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Determinants of Audit Delay at the BPKP in North Sumatra Province

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Abstract: Financial reports have an important role for stakeholder users, such as governments, lenders, citizens, investors, and various other interests, as a reference for measuring profits and making decisions. The results of the analysis to determine the components that drive audit delays on audited financial reports. This study analyzes variables such as audit tenure, financial distress, audit opinion, and auditor reputation. This study uses a quantitative objective mechanism and includes primary data and distributes questionnaires to researchers at the BPKP office. The sample of this study consisted of auditors at the BPKP office in North Sumatra Province, totaling 60 active auditors on duty. Based on the findings of this study analysis, audit tenure has no significant impact on the occurrence of audit delays in financial reporting. However, financial distress, audit opinion, and auditor reputation have a significant impact on the occurrence of audit delays. In this regard, this study will help prevent audit delays in financial reports.

Keywords: Audit Delay, Audit Tenure, Financial Distress, Audit Opinion, Auditor Reputation.

INTRODUCTION

The Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (Badan Pengawasan Keuangan dan Pembangunan, BPKP) of North Sumatra Province is an internal audit institution whose implementation is carried out by auditors advocating for the promotion of regional autonomy, accountability in government institutions' performance to achieve accountable governance, good corporate management, optimization of provincial/regional revenue, and efforts to combat corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Silalahi et al., 2023).

The BPKP Representative Office in Maluku plans to submit the results of a state loss audit in a suspected corruption case involving the construction project of the East Seram Regency (SBT) DPRD building, amounting to IDR 14.8 billion. The submission is being carried out as the Maluku BPKP audit team has completed its audit on this case and will hand over the audit results to the special crime investigators of the Maluku Regional Police. According to

Zainuri, the delay in the audit process by the BPKP team was due to a backlog of other cases still awaiting audit. This delay is attributed to the volume of both old and new case files that must be addressed within the constraints of limited BPKP auditors. Thus, it can be concluded that the delayed publication of audits in this case is due to a lack of auditors or the extended time required for the auditing process, often referred to as audit tenure.

Audit delay refers to the time needed to manage and finalize an audit, calculated until the day the audit report is issued. Over time, audit delays lead to longer delays in financial reporting (Idris & Afiah, 2023). Timely financial reporting is essential because accounting information loses its decision usefulness if it is not made available to stakeholders within a reasonable period (Ashton et al., 1987). Audit delay is particularly important for investors when making investment decisions (Irhamna et al., 2024). Audit tenure refers to the duration of the agreement between the auditor and the client regarding the provision of agreed-upon audit services (Madalena et al., 2023). Audit tenure is measured by calculating the time required for the audit engagement, which influences the emotional relationship between the client and the auditor (Haalisa & Inayati, 2021). The tenure period is necessary to maintain a balance between the client and auditor relationship; excessively long or short periods can lead to issues affecting the auditor's professionalism (Novriska Putri & Pohan, 2022). Extended audit firm tenure can either improve audit efficiency through accumulated client-specific knowledge or impair auditor independence (Deis & Giroux, 1992). The audit period also relates to the observation of the auditor-client attachment, where the auditor's standard value gradually becomes more prominent as contract durations increase.

Financial distress occurs when a company is in financial crisis and unable to meet its obligations due to insufficient funds for continued operations (Bebasari & Putri, 2023). Financial distress can manifest as a decline in assets and finances, inability to repay debts, outstanding stock allocations, cash management issues, limited cash flow, and employee layoffs (Avianty & Lestari, 2023). When entities experience severe financial distress, auditors typically require additional testing and time to evaluate going-concern risks, thereby extending the audit delay (Carslaw & Kaplan, 1991). Failure to address financial distress can result in corporate bankruptcy.

Independent auditors provide opinions on the client company's financial statements concerning the fairness of all material aspects through financial reports prepared by the management following the accounting standards set by PSAK. Audit opinions on an institution's annual financial reports play a key role in decision-making (Yanthi et al., 2020). An audit opinion is the conclusion drawn by auditors based on their audit process and represents their assessment of the fairness of financial reporting. Auditors issue opinions based on their findings and audit results (Eka Banias & Kuntadi, 2022). According to Abdillah et al. (2019), an auditor's reputation is the public trust in the auditor's quality and directly correlates with their credibility. Larger, reputable audit firms often possess superior resources and specialized personnel that allow them to mitigate audit delays more effectively than smaller firms (DeAngelo, 1981). The auditor's reputation significantly affects the quality and performance of financial reports, thereby increasing public trust (Effendi & Tirtajaya, 2022). Based on the above background, this study examines the influence of audit tenure, financial distress, audit opinions, and auditor reputation in relation to delays in financial reporting, commonly referred to as audit delay.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive quantitative approach. The study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS) using SmartPLS software to analyze interactions within the model and determine relationships between constructs. PLS-SEM is a component-based structural equation modeling technique that uses a variance-based approach. The primary objective of this research is to examine the

influence between independent and dependent variables, categorizing the study as causal-comparative research.

The population in this study consists of auditors working at the BPKP Office of North Sumatra Province. The sample is drawn from the population based on specific predefined characteristics. The sampling method employed in this study is simple random sampling, where sample selection is conducted randomly without considering group order or stratification. A total of 60 auditors working at the BPKP Office of North Sumatra Province were selected as the sample for this study.

For data analysis, the research utilizes the Partial Least Square (PLS) technique with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4 software. PLS is one of the more advanced strategies for solving structural equation modeling (SEM), especially in combining theory and data, as well as in path analysis using latent variables. This technique offers high flexibility in social research and is considered effective because it does not require stringent assumptions and allows for the use of relatively small sample sizes, even fewer than 100 samples.

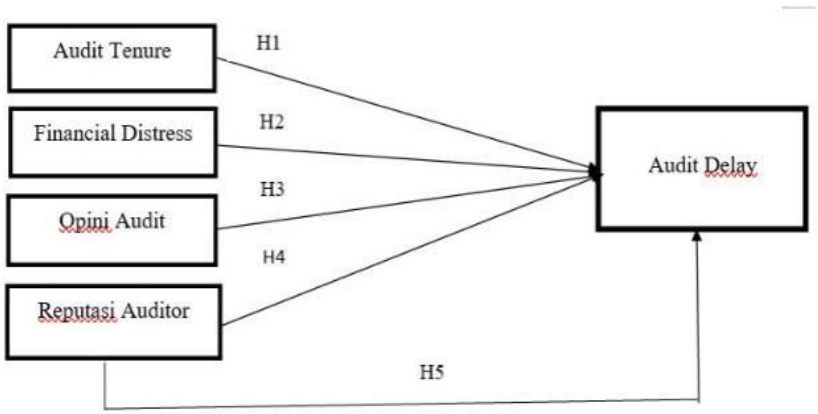


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

H1: Audit tenure influences audit delay at the BPKP Office in North Sumatra Province.
H2: Financial distress influences audit delay at the BPKP Office in North Sumatra Province.
H3: Auditor opinion influences audit delay at the BPKP Office in North Sumatra Province.
H4: Auditor reputation influences audit delay at the BPKP Office in North Sumatra Province.
H5: Audit tenure, financial distress, auditor opinion, and auditor reputation collectively influence audit delay at the BPKP Office in North Sumatra Province.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Research Respondents

The questionnaire was distributed to 60 auditors at the BPKP Office of North Sumatra Province. All questionnaires distributed were returned, processed, examined, and evaluated.

Table 1. Questionnaire Criteria

Criteria	Quantity	Percentage
Questionnaires distributed	60	100%
Unanswered questionnaires	0	0%
Incomplete responses	0	0%
Valid questionnaires	60	100%

The table above shows that 60 surveys were distributed, all of which were returned, resulting in a 100% survey response rate.

Table 2. Number of Questions by Variable

No	Variable	Number of Questions
1	Audit Tenure	6
2	Financial Distress	6
3	Audit Opinion	6
4	Auditor Reputation	4
5	Audit Delay	4
Total Questions	**26**	

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis outlines the data obtained from respondents. The descriptive data describe the situation and status of the respondents, providing additional information to support the research findings.

Characteristics of Research Respondents

The participants in this study are 60 auditors registered at BPKP North Sumatra Province, representing the profile of participants, which is the position of auditor.

Table 3. Respondent Profile Characteristics

Component	Criteria	N	%	Diagram
Auditor Position	Auditor Ahli Pertama	11	18%	
	Auditor Mahir	10	17%	
	Auditor Terampil	11	18%	
	Auditor Muda	15	25%	
	Auditor Penyelia	3	4%	
	Auditor Madya	3	4%	
	Auditor	7	12%	

Based on Table 3, from the 60 auditors surveyed at BPKP North Sumatra, 11 were First-Level Auditors and Skilled Auditors, accounting for 18%, 10 were Expert Auditors or 17%, and 15 were Junior Auditors, with Supervisory Auditors and Senior Auditors each making up 3 auditors or 4%. The remaining 7 auditors made up 12%.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

According to the data that has been accumulated, the responses from the participants have been summarized and evaluated to understand the descriptive nature of each variable. The evaluation of the respondents is based on the following criteria:

Lowest Rating Score: 1
Highest Rating Score: 5
Thus, the rating limits for each variable are as follows:
1.00-1.79 = Very Low
1.80-2.59 = Low
2.60-3.39 = Moderate
3.40-4.19 = High
4.20-5.00 = Very High

Descriptive Analysis of the Audit Tenure Variable

The responses from 60 participants regarding audit tenure were measured using three indicators: the length of time the partner has been assigned the audit, changes the partner has made to the audit process, and the emotional approach the auditor has with the audit firm over a specific period. The following are the 6 statements/questions used to measure this variable:

Table 4. Audit Tenure Indicators

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
1	Auditors should perform audit engagements with clients for a maximum of 6 consecutive years.	4.100	High
2	The compatibility between the auditor and client allows the audit engagement to continue for a long period.	2.800	Moderate
3	The longer the auditor is engaged with a client, the more it affects the quality of the audit.	4.350	Very High
4	Frequent changes in audit partners may disrupt the audit process.	4.100	High
5	Auditors remain vigilant with clients even if they have a close relationship.	4.350	Very High
6	Auditors are able to work effectively and efficiently due to their emotional closeness with the client.	4.100	High

Descriptive Analysis of the Financial Distress Variable

The responses from 60 participants regarding financial distress were measured using six questions based on three indicators: wage cuts, declining profitability, and the inability to settle cash obligations. The following are the 6 statements/questions used to measure this variable:

Table 5. Financial Distress Indicators

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
1	When clients experience financial difficulties, they may be forced to cut employee wages to reduce costs.	2.850	Moderate
2	Wage reductions can affect your performance as an auditor.	4.033	High
3	Clients have experienced declining profitability over recent periods.	4.383	Very High
4	There is no suitable solution to increase profitability. The most effective strategy will vary depending on the specific situation of the company.	4.183	High
5	Clients have difficulty meeting obligations, which can affect the financial statements.	3.567	High
6	Auditing carries the risk of a client's inability to settle its cash obligations due to weak profitability.	4.383	Very High

Descriptive Analysis of the Audit Opinion Variable

The responses from 60 participants regarding audit opinions were measured using six questions based on three indicators: honesty, presentation, and completeness of information. The following are the six statements/questions used to measure this variable:

Table 6. Audit Opinion Indicators

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
1	Auditors are responsible for revealing any material misstatements identified in the client's financial statements during the audit process.	4.350	Very High
2	The assessment of honesty during the audit process heavily relies on the integrity and accuracy of the auditor in revealing findings and conclusions.	4.100	High
3	Competent auditors will issue accurate audit opinions.	4.000	High
4	Transparent and comprehensive financial reporting can support favorable audit opinions from independent auditors.	4.417	Very High
5	Financial statements provide clear information on the accounting policies used by clients to record and measure financial transactions.	4.367	Very High
6	Your view on the quality of the audit opinion is based on the completeness of the information presented in the audit report.	4.100	High

Descriptive Analysis of the Auditor Reputation Variable

Auditor reputation was measured using four questions based on two indicators: auditor experience and audit quality. The responses from 60 participants were based on the following four statements:

Table 7. Auditor Reputation Indicators

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
1	Experienced auditors are more capable of communicating effectively with clients.	4.333	Very High
2	Auditors have sufficient knowledge and expertise to conduct an audit.	4.383	Very High
3	An auditor's reputation will influence the quality of the audit.	4.183	High
4	Auditors must possess high integrity in carrying out their duties.	4.100	High

Descriptive Analysis of the Audit Delay Variable

The responses from 60 participants regarding audit delay were measured using four questions based on two indicators: audit report dates and financial statement report dates. The following are the four statements/questions used to measure this variable:

Table 8. Audit Delay Indicators

Code	Item	Mean	Criteria
1	The audit report date must be accurate and match the audit completion date.	4.383	Very High
2	Delays in the audit report can negatively affect the audit quality.	4.000	High
3	The financial statement date must be accurate and correspond with financial transactions.	4.100	High
4	Audit delays are often caused by external factors, such as delays in providing financial data by the client.	4.033	High

Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The actual model testing was conducted to demonstrate the validity and reliability testing results. In this study, we conducted a validity test to determine if the constructs meet the criteria to be continued as part of the research. The validity test involves two types of evaluations:

Convergent Validity (Validating Using Outer Loading)

Convergent validity evaluates the measurement model's validity using items whose values are based on the correlation between item scores and construct values. The convergent validity is measured by the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) coefficient, composite reliability, R-squared, and Cronbach's alpha. The results of the AVE index, composite reliability, R square, and Cronbach's alpha can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9. AVE Index, Composite Reliability, R Square, Cronbach's Alpha

	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Audit Tenure	0.629	0.951	0.831
Financial Distress	0.547	0.879	0.827
Audit Opinion	0.503	0.882	0.733
Auditor Reputation	0.642	0.821	0.811
Audit Delay	0.666	0.842	0.829

The validity and reliability criteria can also be determined from the composite reliability values and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of each variable. A variable is considered highly reliable if the composite reliability is greater than 0.7 and the AVE is greater than 0.5. Table 9 shows that most of the composite reliability values are above 0.7, and the AVE values are greater than 0.5, indicating that they fall within the reliability category. Additionally, the variables of audit tenure, financial distress, audit opinion, auditor reputation, and audit delay

have AVE values approaching and exceeding 0.5, although they do not pass the conformity test for the threshold > 0.5. This suggests the need for an outlier variable adjustment, as the index can still describe the latent variables. The regulatory compliance value of less than 0.7 but more than 0.5 means that a pre-exclusion structural search model is applied. This implies that the reliability hypothesis is met.

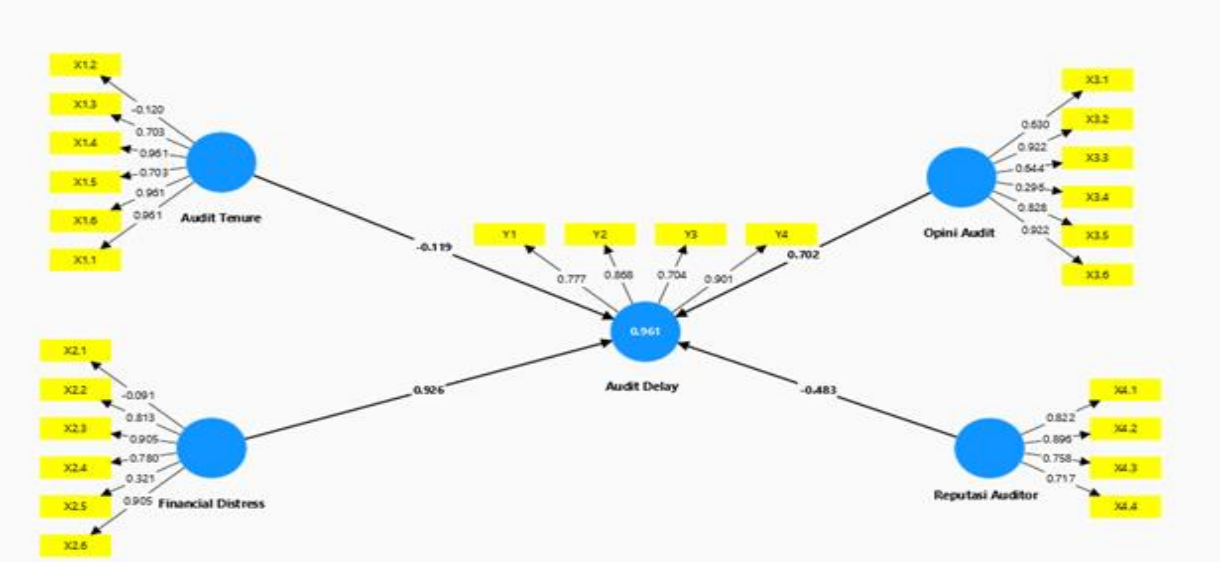


Figure 2. Results of the Outer Model Test Showing Outer Loading Values

Discriminant Validity (Validating Using AVE)

Discriminant validity is measured by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations between that construct and other constructs in the model. A good discriminant validity is chosen if the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than the correlation between that construct and the other constructs in the model. This can be better understood by referring to the graph below.

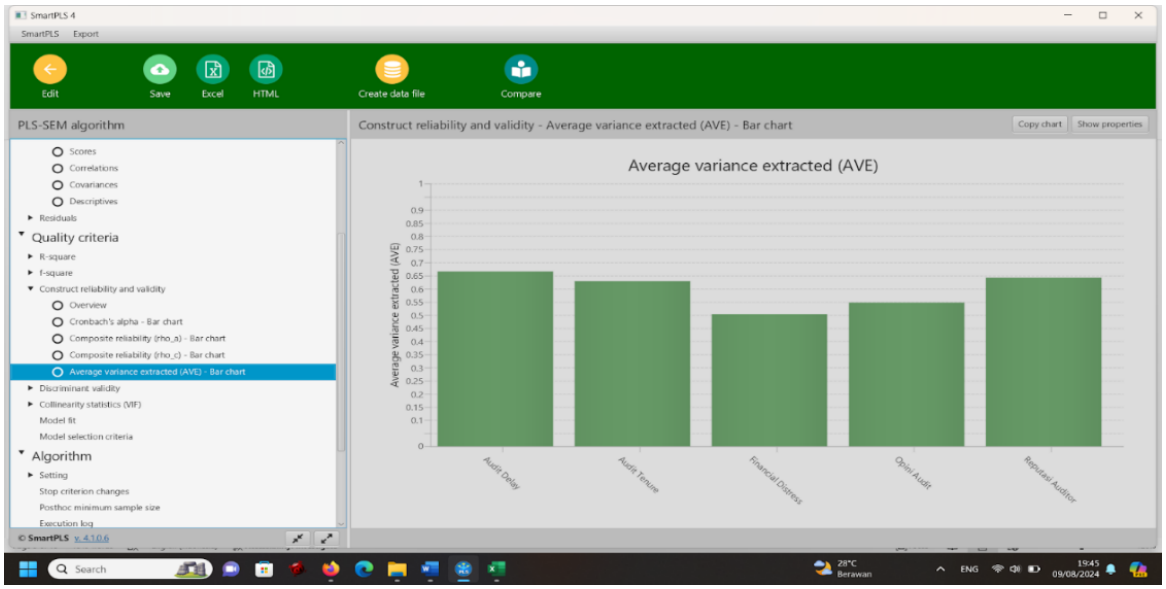


Figure 3. Discriminant Validity (Validating Using AVE)

Composite Reliability

Two methods can be used to measure the reliability of a construct in PLS-SEM using the SmartPLS application: Cronbach's alpha reliability and composite reliability. However, Cronbach's alpha provides a lower value, so composite reliability is preferred. The value should be greater than 0.7. Table 10 below shows that all variable values exceed 0.7 for both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability tests, as well as exceeding 0.5 for the AVE validity test. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tested variables are valid and reliable, allowing us to proceed with testing the structural model.

Table 10. Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)
Audit Tenure	0.829	0.842
Financial Distress	0.831	0.951
Audit Opinion	0.827	0.879
Auditor Reputation	0.733	0.882
Audit Delay	0.811	0.821

Evaluation of Structural Model (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the structural model aims to predict the relationships between latent variables based on substantive theory. The structural model is evaluated using R-square of the dependent structures.

R-Square (R^2)

R-squared is used to measure the predictive power of the structural model. R-squared illustrates the effect of a particular exogenous latent variable on whether the endogenous latent variable has a significant influence or not. An R-squared value of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 indicates a strong, moderate, and weak model, respectively (Chin et al., 1998 in Ghozali and Latan, 2015).

Table 11. R-Square (R^2)

R-square	R-square adjusted
Audit Tenure	0.961

The results in the table show an R-squared value of 0.961. This indicates that the variables of audit tenure, financial distress, audit opinion, and auditor reputation have a 96.1% influence on audit tenure, with the remaining influence being affected by other variables not included in this study.

F-Square

To assess the model quality, an F-squared test is conducted. An F-squared value of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 can be interpreted as the latent predictor variables having weak, moderate, or strong influences on the level of their construct. A variable is considered influential if its value is greater than 0.02.

Table 12. F-Square

	Audit Delay	Audit Tenure	Financial Distress	Audit Opinion	Auditor Reputation
Audit Delay	-	0.002	2.095	0.636	0.531
Audit Tenure	-	-	-	-	-
Financial Distress	-	-	-	-	-
Audit Opinion	-	-	-	-	-
Auditor Reputation	-	-	-	-	-

From the table above, we can categorize the following:

a) The value of 0.02 indicates that audit tenure does not have a significant impact on audit delay.
b) Financial distress, audit opinion, and auditor reputation have a significant impact on audit delay because their values are greater than 0.02.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the structural model (inner model) using R-squared values, which is a model quality fit test. Additionally, considering the number of effects, the parameter coefficients and T-statistics were found to be significant and equal to 1.96. SmartPLS performs statistical tests for each hypothesized relationship through simulations. In this case, the bootstrap approach also aims to minimize data anomaly searching problems. The significance of the parameter estimates provides valuable information about the relationships between the research variables. The results of the SmartPLS bootstrap analysis can be seen in the internal weight outputs shown in the structural model image.

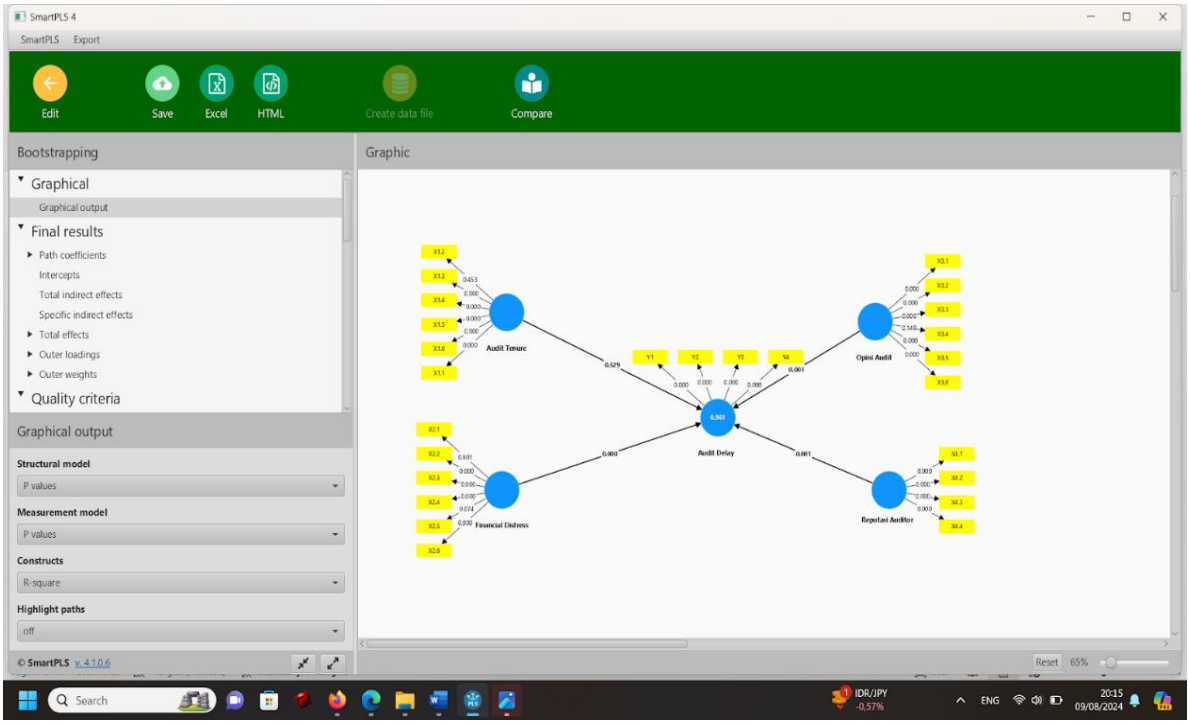


Figure 4. Results of SmartPLS Bootstrap Analytical Test

To determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected, p-values, t-statistics, and interconstruct values can be tested. In this way, estimates and measurement standard errors are calculated based on empirical observations, not using statistical assumptions. In the bootstrap resampling method of this study, a hypothesis is accepted if the t-value significance is greater than 1.96 and/or the p-value is less than 0.05, then Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected, and vice versa. The following hypotheses have been proposed:

Ho: There is no effect of Audit Tenure on Audit Delay
Ha: There is an effect of Audit Tenure on Audit Delay
Ho: There is no effect of Financial Distress on Audit Delay
Ha: There is an effect of Financial Distress on Audit Delay
Ho: There is no effect of Audit Opinion on Audit Delay
Ha: There is an effect of Audit Opinion on Audit Delay
Ho: There is no effect of Auditor Reputation on Audit Delay
Ha: There is an effect of Auditor Reputation on Audit Delay

Table 13. Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T- statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Audit Tenure -> Audit Delay	-0,119	-0,169	0,189	0,629	0,529
Financial Distress-> Audit Delay	0,702	0,740	0,212	3,301	0,001
Audit Opinion -> Audit Delay	0,926	0,866	0,155	5,988	0,000
Auditor Reputation-> Audit Delay	-0,483	-0,419	0,140	3,443	0,001

Based on the table above, exogenous variables are present when the T-statistic is greater than 1.96 or the p-values are less than 0.05. The acceptance or rejection of hypotheses is determined as follows:

1. 1.The audit tenure variable has a t-statistic value of 0.629 (less than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.529 (greater than 0.05). This proves the first hypothesis that there is no effect of audit tenure on audit delay.
2. 2.The financial distress variable has a t-statistic value of 3.301 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (less than 0.05). This proves the second hypothesis that financial distress affects audit delay.
3. 3.The audit opinion variable has a t-statistic value of 5.988 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This proves the third hypothesis that audit opinion affects audit delay.
4. 4.The auditor reputation variable has a t-statistic value of 3.443 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (less than 0.05). This proves the fourth hypothesis that auditor reputation affects audit delay.

The Effect of Audit Tenure on Audit Delay

The discussion on the effect of audit tenure on audit delay aims to address the research question and the first hypothesis, which posits that audit tenure does not affect audit delay. Based on the internal path analysis model, it shows that the audit tenure period (X1) does not have a significant effect on audit delay (Y). This is evident from the obtained t-statistic of 0.629 and p-value of 0.529. From the table above, it can be seen that audit tenure does not have an effect on audit delay because the t-statistic value is smaller than 1.96 and the p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant effect. Based on a survey conducted with several auditors at the BPKP offices in North Sumatra, it was found that audit tenure does not influence audit delay. The findings support previous research by Safitri & Triani (2021), which stated that "audit tenure" has no effect on audit delay.

The Effect of Financial Distress on Audit Delay

The discussion on the impact of financial distress on audit delay aims to answer the research question and the second hypothesis, which states that financial distress affects audit delay. Based on the inner model analysis, it was found that financial distress (X2) has a significant effect on audit delay (Y). This is shown by the t-statistic value of 5.988, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant effect as the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Based on a survey conducted with several auditors at the BPKP offices

in North Sumatra, it was found that financial distress does affect audit delay. This result supports previous research by Submitter et al. (2021) and Kristiana & Annisa (2022), which indicated that the "financial distress" variable has a significant effect on audit delay.

The Effect of Audit Opinion on Audit Delay

The discussion on the effect of audit opinion on audit delay aims to address the research question and the third hypothesis, which states that audit opinion affects audit delay. Based on the inner model analysis, it shows that audit opinion (X_3) has a significant effect on audit delay (Y). This is evident from the obtained t-statistic value of 3.301 and p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant effect because the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05.

Auditors require additional time to gather sufficient and appropriate audit evidence when issuing modified or qualified audit opinions, thereby extending the overall audit duration (Bamber et al., 1993). Furthermore, the negotiation process between management and independent auditors regarding contentious accounting issues or negative audit disclosures frequently contributes to prolonged audit report lag (Whisenant et al., 2003). In situations where companies receive non-standard audit opinions, market participants and auditors tend to exercise greater caution, requiring expanded substantive testing before finalizing the audit report (Solomon et al., 1999).

Based on a survey conducted with several auditors at the BPKP offices in North Sumatra, it was found that audit opinion does affect audit delay. The findings support previous research by Annisa & Sartika (2021), which stated that the "audit opinion" variable has a significant effect on audit delay.

The Effect of Auditor Reputation on Audit Delay

The discussion on the effect of auditor reputation on audit delay aims to answer the research question and the fourth hypothesis, which posits that auditor reputation affects audit delay. Based on the inner model analysis, it shows that auditor reputation (X3) has a significant effect on audit delay (Y). This is evidenced by the obtained t-statistic value of 3.443 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant effect as the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Based on a survey conducted with several auditors at the BPKP offices in North Sumatra, it was found that auditor reputation affects audit delay. This result supports previous research by Puji Astuti (2019), which indicated that the "auditor reputation" variable has a significant effect on audit delay.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and the discussion in the previous chapter, calculations using Smart PLS 4.0 can be concluded as follows:

1. Based on the inner model path analysis, it was found that Audit Tenure (X1) does not significantly affect Audit Delay (Y). This is indicated by a t-statistic value of 0.629 with a p-value of 0.529, meaning there is no significant effect.
2. Based on the inner model path analysis, it shows that Financial Distress (X2) has a significant effect on Audit Delay (Y), as evidenced by a t-statistic of 5.988 with a p-value of 0.000.
3. Based on the inner model path analysis, it shows that Audit Opinion (X3) has a significant effect on Audit Delay (Y), as seen from a t-statistic of 3.301 with a p-value of 0.001.
4. Based on the inner model path analysis, it shows that Auditor Reputation (X4) has a significant effect on Audit Delay (Y), as indicated by a t-statistic of 3.443 with a p-value of 0.001.

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