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The Influence of Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and Leverage on Tax Avoidance in Banking Sub-Sector Companies Listed

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Abstract

Purpose - *This study aims to obtain empirical evidence about the effect of audit quality, accounting conservatism, financial distress, and leverage on tax avoidance*

Design/methodology/approach: *This research uses quantitative research. The sample of this study used a sample of bank sub-sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2017 - 2023. Sample selection based on certain criteria using purposive sampling method. The data used in the study was 98 observation data from companies in 7 reporting years. The analysis technique used to test the hypothesis is multiple linear analysis using EViews 9 software.*

Findings: *The results of this study found that Audit Quality has a negative and statistically insignificant effect on Tax Avoidance. While Accounting Conservatism has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on Tax Avoidance. Financial Distress has a negative and statistically insignificant effect on Tax Avoidance and Leverage has a positive and statistically significant effect on Tax Avoidance.*

Research limitations/implications: *This study discusses Audit Quality, and other factors such as Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and Leverage which focus on*

Bank Sub-Sector companies.

INTRODUCTION

State development financing is sourced from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN). The state revenue and expenditure budget consists of the revenue budget, expenditure budget, and financing. The state revenue budget consists of the taxation sector, non-tax revenues, and grants. Based on the State Budget (2024), it represents that the tax sector contributes greatly to the State Budget with the realization value of the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget in 2023 of IDR 2,021.2 trillion consisting of tax revenue of IDR 2155.4 trillion and customs excise of IDR 605.9 trillion, grant receipts of IDR 13.0 trillion. Based on the results of the realization above, it can be seen that taxes contribute 78% to the state budget. Therefore, as one of the largest sources of state revenue, taxes play an important role in the development of the country.

Taxes are mandatory contributions to the state owed by individuals or entities that are coercive based on the law by not receiving direct rewards and are used for state needs for the greatest prosperity of the people (law Number 7, 2021). Tax revenue consists of several types of taxes including Income Tax (PPh), Value Added Tax (VAT), Sales Tax on Red Goods (PPNBM), Stamp Tax, and Land and Building Tax (PBB). Among the various types of taxes above, income tax (PPh) is one of the largest tax revenues for the government. Income tax is a tax imposed on a tax subject on income received or earned in the tax year (law Number 7, 2021). Income tax subjects consist of individual taxpayers and corporate taxpayers, and the largest income tax revenue is derived from corporate taxpayer income tax which is often referred to as income tax article 25/29 and corporate taxpayer income tax contributes 15.79% to state revenue.

Corporate taxpayers have an obligation for the income earned, namely by paying and reporting taxes on the income earned, as stated in Hotmian Helena Samosir (2020) research, corporate taxpayers are represented by the management responsible for the payment of taxes owed and taxes owed that must be paid to the state according to the amount of profit earned by the company. Because the large tax burden will affect the company's net profit, the company tries to streamline the tax burden by considering regulations and in a legitimate way. This is in line with the research of Liana Fatni Sukaningrat (2013) who stated that companies will reduce tax costs as optimally as possible to increase the efficiency of tax burden and minimize the amount of tax burden that must be paid by managing or planning taxes (Patminingsih et al., 2023).

According to Wibawa (2014), tax planning is the process of engineering the business of taxpayer transactions so that the tax burden is in a minimal amount but still within the tax regulations and the process can be carried out in various ways, which are in accordance with tax regulations called Tax Avoidance practices and contrary to tax regulations (tax evasion). Tax avoidance is a practice to avoid the tax burden that taxpayers usually carry out in order to reduce the nominal payment of taxes owed by taking advantage of weaknesses in laws and regulations (loopholes). According to Bella Irwansyah Putra (2017), Tax Avoidance is an action taken by taxpayers to minimize tax obligations by carefully arranging in such a way as to take advantage of gaps in provisions. Such as utilization through transactions that are not tax objects. For example, companies that convert employee benefits in the form of in-kind to in- kind gifts, because in-kind is not a tax object. Meanwhile, tax evasion is tax deduction that is carried out in violation of the law such as providing false data. For example, not submitting a notification letter or submitting a notification letter but it is incomplete (Faisal et al., 2021).

Tax avoidance and tax evasion have the same goal, which is to reduce the corporate tax burden. However, the practice of tax evasion reduces taxes with illegal actions, because it manipulates the amount of tax owed so that it can harm the state. However, on the one hand, Tax Avoidance will be detrimental to the country. With Tax Avoidance, it will reduce state revenue. According to James Kesseler in a study conducted by (Kurniawati and Kholis 2020), the practice of Tax Avoidance is divided into 2 types, namely acceptable Tax Avoidance, with the characteristic of having a good purpose, not to avoid taxes by not making false transactions and unacceptable Tax Avoidance, with the characteristic of not having a good purpose, to avoid taxes by making fake transactions or manipulating transactions to look legitimate.

One of the Tax Avoidance phenomena that reduces state revenue is the practice carried out by the company PT. Coca-Cola Indonesia which resulted in a shortfall in tax payments of Rp.49.24 billion. In this case, the Directorate General of Taxes revealed that there was manipulation of taxable income, namely by finding that there was an overrun of advertising costs of Rp566.84 billion, thereby reducing taxable income. PT Coca Cola's total taxable income should have reached IDR 603.48 billion, but PT. Coca-Cola Indonesia only calculated IDR 49.59 billion, causing a shortfall in tax payments. This practice of inflating fees is suspected to lead to alleged transfer pricing to reduce and even avoid www.kontan.co.id taxes.

Based on the case above, it can be seen how companies evade taxes through the use of loopholes in tax laws. However, these actions do not focus on Tax Avoidance but instead lead to tax evasion. This action shows that companies can use strategies that are initially legal, but can turn into illegal actions. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine several other factors such as Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and Leverage to carry out Tax Avoidance practices. According to Mira and Purnamasari (2020), Audit Quality is all possibilities that can occur when the auditor audits the client's financial statements and finds violations or errors that occur and reports them in the audited financial statements. Based on the quality of the audit, it can reflect that the financial statements are in accordance with applicable standards, including in accordance with tax regulations. In addition, the quality audit can remind the supervision of the policies implemented by the company. Based on research by Garda Wijaya (2023), it is proven that Audit Quality has an effect on Tax Avoidance. Meanwhile, according to Yohanes and Sherly (2022), Audit Quality has no effect on Tax Avoidance.

Another factor used to determine the influence of Tax Avoidance is Accounting Conservatism. Accounting Conservatism is an approach in accounting that tends to choose the most conservative or most careful estimates in reflecting the financial position of a company. With the practice of Accounting Conservatism a company can acknowledge any possible costs or losses that will occur, but not immediately acknowledge future revenue or profits. Based on research (Roslita and Anugerah 2022). Based on research (Ellyanti and Suwarti 2022; Nugraheni and Mustikawati 2021; Roslita and Anugerah 2022) proves that the variable of Accounting Conservatism has a positive and significant influence on Tax Avoidance. However, in research (Alvionita, Sutarjo, and Silvera 2021; Wulandari and Sari 2022) proves that the variable of Accounting Conservatism has a negative and significant influence on Tax Avoidance. Meanwhile, based on research (Hartanto and Anggraeni 2023; Ningsih et al. 2020; Rudianti and Hermawan, 2023) prove that the variable of Accounting Conservatism has no influence on Tax Avoidance.

In addition to Accounting Conservatism, researchers also involve Financial Distress to see if there is an influence of corporate Financial Distress on tax avoiance. Financial Distress is a condition in which a company faces serious financial difficulties, including the issue of inability to pay debts, a significant decline in sales, or a situation in which the company's assets are insufficient to cover existing liabilities. Companies facing Financial

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Distress have an additional incentive to reduce their tax liabilities. As explained in the research by Muliana & Supriadi (2023), Financial Distress occurs when a company has difficulty paying the company's obligations due to a lack of funds, thus disrupting the company's activities and indicating a potential risk of bankruptcy. Companies that experience this condition tend to aggressively evade taxes for the sake of the company's operational sustainability. Based on research by Astriyani & Safii, (2022), Khan & Nawaz (2023), Kusuma Rahayu Sri Handayani (2023) & Muliana & Supryadi (2023), it is proven that the Financial Distress variable has an influence on Tax Avoidance. Meanwhile, based on the research of Ahdiyah & Triyanto (2021); Ainur Ramadani (2023); Kalbuana (2023) proves that the Financial Distress variable has no effect on Tax Avoidance.

In addition to Financial Distress, to see the effect of Tax Avoidance, the author uses Leverage. Leverage can be used as a strategy to manipulate a company's capital structure with the aim of reducing tax liabilities payable. As this is also stated in the research of Haamzah & Bahri (2023) which states that leverage shows that the company makes debt as a source of funding, therefore, because the existence of debt will incur a deductible interest burden in tax calculations or is deductible. Research results of Hapsari Ardianti (2019); Maulana (2021); Sinaga (2022); Sitepu & Sudjiman (2022) prove that the leverage variable has a positive and significant effect on Tax Avoidance. Meanwhile, based on research by Sari & Ajimat (2023); Yohanes & Sherly (2022) show that the leverage variable has no effect on Tax Avoidance.

As for the reason for choosing the factors above, to see the difference between previous research and this study. The difference between this study and the previous research lies in the variables studied. Based on research conducted by Helen & Haninun (2024) to find out the factors that affect Tax Avoidance using the variables of profitability, company size, leverage, liquidity, this study is different from the research conducted by Nugraheni & Mustikawati (2021) this study uses variables that affect Tax Avoidance, namely audit quality, leverage, Accounting Conservatism. The similarity of this study with the previous research lies in the location of data collection, namely from the Indonesia Stock Exchange.

Based on these research differences, the author intends to study more deeply about Tax Avoidance by considering such as Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and Leverage in the financial sector listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX). The selection of the banking sub-sector as the focus of this research was carried out because this sector is rarely the subject of in-depth research in the context of Tax Avoidance. Therefore, the author decided to choose the financial sector to fill the knowledge gap that exists in the literature. Based on the above considerations, the researcher hopes that variables such as strong audit quality tend to be able to supervise the actions taken by the company. However, on the other hand, the researcher wanted to see if the Accounting Conservatism factor could affect the way companies reported their income, which could affect Tax Avoidance practices and find out whether the variables of Financial Distress and the company's leverage allowed to create a gap to reduce the tax burden with applicable tax norms.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Signaling Theory

Signalling theory was first proposed by Spence in 1973. In the labour market, information

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asymmetry often occurs. So, Spence developed a signal system to strengthen decision making in job recruitment. This signal system includes various criteria that aim to assess uncertainty about the productivity capabilities of employees (Spence, 1973). In other words, signal theory can allow investors to distinguish between companies that have low value or performance with companies that have high value which will be useful for stakeholders with accurate and even distribution of information.

Tax Avoidance

Tax Avoidance is a strategy that can be used by company management to reduce or minimize the proportion of tax burden paid without violating applicable tax laws (Hama, 2020, p. 8). By exploiting loopholes in tax legislation, companies remain compliant with their tax obligations but can exploit weaknesses (grey areas) in the tax regulations themselves to reduce the amount of tax owed.

Audit Quality

Audit quality is the probability of an auditor detecting errors in financial statements and reporting them to users of financial statements (Purba & Umar, 2021, p. 27). In its application, Audit Quality will show transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, equality/fairness which are believed to be able to improve company compliance. High audit quality indicates that the company's financial statements are well supervised and in accordance with accounting standards. This provides a positive signal that the company has optimal financial planning and operates efficiently, including in managing tax burdens. In this perspective, companies that can optimize their tax burdens without violating regulations are seen as efficient and responsible entities. However, if the audit quality is low, the company may be considered involved in aggressive tax avoidance practices, which can damage its reputation in the eyes of investors and regulators. Garda Wijaya, (2023), Hasbi & Fitriyanto, (2021), Tamara & Saragih (2021) states that audit quality has a positive influence on tax avoidance. Based on previous research and explanations regarding the influence of audit quality on tax avoidance, the author proposes the following hypothesis:
H_1: Audit quality has a negative effect on tax avoidance.

Accounting Conservatism

Accounting Conservatism is an approach to financial reporting that allows for slow recognition of revenue and rapid recognition of expenses, undervaluing inventory and overvaluing liabilities. (Perpajakan & Susanti, 2018). This accounting method aims to ensure that the financial statements reflect the actual conditions. The principle of accounting conservatism will certainly affect the size of the company's taxable income. Through the principle of accounting conservatism, the company does not recognize profits first but immediately recognizes debts or losses that may occur. This will provide a positive signal that will affect Tax Avoidance. With the recognition of these expenses or losses, the company's taxable income will also decrease. Therefore, the higher the level of conservatism in a company, the higher the company's chances of carrying out Tax Avoidance. This is in line with research conducted by This is in line with the results of research (Ellyanti & Suwarti, 2022; Nugraheni & Mustikawati, 2021; Roslita & Anugerah, 2022) states that the Accounting Conservatism

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variable has a positive effect on tax avoidance, meaning that the existence of the principle of accounting conservatism will encourage companies to look for loopholes in tax regulations to reduce the taxes that must be paid by using expenses or losses as a reduction in under-taxed income.

H_2: Accounting Conservatism has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance

Financial Distress

Distress is a condition where a company is experiencing serious financial difficulties which can hamper the company's business activities (Kusuma Rahayu Sri Handayani, 2023). With these conditions, it can influence companies to carry out tax avoidance to reduce tax burdens and increase liquidity. This will provide a positive signal to the company which will affect tax avoidance. Companies that are in financial difficulties will try as much as possible to minimize the company's burdens, one of which is the tax burden that must be paid (Muliana & Supryadi, 2023). In addition, companies experiencing financial distress will experience losses that will affect the company's taxable income. This is consistent with the findings of Khan & Nawaz, (2023); Muliana & Supryadi (2023); Tiur Ayumi Briggita Bakkara & Ardan Gani Asalam (2023) who states that financial distress has a positive effect on tax avoidance, meaning that if a company is in a difficult financial condition, it is possible to do tax avoidance. This is because the company will have a solvency that leads to losses that will affect the company's taxable income which will ultimately affect the company's tax payable.

H_3: Financial Distress has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance.

Leverage

Leverage is a ratio that shows how much debt a company uses to finance the company's operations (Haamzah & Bahri, 2023). The higher the leverage ratio, the greater the proportion of the company's assets funded by debt. Thus, the higher the leverage, the greater the interest expense that the company must pay. This will give a signal to companies to carry out tax avoidance. Companies with a high level of leverage have a large interest expense which can give a positive signal to the company to take advantage of the interest expense as a deduction for tax that must be paid. According to (Sitepu & Sudjiman, 2022) the debt owned by a company will cause a burden, namely the interest expense that can be used to reduce taxable profits, so that the higher the interest cost, the tax burden will also be reduced. This is in line with (Helen & Haninun (2024, Maulana et al (2021), Sinaga et al (2022) who stated that companies with high leverage have a positive effect on tax avoidance, meaning that companies with high leverage tend to be able to carry out tax avoidance by utilizing interest expense as a deduction for corporate taxable income, this will certainly reduce the company's tax burden.

H4: Leverage has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to determine the possibility of the influence of independent variables Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and leverage on the dependent variable, namely Tax Avoidance. The research paradigm used in this study is positive, which is systematically arranged using deductive logic starting from hypothesis

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formulation to testing. The type of data used in this study is quantitative data. Quantitative data research is empirical research whose data is in the form of numbers. This analysis technique views human behavior as predictable and social reality, objective and measurable to get definite results in processing data and can be held accountable (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023). Meanwhile, the research method uses case studies, where this case study is aimed at investigating and studying events or phenomena about something and the unit of analysis uses a company. The sampling design in this study is non-probability sampling using purpose sampling. For the background of the study, the researcher did not find any intervention in this study (no contrived). For the implementation time, Patel data was used which is a combination of cross-section and time series using data analysis, namely hypothesis testing. The measurements used are as follows:

Tabel 1. Measuring instruments and variable measurement sources

No	Variables	Measurement	Source
1	Audit Quality	Dummy Variable. If the company is audited by a Big Four public accounting firm, give it 1 point. If the company is audited by a non-big four Public Accounting Firm, give 0 points.	(DeAngelo, 1981)
2	Conservatism Accountancy	$CONACC = \frac{(Net\ Income\ +\ Dept)\ -CFO}{Total\ Asset}$	(Watts, 2005)
3	Financial Distress	Altman Z- Score =1.2A+1.4B+3.3C+0.6D+1E	(Altman, 1995)
4	Leverage	$DAR = \frac{Total\ Liabilities}{Total\ Asset}$	(Yohanes & Sherly, 2022)
5	Tax Avoidance	$CETR = \frac{Income\ Tax\ Exp}{Income\ Before\ Tax}$	(Maulana et al., 2021)

RESULTS

Some of the criteria set by the researcher are as follows:

1. Companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange during the observation period, namely 2017-2023
2. Bank sub-sector companies that publish financial reports and include financial statements that have been audited by independent auditors consecutively from 2017 to 2023.
3. Companies in the banking sub-sector that had consecutive profits during the research period 2017 – 2023.
4. Financial statements presented in rupiah.

Based on the criteria that have been determined, the companies that meet the requirements in this study are 14 companies out of 47 companies in the banking sub-sector. The observation of

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the research sample was carried out for 7 years, so that as many as 98 observation observations were obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

	TA	AQ	AC	FD	LEV
Mean	0.229682	0.683673	-0.025122	1.832038	0.823050
Median	0.221673	1.000000	-0.028500	1.783445	0.834281
Maximum	0.371108	1.000000	0.205000	3.727250	0.918899
Minimum	0.024320	0.000000	-0.295000	-1.214660	0.694568
Std. Dev.	0.051957	0.467433	0.079078	0.838763	0.049582
Skewness	-0.540928	-0.789922	-0.101012	-0.988574	-0.282486
Kurtosis	7.201356	1.623977	4.106867	6.632431	2.698493
Jarque-Bera	76.85569	17.92317	5.169368	69.83998	1.674574
Probability	0.000000	0.000128	0.075420	0.000000	0.432883
Sum	22.50886	67.00000	-2.462000	179.5397	80.65886
Sum Sq. Dev.	0.261859	21.19388	0.606567	68.24185	0.238464
Observations	98	98	98	98	98

Source: Data processed (2024)
AQ = Audit Quality, AC = Accounting Conservatism, FD = Financial Distress, LEV= Leverage TA = Tax Avoidance

The table above shows that the research period 2017 – 2023 shows that there are 98 observations (unbalanced). With descriptive explanations of statistics on meaningful data:

1. Tax Avoidance, based on the results of the data processing presented above, Tax Avoidance has the lowest value of 0.02 and the highest value of 0.37 and obtained an average value of 0.23 with a standard deviation of 0.051 which shows that the standard deviation value is greater than the average value. This indicates that the distributed data is varied and depicts a complete picture of information. The company with the highest Tax Avoidance was Bank Nationalnobu Tbk in 2018 and the company with the lowest Tax Avoidance value of 0.37 was Bank Maybank Tbk in 2020. This indicates that Bank Nationalnobu obtained the lowest Tax Avoidance in 2018 compared to other banks and Bank Maybank Tbk became the highest bank to obtain the highest Tax Avoidance compared to other banks in 2020.
2. Audit Quality, in the financial sector, has a value range between the lowest of 0.00 and the highest value of 1,000 and obtains an average score of 0.68 with a standard deviation of 0.46. This shows that the standard deviation value is smaller compared to the average value. This indicates that the data is normally diverse and illustrates a complete picture of information. The company that obtained an audit quality score of 1.00 was Bank Central Asia in 2017 – 2023 and the company that

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obtained the lowest audit quality score of 0.00 was Bank Capital Indonesia Tbk in 2017 – 2023. This indicates that in the period 2017 – 2023 Bank Central Asia is the company that obtained the highest audit quality results compared to other companies and the company that obtained the lowest audit quality in the period 2017 – 2023 is Bank Capital Indonesia Tbk.

3. Accounting conservatism in the bank sub-sector has a swimming value between the lowest value of -0.29 and the highest value of 0.20 and obtained an average value of -
0.02 with a standard deviation value of 0.07 which indicates that the standard deviation value is greater than the average value. This indicates that the data is diverse and illustrates a complete picture of information. The company with the lowest Accounting Conservatism score of 0.24 is BankCapital Tbk in 2022. Meanwhile, the highest Accounting Conservatism score was obtained by Bank Capital Tbk in the following year, in 2023.
4. Financial Distress in the bank sub-sector has the lowest Financial Distress value range of -1.21 and the highest Financial Distress value of 3.72 and an average value of 1.83 with a standard deviation value of 0.83 which indicates that the standard deviation value is smaller than the average value. This indicates that the data is normal and depicts a complete picture of information. The company with the highest Financial Distress score of 3.72 is Bank Mestika Dharma Tbk in 2019. Meanwhile, the one with the lowest Financial Distress score is Bank Capital Indonesia Tbk in 2022
5. Leverage in the bank sub-sector has the lowest Leverage value range of 0.69 and the highest Leverage value of 0.91 and the average Leverage value of 0.82 with a standard deviation value of 0.04 which shows that the standard indigo is smaller than the average value. This indicates that the data is normal and depicts a complete picture of information. The company that obtained the highest Leverage value of 0.91 was Bank Capital Indonesia Tbk in 2019 while the company that obtained the lowest Leverage value of 0.69 was Bank Mestika Dharma in 2023.

Panel Data Regression Selection

Chow Test

Tabel 3 Chow Test

Effects Test	Statistic	d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section F	2.545952	(13,80)	0.0055
Cross-section Chi-square	33.929806	13	0.0012

Source: Processed data (2024)

Based on the results of the chow test using Eviews9, it is stated that the probability value of Cross Section F is 0.00, meaning it is less than the value of the significant level (α=0.05). This means that the best model used is the Fixed Effect Model (FEM). Therefore, a hausman test is needed to choose the best model between the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) and the Random Effect Model (REM).

Hausman Test

Tabel 4 Hausman Test

Test Summary	Chi-Sq. StatisticChi-Sq.	d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	12.107733	4	0.0166

Source: Processed data (2024)

Based on the results of the Hausman Test, the probability value is 0.01 where this result is greater than the significance level value (α=0.05). In this case, it means that the best model used is the Fixed Effect Model (FEM). Therefore, a Lagrange Multiplier test is needed to choose the best model between the Common Effect Model and the Random Effect Model.

Lagrange Multiplier Test

Tabel 5 Lagrange Multiplier Test
Test Hypothesis

	Cross- section	Time	Both
Breusch-Pagan	2.285519 (0.1306)	2.455114 (0.1171)	4.740633 (0.0295)
Honda	1.511793 (0.0653)	1.566880 (0.0586)	2.176951 (0.0147)
King-Wu	1.511793 (0.0653)	1.566880 (0.0586)	2.145631 (0.0160)
Standardized Honda	2.294145 (0.0109)	2.025051 (0.0214)	-0.707674 --
Standardized King-Wu	2.294145 (0.0109)	2.025051 (0.0214)	-0.583909 --
Gourierioux, et al.*	--	--	4.740633 (< 0.05)

Source: Processed data (2024)

Based on the results of the Lagrange Multiplier test, the significance value on Both is 0.13 where this result is greater than the significance level value (α=0.05). In this case, it means that the best model used is the Common Effect Model (CEM). In this case, based on the Chow test, Hausman Test, and Langrange Multiplier test, the dominant model is the Fixed Effect Model (FEM). So, the best model used is the Fixed Effect Model (FEM).

Hypothesis Test

The best regression model after estimation and model selection in this study is the Fixed Effect Model (FEM). The following are the results of the panel data regression estimation using the Fixed Effect Model (FEM).

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Tabel 6 Hypothesis Test

TA = -0.178 + 0.052*QA + 0.013*CA - 0.001*FD + 0.454*LEV

Variables	Predictions	Coeficient	T-Statistics	Prob.	Explanation
C		-0.178070	-0.860904	0.3919	
QA	-	0.052816	1.469089	0.1457	**QA has a non-significant positive effect on the TA but** in different direction
CA	+	0.013724	0.222917	0.8242	**CA has non-significant positive on TA and** is line with the hypothesis that support theory
FD	+	-0.001194	-0.092778	0.9263	**FD has a non-significant negative effect on the TA** but in different direction
LEV	+	0.454621	1.880853	0.0636	**LEV has a significant positive effect on TA** in line with the hypothesis that support the theory
R-Square					0.345524
Adjusted R-Square					0.206447
F-Statistic					2.484418
Prob (F-Statistic)					0.003447

Source: Processed data (2024)
QA = Audit Quality, CA = Accounting Conservatism, FD = Financial Distress, LEV = Leverage, TA = Tax Avoidance

Parsial Test (t-test)

Partial tests were used to determine whether individual independent variables had a significant effect on dependent variables. The results of the test using the Fixed Effect Model (FEM) can be summarized as follows:

1. Audit Quality Negatively Affects Tax Avoidance
   Hypothesis The first hypothesis (H_1) formulated in this study states that Audit Quality has a negative effect on Tax Avoidance. However, the results of the analysis from this study obtained a beta coefficient value of 0.05. This results in a value that is opposite to the expected direction or indicates a negative value. Based on the regression results, it was also found that the results of the t-test on the Audit Quality variable showed a calculated t-value of 1.46 smaller than the t-table of 2.18 with a significance value of 0.14. Because this study uses a one-tailed test, the probability value is divided by two. So, it was found that the significance value of 0.07 was

greater than the significant level of α = 0.05. This means that there is no significant influence, and the effect shows different results than assumed in the hypothesis. Thus, H1 is rejected and H0 is accepted. Therefore, it can be interpreted that an audited company does not necessarily do not carry out Tax Avoidance.

2. Accounting Conservatism has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance
The second hypothesis (H_2) raised in this study states that Accounting Conservatism has a positive influence on Tax Avoidance. The results of two, So lysis of this study support this hypothesis with a beta coefficient of 0.01 and the results of the t-test on the Accounting Conservatism variable produce a calculated t-value of 0.22 smaller than the table t-table of 2.18 with a significance value of 0.82 Because this study uses a one-tailed test, the probability value is divided by two, So that a significance value of 0.41 was obtained which was greater than the significance level of α = 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant influence of Accounting Conservatism on Tax Avoidance. So that H2 is accepted and H0 is rejected. Therefore, the higher the company's Accounting Conservatism, the greater the company's ability to carry out Tax Avoidance.

3. Financial Distress has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance
The third hypothesis (H_3) formulated in this study is that Financial Distress has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance. However, the results of this analysis obtained a beta coefficient value of -0.00. This results in values that are in the opposite direction to the expected or show negative values. In addition, based on the t-test, it was found that the calculated t-value of -0.09 was smaller than the t-table of 2.18 with a significance value of 0.92. Because this study uses a one-tailed test, the probability value is divided by two, so that a significance value of 0.42 is obtained greater than the significance level α = 0.05. This means that there is no significant influence, and the effect shows different results than those assumed in the hypothesis. Thus, H3 was rejected and H0 was accepted. Therefore, it can be interpreted that banking companies that experience Financial Distress tend not to carry out Tax Avoidance, because companies that experience this condition try to conduct evaluations to maintain their business continuity.

4. Leverage has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance
The fourth hypothesis (H_4) formulated in this study is that leverage has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance. The results of this study support the hypothesis shown from the coefficient value of 0.45. In addition, based on the results of the Leverage variable t-test, it was found that the calculated t-value was 1.88 l, which is small from the t-table of 2.18 with a significance value of 0.06. Because this study uses a one-tailed test, the probability value is divided by two, so that a significance value of 0.03 is obtained which is smaller than the significance level of α = 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that H4 is accepted and H0 is rejected. Therefore, it can be interpreted that companies that have a high debt ratio tend to have the ability to carry out Tax Avoidance.

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Uji Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

Tabel 7 Uji Koefisien Determinasi

R-squared	0.345524	Mean dependent var	0.229682
Adjusted R-squared	0.206447	S.D. dependent var	0.051957
S.E. of regression	0.046284	Akaike info criterion	-3.143614
Sum squared resid	0.171380	Schwarz criterion	-2.668824
Log likelihood	172.0371	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-2.951571
F-statistic	2.484418	Durbin-Watson stat	1.967724
Prob(F-statistic)	0.003447		

Based on the results of data processing using Ewiews 4.9 software using the Fixed Effect Model (FEM), it shows that the Adjusted R-square value in this research model is 0.206. This means that 20.6% of the variables Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, and Leverage can explain the influence on Tax Avoidance practices and 79.4% are explained by other variables that are not used in this study. Based on previous research, other variables that can affect the practice of Tax Avoidance are Profitability, Company Size, Capital Intensity Ratio, Capital Intensity, Tunneling Incentives, Fixed Asset Intensity.

DISCUSSIONS

Audit Quality on Tax Avoidance

The results of this study show that the results of the first hypothesis test (H_1) indicate that the quality of Audit has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance. However, based on the results of the study, it is shown that Audit Quality influences tax avoidance, so the first hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. This can be explained that with the audit quality of the audited financial statements showing compliance with accounting standards, this does not guarantee that the company is not involved in Tax Avoidance. Companies with high audit quality may still carry out Tax Avoidance to minimize corporate tax liabilities by taking advantage of loopholes in tax regulations. Therefore, companies that have high audit quality do not always guarantee that tax avoidance will be avoided.

Accounting Conservatism on Tax Avoidance

The results of this study show that the results of the second hypothesis test (H_2) show that Accounting Conservatism has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance and is statistically not significant to Tax Avoidance. This gives meaning that Accounting Conservatism can be used in Tax Avoidance. As explained, accounting conservatism is a concept that recognizes as many burdens and liabilities as possible even though there is uncertainty about the results, but only recognizes income and assets when they have been received (Savitri, 2016). With this concept, companies can reduce the tax payable by utilizing the recognition of these expenses as a deduction for income tax.

Signal theory explains that the principle of accounting conservatism is the recognition of costs or losses in advance to describe the actual financial condition. This recognition of loss can give a positive signal to Tax Avoidance to take advantage of the burden or loss as a burden to reduce taxable income. This finding is in line with research conducted by Roslita and Anugerah (2022) on manufacturing companies in 2017 – 2020, finding that Accounting Conservatism has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance. Research conducted by Nugraheni and Mustikawati (2021) on banking companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange 2017-2019, stated that Accounting Conservatism has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance. The principle of accounting conservatism that has an impact on financial statements will tend to generate low profits and make the basis for calculating taxes will also be low. With the lack of profit, the tax obligation that must be paid is also lower.

Financial Distress on Tax Avoidance

The results of this study show that the results of the third hypothesis test (H_3) indicate that Financial Distress has a negative effect and statistically does not have a significant effect on Tax Avoidance. So, the third hypothesis (H_3) was rejected. The results can be explained that with companies experiencing Financial Distress that are proxied with the Altman modified model, it will reduce the possibility of companies committing Tax Avoidance. Financial Distress which is proxied with Altman's modified model determines if the Z-Score > 2.6 then the company is classified as safe, if the company has a value of 1.1 ≤ a Z-Score < 2.6 then it is classified as a gray area, while if the Z Score value < 1.1 then it is classified as distress. The results of the descriptive analysis show that the average Z-score in this study is 1.56. This can explain that banks that are in the gray area will likely experience changes in financial conditions that lead to financial difficulties (distress). Therefore, companies that are in financial conditions often do not have enough taxable profits to be taxed. If the company suffers a loss, then the company will not owe any taxes at all. With this condition, Tax Avoidance becomes less relevant because there are no taxes that need to be avoided.

In signal theory, companies in financial distress send negative signals including financial instability which makes companies focus more on the company's financial recovery efforts. Because companies that experience financial distress will be free from the burden of income tax, companies that experience financial distress tend to prioritize corporate financial recovery. This finding is in line with research conducted by Ahdiyah and Triyanto (2021) on consumer goods companies which stated that Financial Distress has a negative effect on Tax Avoidance. Because companies that experience this condition tend to try to maintain their business and improve their finances.

Leverage on Tax Avoidance

The results of this study show that the results of the fourth hypothesis test (H4) indicate that Leverage has a positive effect statistically on Tax Avoidance. So, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is accepted. These results show that if a company has debt, it will result in a high interest expense on loans, which can be used to reduce taxable income. In signal theory, it is explained that companies with high levels of leverage generally have a large interest expense. This interest expense can give a positive signal to Tax Avoidance. The interest expense can be used to reduce the amount of tax that must be paid.

This finding is in line with research conducted by (Maulana et al., 2021; Risani & Purwantini, 2022) on companies in the food and beverage sub-sector who stated that Leverage has a positive and significant effect on Tax Avoidance. High debt resulting in the

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appearance of interest expense can be a deduction of taxable profit so that the higher the Tax Avoidance. So that Leverage has a positive and significant effect on Tax Avoidance.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted on the test of the influence of Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, Leverage on Tax Avoidance, the following conclusions were obtained:

1. Audit Quality has not been proven to have a negative effect on Tax Avoidance in bank sub-sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2017 – 2023. Therefore, it can be explained that a company with high Audit Quality will show compliance with applicable accounting standards and tax regulations. However, it will not guarantee that the company is not involved in Tax Avoidance. Because Tax Avoidance is not an act of non-compliance with tax obligations. In the context of signal theory, companies that can see gaps in tax regulations that can be used to streamline tax burdens will give a positive signal to companies to implement Tax Avoidance measures by having strategic tax planning. So that the company will remain compliant with its tax obligations but be able to minimize the tax burden that must be paid legally.
1. Accounting conservatism has proven to have a positive effect on Tax Avoidance in bank subsector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2017-2023. So, it can be explained that, with the principle of accounting conservatism which is one of the principles that can be required in the presentation of financial statements. This principle of accounting conservatism has an impact on financial statements will tend to generate low profits and make the basis for calculating taxes will also be low. In the context of signal theory, this principle of Accounting Conservatism will give a positive signal to companies to carry out Tax Avoidance. Because with the principle of Accounting Conservatism, it will reduce taxable income, due to the early recognition of costs, so that companies can manage their tax burden more effectively.
2. Financial Distress has not been proven to have a positive effect on Tax Avoidance in bank sub-sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2017-2023. This indicates that companies with Financial Distress often do not have sufficient taxable profits to be taxed. If the company suffers a loss, then the company will not owe any taxes at all. In the context of the theory of corporate signals with conditions that will give a negative signal to Tax Avoidance. Because companies with this condition will not have a tax burden, Tax Avoidance becomes less relevant because there is no tax that needs to be avoided.
3. Leverage has proven to have a positive effect on Tax Avoidance in bank sub-sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2017 – 2023. A company with high leverage means that it has a high proportion of debt in its capital structure, this will result in or generate a high interest expense as well. In the context of signal theory, this condition will give a positive signal to companies to carry out Tax Avoidance. With a high interest expense due to the debt, it can increase the efficiency of tax payable by utilizing the interest expense of the loan to reduce the taxable income of companies in

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the bank sub-sector.

IMPLICATION

1. For Literature
   This research is expected to contribute, develop and enrich literature in the field of taxation, especially regarding the practice of Tax Avoidance and become a reference for future researchers who want to research, especially on the influence of Audit Quality, Accounting Conservatism, Financial Distress, Leverage on Tax Avoidance.
2. For Practice Environment
   This research is expected to provide input for interested parties and contribute to decision- making, especially in the context of Tax Avoidance, and make policies, especially related to tax regulations and their implementation.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that can affect the results, including the following:

1) The data used is only for a period of 7 years and is only carried out in the financial sector of the bank sub-sector, so the results cannot be generalized to other sectors.
2) The measurements used for each variable are only limited.

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