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The Phenomenon of Tax Avoidance in the Covid-19 Period in Mining Companies.

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of debt and company size on tax avoidance in mining companies in 2020-2021.This study uses multiple regression analysis and purposive sampling method. Secondary data is collected through financial reports downloaded from www.idx.com. The results showed that debt and company size have a positive effect on tax avoidance.

KEYWORDS: Tax avoidance, Debt, Firm Size, minning companny, *covid-19*

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a new infectious disease originating from the Wuhan China Corona virus that has hit Indonesia and the rest of the world for 2 years. This covid-19 pandemic has clearly caused many crises ranging from health crises, economics to facility stability. Changes in significant impacts on the Indonesian economy experienced a contraction that fell to 5.32% in the second quarter of 2020 (Pradana dan Wulandari., 2023). Mineral and coal companies such as mining companies are no exception and have also been affected. Based on existing news sources in Australia, it is said that this impact has caused the Australian government to also have to accelerate technological adaptation and change the way companies operate due to the limitations of movement, expenses and demands for fast scale (https://impact.economist.com/perspectives).

In line with the opinion (Jong 2020) which also said that Indonesia, especially the mining sector, experienced a weakening demand for exports of mining products due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Save Indonesian Coal 2020 event, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) Arifin Tasrif stated that the realization of coal production until August 2020 fell 11 percent compared to the production achievement in the same period in 2019 of 409 million tons. There are around 150,000 workers in the coal mining sub-sector and Indonesia is the world's largest exporter of thermal coal, with more than 70% of coal products exported to China and India. However, with the pandemic comes the worst concerns about the industry. In its efforts to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indonesian economy, the government adopted various policies, one of which is providing tax incentive programs to businesses that have experienced a decrease in turnover. Minister of Finance Regulation Number 86/PMK. 03/2020 concerning Tax Incentives for Taxpayers Affected by the Corona Virus Disease 2019 Pandemic (Ministry of Finance, 2020) outlines the policy. However, the provision of tax incentives is definatelly used by corporate companies to carry out the practice of minimizing tax payments by means of tax avoidance (Fauzan et al., 2019). The main cause of this action is suspected to be due to the difference in views between the purpose of tax collection and the amount of tax payment burden by the company. For companies, taxes are considered a burden that can reduce the amount of profit but must also be carried out in an orderly manner because it is related to government regulations, in contrast to the tax authorities or the government who consider taxes as a source of state revenue that must be obeyed and realized (Pradana and Wulandari 2023). To measure the level of effectiveness of tax payments in Indonesia, there is an alternative that is used, namely reviewing through the performance of tax revenue Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The following are the facts of tax realization revenue summarized from 2020-2021:

TABLE 1: Realization and Tax Targets for 2020-2021. (Trillion)

Year	Amount Tax Targets	Amount Tax Realization	Percentage Ratio Taxation
2020	1,198.82	758.60	6.90%
2021	3.130.00	1,268.50	8.18%

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It can be concluded above that although tax revenue has started to improve, it has not been declared optimal, because ideally for developing countries such as Indonesia the realization of tax revenue is in the range of 19%. Many companies are indicated that still do not comply with taxes. This action identifies that Indonesia will be difficult to achieve a harmonized tax system because there are still many corporate obligations that use the transfer pricing method (base erosion and profit shifting) (Nepal et al. 2025). Tax Justice Network revealed that Indonesia suffered a loss of IDR 68.7 trillion as result of tax evasion, in addition to Sri Mulyani, Indonesia's Minister of Finance. In 2016, Ernesto Crivelly, an investigator from the International Monetary Fund, pointed out that Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest tax avoidance, ranking 4th highest after China, Japan, and India (https://money.kompas.com/). PT Unilever Tbk and PT Indofood CPB Sukses Makmur Tbk, both operating in Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry, engage in tax avoidance using the transfer pricing method by shifting capital, assets, and liabilities to other subsidiaries. This fact is reinforced by the Panama Papers and Pandora Papers scandals, which reveal that public officials and big businessmen often practice tax avoidance. This happens because Presidential Regulation (Perpres) number 13 of 2018 does not pay comprehensive attention to the provisions of tax payments established by Indonesian citizens abroad (https://antikorupsi.org/id/article/). Another example of a company that engages in tax avoidance is PT Waskita Karya (Persero), which deliberately utilizes the amount of its debt. In 2018 PT Waskita was proven to increase the amount of tax from IDR 75.14 T to IDR 95.50 T. This is intended to save on tax payments by increasing the interest expense contained therein (https://www.tempo.co). The factors that influence tax avoidance include debt and company size.

Debt or leverage refers to the ratio of the level of debt capital. This suggests how high the level of debt is in financing the company's operational activities. The interest burden resulting from debt financing can reduce taxable income if the amount of debt used to finance the company's operational costs increases. In line with the research by Muliana and Yuliandhari (2022); Kushariadi and Putra (2018); it also states that leverage has a positive effect on tax avoidance. The high interest burden associated with debt can encourage tax aggressiveness, resulting in reduced tax payments. Companies that tend to engage in these activities are usually prepared for the increase in several financing items such as equity costs, risks, consultants, and other management costs (Francis et al., 2022). Moreover, this action also has the potential to cause bankruptcy due to mismanagement, which should be monitored more closely (Gabrielli and Greco, 2023). This statement contrasts with the views of Permatasari (2020); Hatami and Shahmir (2017); Wardani et al. (2019); Rozak et al. (2018); Arianandini and Ramantha (2018), who argue that leverage does not affect tax avoidance because the high intensity of debt is not used to increase income but rather for long-term investment, making the interest burden not recorded in the financial statements.

Next is the size of the company. The size of the company can be classified into several categories, from small to medium and large companies. The benchmark for a company can be assessed through the magnitude of transactional activities, sales levels, wealth, and the extent of its stock returns. Larger companies are more susceptible to tax avoidance actions because they possess a more complex transaction flow and tend to have more professional personnel to manage tax regulations to maintain the company's image. The advantages held by larger companies are considered to provide a more secure political and economic order compared to smaller companies, hence it is not surprising that large companies can be referred to as political economic power (Chyz and White.,2014). In addition, if the company is getting bigger, if it is supported by good management and governance, it is not impossible that the company will be able to refinance (Tran and Nguyen., 2024).

The results of the research by Fauzan et al. (2019); Selviani et al. (2019); Rani (2017) indicate that company size positively affects tax avoidance, in contrast to the findings of (Barli 2018); Salehi et al. (2020); Noviyani and Muid (2019), which state that company size does not impact tax avoidance. This is because, despite the complexity of transactions, companies may not want to exploit gaps in their resources to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the public and consider the size of the company as a determinant of tax costs. This research focuses on mining companies because they have shown more stable income fluctuations during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other sectors. The research aims to identify the factors influencing whether the companies during the research period engaged in tax avoidance or not during COVID-19, especially considering the opportunity for the government to provide leniency in tax policies, such as offering tax rate incentives.

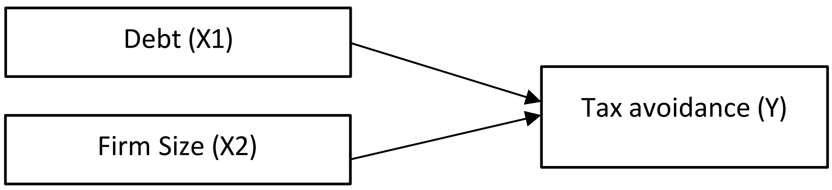
I. LITERATURE REVIEW

The index of measuring company performance is usually reviewed through the source of the financial statements it publishes, the more the results show positive performance, the better it is seen in determining the future direction of the economy. The process of making financial reports is of course independent of reliable human resources and the relevant information that accompanies it so that it can cause decision points for the recipient (Moeljono, 2020). The existence of the signal theory coined by Michael Spence (1973) initiated a difference in interests between two parties, namely the company / management and the external party / user. The company side hopes that with the published financial statement information, external parties can provide a positive assessment of the market reaction and the decisions it will make even though there are other alternatives used in it. However, in contrast to the external party side, they are more concerned with the quality of the information submitted in order to avoid mistakes in the decisions they make and avoid the risk of uncertainty in the future (Lukito and Sandra, 2021). Tax avoidance is one of the most frequently used methods. In Indonesia, tax avoidance is a legal action to reduce tax debt without violating statutory provisions. According to Meilia and Adnan (2017), the time span for tax avoidance practices has occurred for at least 10 years. Tax avoidance strategies can be classified into two, first lawful, which is a form of reducing the amount of debt with legal status by utilizing gray areas and loopholes, and unlawful forms of unlegal tax reduction carried out by deliberately manipulating tax laws (Wicaksana and Darmansyah, 2021).

Debt is one of the driving factors that cause tax avoidance. According to (Zuhaida, 2022) the higher the debt owned by the company, the higher the interest expense incurred so that it will reduce the CETR number to low. This interest expense is a deductible expense that has been regulated in Article 6 of Law No. 36 of 2028 so that it is not saved as a criminal expense so that it can reduce taxable income in accordance with the accounting scheme (Fadhila and Andayani, 2022). Then another factor that contributes to tax avoidance is company size. The larger the size of the company, the more complex the transaction flow and the more reliable the existing human resources (Pradana and Wulandari, 2023). Due to the increasing size of the company, it is increasingly becoming the center of attention, so the company must be more able to present positive information sources and will be free to practice tax avoidance (Nursanti., et al, 2023). In contrast to small companies due to the limited resources they have, they prefer to disclose openly as it is or tax amnesty.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESIS

To describe the research model carried out, it can be described as follows research framework as follows:



Picture 1. Framework research

Based on the research framework presented above, it can be explained that this study consists of 2 independent variables, namely debt and company size and 1 dependent variable, namely tax avoidance. The hypothesis structure is as follows:

1. Effect of Debt on Tax Avoidance

The debt ratio is a benchmark of the company that focuses on how much debt can finance the company's activities compared to its capital. The greater the level of debt, the higher the interest expense incurred and the more it will encourage tax avoidance. In line with the opinion expressed by Mkadmi et al., (2024) as for expenses must be minimized and profits must be maximized. In accordance with this statement, the following hypothesis is prepared:

H_1: Debt has a positive effect on tax avoidance

2. The effect of company size on tax avoidance

Company size is classified into 3 groups, namely from small, medium to large companies. The size of the company is determined by the amount of transaction cash flow, sales, level of asset ownership and total net worth. The company is getting better and more prosperous if it masters the strategic milestones and basic compliance of company growth (Sup Cho, 2016). The bigger the company, the more it will be in the spotlight for external circles, including investors so that companies will be more required to produce superior information and products than small companies. To reach the wishes of shareholders, the company has adequate human resources and reliability that can be used as a loophole for tax avoidance (Fatimah et al., 2020). In accordance with this statement, the following hypothesis is prepared:

H_2: Company size has a positive effect on tax avoidance

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses mining companies as a research population since 2020-2021. While determining the sample of this study using purposive sampling method with the results of 30 companies from 45 observation companies and with multiple regression methods. The data used in this study uses secondary data downloaded through each company's website or the website www.idx.co.id. This research includes quantitative research because it includes causing a causal relationship. The sample selection requirements are as follows:

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1. Number of mining companies listed on the IDX in 2020-2021
2. Companies that were suspended during the study

3. Companies that do not provide complete data related to research variables Furthermore, the following is the definition of each of the research variables:

1. Dependent Variable: Tax avoidance

Tax avoidance is an action that does not violate the law aimed at saving company payments while still paying attention to existing laws and regulations. Tax avoidance is calculated by means of CETR (Cash Effective Tax Rate) which indicates the closer the number "0", the more aggressive the action (Moeljono, 2020). The following is the research calculation formula:

$$\text{Cash Effective Tax Rate (CETR)} = \frac{\text{(Tax fee)}}{\text{(Earning before interest)}}$$

2. Independent Variable I: Debt

Debt is the level of financing from the company that must be fulfilled to the borrower. In this study, debt is measured using the debt to equity ratio, where this ratio measures the extent to which the company is financed by its debt level rather than its equity. The debt ratio according to (Permata, et all, 2019) is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Debt to Equity Ratio (DER)} = \frac{\text{Totally Debt}}{\text{Totally Equity}} \times 100\%$$

3. Independent Variable II: Firm Size

Company size is the level of wealth of a company which is determined by several factors including total sales, level of asset ownership and transaction size. The greater the flow of transaction traffic, the bigger the company. Company size is divided into 3 groups, namely small, medium and large companies. According to Widagdo, et al, (2020) company size can be calculated using the following formula:

Firm Size = *Ln* total assets

IV. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

In this study, the method used is the multiple regression method with the help of SPSS version 25.0. To support the validity of this research data, it uses a classic assumption test which is an integral part of hypothesis testing. The classic assumption test consists of normality test, heteroscedasity test, multicolonierity test, correlation test. While the hypothesis test consists of the coefficient of determination test, simultaneous test and partial test. To facilitate the concept of the research framework, the following model is presented:

Model: Y1: $\alpha + \beta 1.X1 + \beta\ 2.X2\ \varepsilon$

Description:

Y	:	Tax avoidance
α	:	Constanta
B1-β2:		Regression Coefficients
X1	:	Debt
X2	:	Firm Size
E	:	Error

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC

Descriptive statistical tests are used to describe or describe variable data through the results of testing the mean (average value), standard deviation, minimum maximum value, kurtoris and sweeknes. The following are the research results based on the descriptive statistical test:

Variable Debt has an average value of 1.07893 and a standard deviation of 1.340989. These results conclude that the sample has a fairly high variation. The minimum value of debt is 0.45 and the maximum is 0.95.

The firm size variable has an average value of 3.678001 and a standard deviation of 3.74489. These results indicate that the sample has a high variation as well. The minimum value of company size is 3.00 and the maximum is 20.00.

The tax avoidance variable has an average value of 9.78000 and a standard deviation of 6.890076. These results indicate that the sample variablity is low. The minimum value is 1,567 and the maximum value obtained is 22,930.

Tabel 2: Statistik Deskriptif

Variabel	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Deviation
Hutang	60	0,45	0,95	1,07893	1,340989
Uk.Perusahaan	60	3,00	20,00	3,678001	3,74489
Peng Pajak	60	1.567	22,930	9,78000	6,890076

Source: Processed secondart data, 2025

b. CLASSICAL ASSUMPTION

The classic assumption test aims to test whether the research residual variables can fulfill the assumption of the main requirement of normal status or not. The classic assumption test is a mandatory prerequisite test that must exist in the regression research model because it will determine the results of the decision on the next research analysis. The following presents the test results and decision levels of each classic assumption test:

Table 3.: Summary of Classical Assumption Test

Uji	**Hasil Pengujian**		**Kesimpulan**
Normality test (Kolmogorov Smirnov test)	Test Statistic *Asymp. Sig*. (2- tailed) upper 5%	.200	Distributed data Normally
Multicollinearity Test	Values of VIF upper than 10%	X_1 1.093 > 10 X_2 1.093> 10	Not occur Multicolonoerity
Heteroscedasticity Test	Test statistic *Asymp. Sig* upper than 5%	X_1 .716 > 0,05 X_2 .232 > 0.05	Not occur Heteroscedasticity
Uji Autocorrelation Test	Durbin Watson if the DW value lies between dU and (4-dU).	1.916	Not occur symptom autocorrelationautokorelasi

Source: Processed secondart data, 2025

c. HYPHOTESIS TEST

Hypothesis testing is a testing method used to make decisions based on data analysis. Hypothesis testing consists of the coefficient of determination test (Adjusted R2), simultaneous test (F test), and partial test (t test). The following are the test results of each test:

1. Determination Coefficient Test

This test aims to measure the extent to which the ability of the independent variable to explain the dependent variable. The significance rate used when the result of the R2 value is closer to number 1, the better the adaptive ability of the independent variable. The following test results are generated:

Table 4: Determination Coefficient Test Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.217[a]	.083	.029	.3387007
a. Predictors: (Constant) LEVERAGE, SIZE				

Source: Processed secondart data, 2025

It can be concluded based on the test results of table 4 above that the Adjusted R Square value is 0.083 or 8.3%. This indicates that 8.3% of tax avoidance can be explained by the debt and company size variables, then the remaining 1.7% is explained by other variables not included in this study such as gender, constitutional ownership, political connection and others.

2. Simultaneous Test (F)

This test aims to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable simultaneously. The significance level determined is if the significance value is less than 5% then H0 is accepted and states that the independent variables are able to explain the dependent variable together. The following test results are generated:

Table 5: Simultaneous Test Result (F)

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3318.45	4	1659.22	3.84	.026[b]
	Residual	29391.26	68	432.22		
	Total	32709.70	70			
a. Dependent Variable: PENGH PAJAK						
b. Predictors: (Constant), LEVERAGE, SIZE						

Source: Processed secondart data, 2025

It can be concluded based on the test results of table 5 above that the significance value obtained is 0.026 < α (0.05). This indicates that the debt and company size variables are able to influence tax avoidance.

3. Partial Test (t)

Partial Test aims to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable partially /individually. The level of significance determined is influential if the significance value is less than 5%. The following test results are generated:

Table 6: Partial Test Result

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	37.04	11.21	.00	3.30	.002
	LEVERAGE	-.18	.09	-.24	-2.09	.040
	KARAK EKSEKUTIF	-.83	.41	-.23	-2.01	.048
a. Dependent Variable: PENGH PAJAK						

Source: Processed secondart data, 2025

It can be concluded based on the test results of table 6 above that the significance value of the debt variable is 0.040 < α (0.05), so H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which means that debt has a positive effect on tax avoidance. Then the company size variable has a significance value of 0.048 < α (0.05) then H0 is rejected and H2 is accepted which states that Company Size has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance.

a. Effect of Debt on Tax Avoidance

Based on the results of the t test, debt is proven to have a partial effect on tax avoidance. This can be proven from the significance value obtained 0.040 < α (0.05) which indicates H0 is rejected H1 is accepted. The greater the company's debt, the greater the tendency of tax avoidance arising from its debt burden. According to Arhinful and Radmehr., (2023) the benefits of debt in addition to maintaining wealth and easy access, the interest expense arising therefrom is more effectively used in reducing fiscal accounting profit expenditures compared to stock dividends. In addition, the row of company officials, namely shareholders, also demands minimal expenditure of maximum profits, especially in relation to government tax policies on relaxed tax incentives (Mkadmi et al., 2024).

b. Effect of Company Size on Tax Avoidance

Based on the results of the t test, company size is also proven to have a partial effect on tax avoidance. This can be proven from the significance value obtained 0.048 < α (0.05) which indicates H0 rejected H2 accepted. The greater the flow of company transactions such as sales, accounts receivable and payable, the more net worth triggers tax avoidance to occur. This action is driven by adequate human resources so that it is different from small companies that prefer open tax disclosure. In line with the opinion of Lopo Martinez et al., (2024) which reveals the privileges of large companies are more potential especially supported by strong political connections. Another pressure that must be faced by large companies is the demand for them to be trend setters so that they must force them to display good corporate value (Nepal et al. 2025).

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of this study indicate that the variables of debt and company size both have a positive effect on tax avoidance for mining companies listed on the IDX in 2016-2021. The increasing amount of corporate debt further encourages the company's transaction flow to increase and can cause the interest expense that occurs therein. This study has limitations, namely sample testing is only based on the financial statements of mining companies so that further references are added not only from the IDX but other scopes. Then as for the suggestions that can be conveyed through this research are for investors and the government to be more careful and careful in selecting companies, especially companies that are seen as leading companies, then for company management to be more transparent in managing the company so as not to cause conflicts of interest between the parties involved. For further research, it can be suggested that it is better to use more varied and stronger variables because this study only contains Adjusted R 8.3% in explaining the variables of debt, company size on tax avoidance.

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