opportunistic, and self-interest-oriented behavior, in this study its influence on auditors' ethical behavior is not strong enough to be proven statistically. This means that auditors with Machiavellian traits do not always immediately exhibit unethical behavior, because there are still other factors such as professional codes of ethics, internal control systems, and moral commitments that are more dominant in influencing their ethical behavior.

This result is in line with research (Martadi, IF, Soemantri, R., & Harahap, 2025) which found that Machiavellian traits had a negative effect on auditors' ethical behavior, although it was not significant when tested with other variables. (Istiqomah et al., 2024) even showed more definitive results, namely that Machiavellian traits had a significant negative effect on auditors' ethical behavior. Meanwhile, (Suryawibawa et al., 2024) found that Machiavellian personality is associated with dysfunctional auditor behavior, although it is not always directly reflected in their ethical decisions. These differences in results indicate that the influence of Machiavellianism on auditor ethics is not always consistent and may be influenced by mediating variables and organizational environmental conditions.

Theoretically, Machiavellian traits describe an individual's tendency to manipulate others to achieve personal interests, with little or no consideration of moral values (Feist & Feist, 2009:317). Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izek Ajzen, 1991:179) this trait is related to an individual's negative attitude toward social norms, which can reduce their intention to behave ethically. However, an auditor's actual behavior is not only determined by attitude but also influenced by subjective norms (social pressure) and perceived behavioral control. In government auditors, the existence of a code of ethics, a reward and punishment system, and multi-layered supervision play a significant role in curbing potential manipulative tendencies. Therefore, although Machiavellian traits negatively impact ethical behavior, their influence remains insignificant because organizational factors and professional values are more dominant in shaping auditor behavior.

3) Fraud negatively impact ethical behavior

The partial test results for the Fraud variable show a negative regression coefficient of -0.285 with a significance level of 0.096. This value indicates that Fraud has a negative effect on ethical behavior, but is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This negative trend indicates that the higher the tendency to commit fraud, the lower the auditor's tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not statistically strong enough. This finding illustrates that although Fraud is conceptually clearly incompatible with ethical behavior, in the context of this study, Fraud is not the primary factor determining auditor behavior. Other factors such as organizational culture, professional commitment, and personal integrity are more dominant in influencing auditor ethical behavior.

These results align with research by Sari & Pratama (2021), which found that the fraud triangle (pressure, opportunity, and rationalization) significantly negatively impacts the ethical behavior of external auditors. However, this contrasts with research by Dewi & Kurniawan (2022), which found that the fraud triangle actually positively impacts auditor ethical behavior, as pressure and opportunity encourage auditors to be more cautious and maintain integrity. This difference in results confirms that the influence of fraud on auditor ethical behavior is highly dependent on the work environment and internal control mechanisms. In the context of the Regional Inspectorate, the weak significance is understandable, as the existence of an internal oversight system and strict regulations suppress the opportunities for auditors to commit fraud.

Theoretically, fraud is defined as an intentional act of deception to obtain personal gain by misleading or deceiving others (Ferina et al., 2023:7). Fraud is a concrete form of unethical behavior, so its logical relationship is inversely related to ethics. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izek Ajzen, 1991:179), the tendency to commit fraud reflects a negative attitude toward social norms and the law. However, auditors' actual behavior is influenced not only by personal attitudes but also by subjective norms and behavioral control. This means that even if some auditors have a tendency toward fraud, the existence of a professional code of ethics, social pressure from the work environment, and an internal control system can reduce or restrain such unethical behavior. Therefore, the influence of fraud on ethical behavior in this study remains negative, but not statistically significant.

b. F test

Sugiyono (2019) explains that the F test is used to determine the extent of influence between the independent variable and the dependent variable, if significant. To test this hypothesis, the following decision-making criteria are used:

- 1) H_0 is accepted if the calculated F value $< F$ table, for a significance level of 5%
- 2) H_a is accepted if the calculated F value $> F$ table, for a significance level of 5%.

Table 2. F Test (Partial)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.735	3	0.912	2,160	0.108b
Residual	16,461	39	0.422		
Total	19,196	42			

The results of the f test in the table above obtained an F value of 2.160 with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.108. Because the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the regression model built with the independent variables of Love of Money, Machiavellian, and Fraud simultaneously does not have a significant effect on the dependent variable, namely the auditor's Ethical Behavior. This shows that together the three independent variables are not able to explain the variation in changes in the auditor's ethical behavior significantly. Thus, although the three variables are theoretically relevant to be studied, in terms of research on Inspectorate auditors, their influence on ethical behavior cannot be strongly proven.

c. Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2)

The coefficient of determination test is essentially used to predict how much influence the independent variable contributes to the dependent variable. According to (Ghozali, 2018:179) explains that the coefficient of determination is used to test the goodness-fit of a regression model. The value of the coefficient of determination is between 0 (zero) and 1 (one) ($0 < R^2 < 1$). A small R^2 value indicates that the independent variables' ability to explain variation in the dependent variable is limited, and a value close to one indicates that the independent variables provide almost all the information needed to predict variation in the dependent variable.

- 1) $R^2 = 0$, meaning the independent variable (X) does not have the ability to explain the dependent variable (Y).
- 2) $R^2 = 1$, meaning the independent variable (X) fully has the ability to explain the dependent variable (Y).

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.377	0.142	0.077	0.64968	2.160	3	39	0.108

The Determination coefficient test table, the R value of 0.377 indicates a positive but weak relationship between the independent variables (Fraud, Love of Money, and Machiavellian) to the dependent variable (Ethical Behavior). The R Square value of 0.142 means that the three independent variables are only able to explain the variation in changes in auditor ethical behavior by 14.2%, while the remaining 85.8% is explained by other factors not included in this research model. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.077 indicates an adjustment of the R Square to be more accurate to the number of samples and the number of variables used, so that this model is actually only able to explain around 7.7% of the variation in ethical behavior. Furthermore, the Standard Error of the Estimate (SEE) value of 0.64968 indicates the level of prediction error in the model, where the smaller the value, the better the model's prediction. The F Change value of 2.160 with a Sig. F Change of 0.108 (> 0.05) indicates that the three independent variables simultaneously do not significantly influence auditor ethical behavior. In other words, although there is a positive influence, this influence is not statistically strong enough to be declared significant.

4.2. Interpretation of Hypothesis Testing Results

a. Direct influence effect

This study examines the influence of Machivalian love of money and fraud on ethical behavior. The following is a discussion of the results of testing each hypothesis in this study.

1) Love of Money Influences Ethical Behavior

The partial test results show that the Love of Money variable has a positive regression coefficient of 0.465 with a significance value of 0.072. This means that there is a tendency that the higher the respondents' orientation towards money, the higher their tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This condition indicates that orientation towards money is not always a determining factor in auditors' ethical behavior, but is still predominantly influenced by other factors such as organizational culture, professional commitment, and the internal control system applicable in the work environment of government auditors. This is in line with the view (Tang, 2024:127) who emphasizes that Love of Money can have a positive impact if managed healthily, namely used as work motivation without having to sacrifice ethical values. This finding is also consistent with several previous studies that have produced varying conclusions. For example, research by Istiqomah et al. (2024), for example, found that love of money had no effect on auditor ethical behavior, while Bulutoding (2020) showed a positive effect on ethical behavior. Meanwhile, Yasa (2023) confirmed that love of money had a negative effect on auditor dysfunctional behavior, meaning the higher the orientation toward money, the lower the auditor's tendency to act dysfunctionally. These differences in results demonstrate that orientation toward money can have different impacts, depending on the organizational context and the individual's value system.

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izek Ajzen, 1991:188-190), which states that a person's behavior is influenced by attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Thus, even though auditors have a positive attitude towards money, social norms in the form of a professional code of ethics and internal control mechanisms are able to restrain them from acting deviantly. This is also in line with behavioral accounting (Lubis, 2017:21), which emphasizes that auditor behavior is not solely influenced by personal psychological factors, but also by the social environment and organizational systems. Furthermore, (Tang, 2024:300) adds that a healthy view of money encourages someone to use it as a means to achieve the common good, not as a life goal that controls themselves. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive influence of Love of Money on auditors' ethical behavior in this study is weak and insignificant because there are still stronger external factors in shaping auditors' ethical behavior.

2) Machiavellian Influence on Ethical Behavior

The partial test results show that the Machiavellian variable has a negative regression coefficient of -0.247 with a significance value of 0.276. This negative trend indicates that the higher the Machiavellian trait, the lower the auditor's tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This condition indicates that although Machiavellian traits are theoretically closely related to manipulative, opportunistic, and self-interest-oriented behavior, in this study its influence on auditors' ethical behavior is not strong enough to be proven statistically. This means that auditors with Machiavellian traits do not always immediately exhibit unethical behavior, because there are still other factors such as professional codes of ethics, internal control systems, and moral commitments that are more dominant in influencing their ethical behavior.

These results align with research by Martadi, IF, Soemantri, R., & Harahap, 2025, which found that Machiavellian traits negatively impact auditor ethical behavior, although this was not significant when tested alongside other variables. Research by Istiqomah et al., 2024, even more strongly suggests that Machiavellian traits significantly negatively impact auditor ethical behavior. Meanwhile, Suryawibawa et al., 2024, found that Machiavellian personality traits are associated with dysfunctional auditor behavior, although this is not always directly reflected in their ethical decisions. These differences in results demonstrate that the influence of Machiavellian traits on auditor ethics is not always consistent and can be influenced by mediating variables and organizational environmental conditions.

Theoretically, Machiavellianism describes an individual's tendency to manipulate others to achieve personal interests, with little or no consideration of moral values (Feist & Feist, 2009:317). Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izek Ajzen, 1991:179), this trait is related to an individual's

negative attitude toward social norms, which can reduce their intention to behave ethically. However, an auditor's actual behavior is not only determined by attitude but is also influenced by subjective norms (social pressure) and perceived behavioral control. In government auditors, the existence of a code of ethics, a reward and punishment system, and multi-layered supervision play an important role in curbing potential manipulative tendencies. Therefore, although Machiavellianism has a negative effect on ethical behavior, its influence remains insignificant because organizational factors and professional values are more dominant in shaping auditor behavior.

3) The influence of fraud on ethical behavior

The partial test results for the Fraud variable show a negative regression coefficient of -0.285 with a significance level of 0.096. This value indicates that Fraud has a negative effect on ethical behavior, but is not significant at the 5% confidence level. This negative trend indicates that the higher the tendency to commit fraud, the lower the auditor's tendency to behave ethically. However, this relationship is not statistically strong enough. This finding illustrates that although Fraud is conceptually clearly incompatible with ethical behavior, in the context of this study, Fraud is not the primary factor determining auditor behavior. Other factors such as organizational culture, professional commitment, and personal integrity are more dominant in influencing auditor ethical behavior.

These results align with research by Sari & Pratama (2021), which found that the fraud triangle (pressure, opportunity, and rationalization) significantly negatively impacts the ethical behavior of external auditors. However, this contrasts with research by Dewi & Kurniawan (2022), which found that the fraud triangle actually positively impacts auditor ethical behavior, as pressure and opportunity encourage auditors to be more cautious and maintain integrity. This difference in results confirms that the influence of fraud on auditor ethical behavior is highly dependent on the work environment and internal control mechanisms. In the context of the Regional Inspectorate, the weak significance is understandable, as the existence of an internal oversight system and strict regulations suppress the opportunities for auditors to commit fraud.

Theoretically, fraud is defined as an intentional act of deception to obtain personal gain by misleading or deceiving others (Ferina et al., 2023:7). Fraud is a concrete form of unethical behavior, so its logical relationship is inversely related to ethics. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Izek Ajzen, 1991:179), the tendency to commit fraud reflects a negative attitude towards social and legal norms. However, the actual behavior of auditors is influenced not only by personal attitudes, but also by subjective norms and behavioral control. This means that even though some auditors have a tendency towards fraud, the existence of a professional code of ethics, social pressure from the work environment, and an internal control system can reduce or restrain such unethical behavior. Therefore, the influence of fraud on ethical behavior in this study remains negative, but is not statistically significant.

4) Love of money, Machiavellian Fraud negatively impact ethical behavior

The fourth hypothesis in this study states that Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud negatively influence auditors' ethical behavior. The analysis results show that simultaneously, these three variables tend to have a negative influence on ethical behavior, although not all are statistically significant. This finding indicates that auditors who have a tendency to love money excessively, are Machiavellian, and have the potential to commit fraud are more prone to ignoring ethical values in their work. However, because the results of the simultaneous and partial tests show a significance above 0.05, the strength of the influence of these three variables is not strong enough to be empirically proven in Regional Inspectorate auditors.

Partially, the Love of Money variable actually shows a positive trend towards ethical behavior, although not significantly. This suggests that a focus on money does not always undermine ethics; in fact, in certain contexts, it actually encourages auditors to maintain their reputation and professionalism for long-term economic interests. This finding aligns with research (Bulutoding, 2020), which found that a love of money can be positively correlated with ethical behavior when managed properly. However, this finding differs from the findings of (Suryawibawa et al., 2024) which confirms that a high orientation toward money can actually trigger dysfunctional behavior and weaken auditor ethics. Meanwhile, Machiavellian traits show a negative trend toward ethical behavior, although not significantly. This finding is consistent with the literature that positions Machiavellianism as a factor that undermines integrity, as auditors with manipulative, opportunistic, and selfish traits are more likely to disregard ethical standards. (Martadi, IF, Soemantri, R., &

Harahap, 2025; Istiqomah et al., 2024) Although the effect is not significant, this negative tendency still shows the potential threat to the ethical behavior of auditors.

Furthermore, the Fraud variable also shows a negative regression coefficient on ethical behavior with a significance level above 0.05. This negative trend aligns with theory and previous research, which assert that the higher the tendency toward fraud, the lower the auditor's ethical behavior (Sari and Pratama, 2021). However, the insignificant effect of fraud in this study suggests that fraud is not the primary determinant influencing auditor ethical behavior in the Inspectorate, but rather only one factor that complements the auditor's psychological and motivational picture. The results of the simultaneous F-test also show that the three independent variables do not significantly influence auditor ethical behavior. In other words, psychological factors such as money orientation, Machiavellianism, and fraudulent tendencies do have the potential to undermine ethics, but other factors more dominantly influence auditor ethical behavior, such as organizational culture, government regulations, institutional oversight, and auditor professional commitment. Thus, the results of this study provide partial support for hypothesis H4. Theoretically, these three variables can be viewed as determinants that weaken auditor ethical behavior, as emphasized in behavioral accounting and the Theory of Planned Behavior. (Izek Ajzen, 1991;179) It has been shown that individual attitudes, norms, and behavioral controls influence the ethics they practice. However, empirically, in the context of the South Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate, the influence is not yet significant because auditor ethical behavior is largely determined by external factors such as regulations, organizational culture, and a strict internal oversight system.

V. Conclusion

This study on the influence of Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud on Ethical Behavior among auditors at the Regional Inspectorate of South Sulawesi Province found that Love of Money has a positive but insignificant effect on ethical behavior, suggesting that an excessive focus on money doesn't necessarily undermine ethics in auditors. Machiavellianism showed a negative but insignificant impact, indicating that manipulative tendencies can harm the integrity of the profession, while Fraud also had a negative but insignificant effect. Collectively, these factors influence ethical behavior negatively, but they are not the primary determinants; other factors like organizational culture and internal controls play a more significant role. The findings of this study contribute to theoretical understanding by highlighting the importance of the work environment and internal controls in shaping auditors' ethical behavior. From a practical perspective, it emphasizes the need for strong ethical training, a culture of integrity, and clear regulations within the Regional Inspectorate to minimize the influence of personal traits such as Love of Money, Machiavellianism, and Fraud. Strengthening internal control systems and ethical guidelines can help auditors maintain professionalism and public trust in their work.

The study's scope was limited to auditors in South Sulawesi, and further research should extend to other regions and include private sector auditors to provide more generalizable results. Future studies could also examine additional variables like religiosity, professional commitment, and organizational culture, which likely affect ethical behavior. Methodologically, a mixed-methods approach would allow for a deeper exploration of contextual factors. For practitioners and the government, the study recommends enhancing ethical training, improving internal controls, and fostering a transparent work environment to reinforce ethical standards and maintain public confidence in the auditing process.

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