

# Determinants of Audit Quality with Auditor's Professionalism Skepticism as a Mediating Variable in Public Accounting Firm (KAP) Medan City

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to detect factors that encourage an increase in auditor professionalism skepticism so that they are able to produce quality audits. It is realized that audit quality comes from a good audit process and the auditor puts forward a good attitude of professional skepticism. The results of this study indicate that the experience and competence of auditors can increase the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism and audit quality. In addition, the skepticism of the auditor's professionalism is able to mediate the experience of the auditor and the competence of the auditor affects the quality of the audit. For KAP, especially in the city of Medan, it has an obligation to provide an equal portion of audit assignments to all auditors and provide opportunities for auditors to improve their abilities by attending education and training from both formal and non-formal educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Experience, Competence, Skepticism, Audit Quality

## INTRODUCTION

The financial statements presented by the company are one of the important factors for all interested parties, not only investors, company commissioners, government, labor unions and other parties who are very interested in the financial statements published by the company's management. Because financial reports are very important, financial statements that have been audited with good audit quality are absolutely highly desired by all of these parties (Arfiansyah, 2017). Good audit

quality will reduce misstatements in financial statements (Veena et al., 2016). Thus, it is very clear that audit quality produces financial reports that can provide quality information for all parties, which in turn will help the public to make good decisions (Furiady & Kurnia, 2015).

Audit quality is produced through a correct audit process and is carried out by auditors who uphold the truth to display correct information as well. However, it should be known and realized together that there is no guarantee for all parties that the auditor will conduct a quality audit in accordance with the applicable standard operating audit procedures. Currently, it is very difficult to state the financial statements that result from a quality audit process. It is undeniable that the data show many cases of companies experiencing bankruptcy, or there are financial problems but the financial statements show unqualified (WTP). The case of PT Jiwasraya, PT. Hanson International, Tbk. This can indicate that the audit that was carried out was not of high quality. This condition does not rule out the possibility of also happening in the city of Medan.

As one of the big cities in Indonesia and as the capital city of North Sumatra Province, Medan City is the business and economic center of North Sumatra Province. Many organizations or institutions, both for-profit and not-for-profit, are established and operate here. There are also many parties who have an interest in the establishment of the organization or institution. In its

activities, the organization or institution must present financial reports for all interested parties. Therefore, there are also many Public Accounting Firms (KAP) in Medan City. As of June 2021, there are 23 KAPs in Medan City out of 485 KAPs in Indonesia that have obtained operational permits from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia (Center for Professional Development of Finance Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). There is no guarantee that the audit carried out is of the quality expected by all parties. It is necessary to conduct research that audit quality is actually carried out and what causes audit quality to be carried out or not based on measurable variables.

Fauziah Research, (2015); Nadi & Suputra, (2017); Susanti, (2018); Hajering et al., (2019); Rashid & Ghazi, (2021); Sulistyawati & Santoso, (2021); Syam et al., (2021) show that the experience of conducting audits and the competence of auditors in conducting audits are important variables to provide a quality audit. Although not the main variables that affect audit quality, auditing experience and auditor competence are contemporary issues in Medan City. The large number of college graduates' interest in becoming auditors raises big questions about their experience in conducting audits and their ability to conduct audits. Does the KAP in Medan City treat these auditors well to gain a lot of experience, and improve their competence? So it is important to do this research.

Experience is a condition where the auditor gets a lot of tasks to do audits and the duration he gets to do the audit is quite long (Nadi & Suputra, 2017). When the auditor often gets the task of conducting an audit, technically the auditor will gain experience, and this experience will increase his ability to carry out the next task. Thus, experienced auditors tend to provide quality audits compared to inexperienced auditors (Bawono & Singgih, 2010). This statement is because experienced auditors have really

good techniques to find errors, fraud and crimes both planned and unplanned.

Furthermore, competence is one of the other variables that have an impact on audit quality Mahdi, (2014); Furiady & Kurnia, (2015); Hajering et al., (2019). Competence tends to make it easier for auditors to complete their audit work (Idawati, 2014). Therefore, competence is one of the important factors that determine the success or failure of the audit, the better the competence of the auditor, the higher the quality of the audit conducted by the auditor (Nadi & Suputra, 2017).

However, it should be realized that although experience and competence are important variables, it is necessary for researchers to pay attention to the impact of an auditor's professional skepticism. The auditor's skepticism at work can lead to a sense of public trust in the auditor (Chang et al., 2007). This is reasonable, because it tends to be that when auditors do not promote their professional skepticism, the resulting audit quality will be reduced (Carpenter et al., 2002). It is not impossible that the experience of an auditor with good competence because the lack of skepticism makes the resulting audit not of the expected quality. The experience of the auditor will lead him to the right steps in conducting the audit, but the attitude of skepticism is low, the audit step is carried out only by following the standard operating procedures of the audit without having meaning and emphasis on why the audit is carried out. Likewise, the competence of the auditor becomes useless when skepticism is put aside. Therefore, this research is very important to do, so that it can be seen that these variables are variables that have an effect on the quality of audits carried out by auditors at KAP in Medan City.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Audit Quality**

Audit quality is a necessity for every operating company, not only in Indonesia but throughout the world. The issue of audit quality is not something new, but it is an old

thing but it is very difficult to achieve it well and consistently on an ongoing basis. Because the quality of the audit will be related to the person conducting the audit itself. Audit quality will increase when the auditor dares to disclose every fact he finds to all parties (Kusumawati & Syamsuddin, 2018). Auditors should work with high quality, because there is a great responsibility on their shoulders to provide correct information to all interested parties in the company's financial statements (Hajering et al., 2019). Because basically the results of a quality audit will help the company's top management and people with an interest in the company more easily and precisely make a business decision (Haeridistia & Fadjarenie, 2019).

A quality audit can be used as a tool for management to evaluate, confirm and verify the company's business activities that run in accordance with applicable regulations and have met the effective and efficiency standards desired by the company's management. The quality audit is then measured by the level of quality, one of which considers the behavior of the auditor in carrying out the audit function (Kusumawati & Syamsuddin, 2018). Thus, audit quality will depend on the attitude, behavior and personality of the auditor.

This explanation can provide a conclusion about the meaning of audit quality. Although there is actually no single understanding of audit quality (Al-Khaddash et al., 2013). Many auditing experts provide an understanding of audit quality, but all of them refer to the statement (DeAngelo, 1981) which states that audit quality is a joint opportunity between the auditor and the client to find and disclose any violations of the generally accepted accounting system committed by management. clients both intentional and unintentional (Al-Khaddash et al., 2013). Based on the definition described by DeAngelo (1981), in his research, further developed into indicators that can be used to measure audit quality, namely (1) the technical quality of the auditor, (2) the

quality of services provided by the auditor, (3) the relationship between the auditor and the auditor. client, (4) auditor independence.

### **Auditor Experience**

For an auditor, the experience of conducting an audit is an absolute must. Work experience is a learning process for auditors to increase their potential to develop abilities to be better than before (Bawono & Singgih, 2010). The longer an auditor has experience conducting audits, the more the quality of self-potential and ability to carry out audits will increase (Zahmatkesh & Rezazadeh, 2017). The audit experience referred to in this study is the experience of the auditor in the time required when examining financial statements and the number of assignments carried out by him (Sulistiyawati & Santoso, 2021).

Auditors who do not have experience means that they do not have good abilities in carrying out audits and their potential is not fully developed. This has an impact on the public perception that the public accounting firm where the auditor works has a poor or bad reputation because it has inexperienced auditors (Gaballa & Ning, 2011). The amount of auditor experience is expected to increase the auditor's ability to be better than before. The increased experience of the auditor will increase the possibility for the auditor to explore his ability to find irregularities and errors in the financial statements while being audited (Zahmatkesh & Rezazadeh, 2017). The longer the auditor's tenure, the higher the experience he has, the better his ability which will ultimately improve the quality of the audit he undergoes (Susanti, 2018).

Auditor experience is measured using indicators developed by research by Bawono & Singgih, (2010) which uses 3 indicators. The indicators used for the auditor's experience are (1) the length of the auditor's work, (2) the frequency of audit work carried out, (3) the intensity of the training followed.

## **Auditor Competence**

Auditor competence is the ability of an auditor which can be measured by using how many certificates the auditor has and how often the auditor attends training related to certain audits that are his expertise (Putra, et al., 2020). The more auditors have certificates, the more capable the auditors will be in carrying out their duties (Hajering et al., 2019). Auditors who have competence tend to be ordered by the Public Accounting Firm to carry out audit tasks as expected (Hajering et al., 2019). Because the higher the level of competence of the auditor, the better the quality of the audit it produces (Zahmatkesh & Rezazadeh, 2017).

Competence can be interpreted as an intelligence, level of education and training received as added value for the organization through the performance of human resources in it (Chambers, 2014). The competence of the auditor is an important factor for him to find fraud in the financial statements (Frank et al., 2017). Good competence possessed by the auditor will make it easier for him to carry out the audit tasks assigned by the public accounting firm to him.

Purwanda & Harahap's research, (2015) uses several indicators to measure auditor competence. This study will refer to the research to measure the competence of auditors, namely; (1) have knowledge in their field, (2) have knowledge of the client's business being examined, (3) present audit reports on time.

## **Auditor Professional Skepticism**

An auditor's attitude of professional skepticism really needs to be possessed by an auditor to produce a quality audit as expected (Nandari & Latrini, 2015; Sari et al., 2015; Handayani & Merkusiwati, 2015; Sulistyawati & Santoso, 2021). The attitude of auditor professional skepticism is the attitude of an auditor carrying out duties that prioritize attitudes, thoughts, behavior, and evaluative analysis of the evidence obtained during the examination (Noviyanti, 2008). Therefore, if the auditor's professional

skepticism has a high level, then the audit results are guaranteed to be of high quality and vice versa if the auditor's professional skepticism is low, it is only natural for all interested parties to doubt the level of audit quality produced by the auditor. Failed audit results can be caused by an attitude of skepticism in the auditor who is not maximized (Indrawati et al., 2019)

Professional skepticism is the basic construction in carrying out the audit process. Auditors are required to be skeptical during the audit process (Nolder & Kadous, 2018). Skeptic auditors are generally suspicious and encourage themselves to report fraud that they detect, and skepticism will increase when the auditor's thinking and analysis arises a sense of doubt about the validity of the information received by the auditor (Sayed Hussin et al., 2017)

In measuring the auditor's professional skepticism variable in this study, it refers to the research conducted by Arifuddin & Indrijawati, (2018). Indicators of the auditor's professional skepticism are (1) understanding of the provision of evidence, (2) actions taken on the evidence, (3) the attitude and behavior of auditor skepticism.

## **Framework and Hypotheses**

The framework of thinking is the main elements in research where the theoretical concept will turn into an operational definition that can describe the series between the variables studied. To provide a clear picture of the framework of this research, it can be seen in the following table:

Figure 1 describes the direct relationship between exogenous variables and their endogenous variables. The figure also provides information on the indirect effect of exogenous variables on the endogenous variables because of the variables that intervene between exogenous variables and endogenous variables. To provide an explanation of the relationship, it is explained as follows:

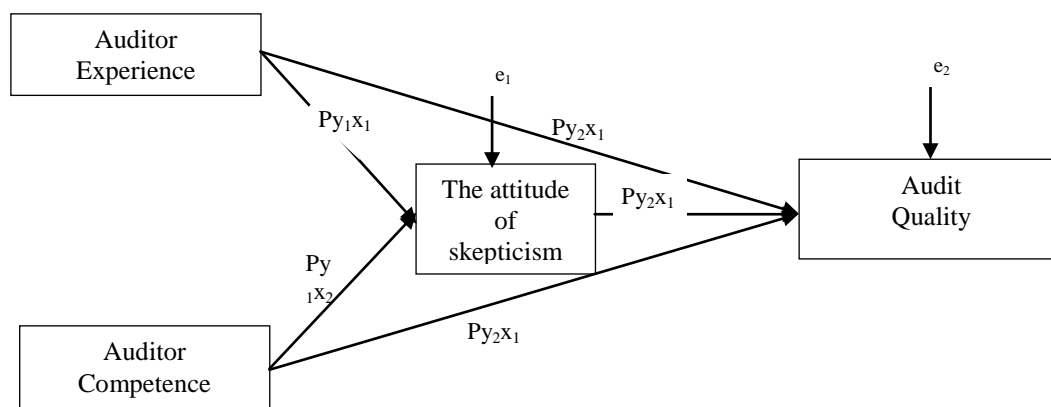


Figure 1: Research Framework

### The relationship between auditor experience and professional skepticism

Experience in conducting audits will increase the auditor's ability to carry out his audit duties with the best possible results. This capacity improvement will directly increase the auditor's professional skepticism. Auditors who have better experience will grow their knowledge and abilities, this will encourage greater auditor skepticism. Experienced auditors certainly have a better attitude of skepticism than inexperienced auditors. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Hadi & Hardiyati, (2014); Dharmadiaksa & Utama, (2017); (Basuki et al., 2020) which states that experience has a significant effect on auditors' professional skepticism. Thus, the hypotheses of this research can be formulated as follows:

H1: There is a significant effect of auditor experience on the attitude of professional skepticism of auditors at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### Relationship between Auditor Competence and Professional Skepticism

Auditor competence as something absolutely owned by every auditor. Auditors who have competence will improve their ability to examine financial statements properly. The examination of the financial statements is supported by the professional skepticism of the auditor. Thus, the auditor's competence encourages the skepticism of the auditor's professionalism to carry out his audit duties as well as possible. This is in

accordance with the results of research conducted by (Komala & Suryani, 2019); (Rifoaffa & Zaldin, 2020); (Basuki et al., 2020) which shows the results of auditor competence research have a significant effect on auditors' professional skepticism. Thus, the second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H2: There is a significant effect of auditor competence on the attitude of professional skepticism of auditors at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### Relationship of Auditor Experience with Audit Quality

Experience in carrying out audits is obtained from the frequency with which auditors get assignments to conduct audits from the public accounting firm where the auditor is active. The audit experience will automatically increase the auditor's knowledge and ability in carrying out the next task. Thus, experienced auditors tend to provide quality audits compared to inexperienced auditors (Bawono & Singgih, 2010). This is supported by the results of research conducted by Furiady & Kurnia, (2015); Zahmatkesh & Rezazadeh, (2017); Kuntari et al., (2017); Susanti, (2018) which shows that auditor experience has a significant effect on audit quality. Thus, the second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H3: There is a significant effect of auditor experience on audit quality at Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### **Relationship between Auditor Competence and Audit Quality**

Competence as an explicit skill can be used to conduct an audit objectively so as to produce a quality audit. It takes very good judgment with sharp analysis in decision making so that the resulting audit shows the actual conditions that generally describe the quality of the audit. Thus, good competence possessed by auditors encourages auditors to carry out audit programs as well as possible, which ultimately results in quality audits. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Mahdi, (2014); Furiady & Kurnia, (2015); Hajering et al., (2019) which states that auditor competence has a significant effect on audit quality. Thus, the second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H4: There is a significant effect of auditor competence on audit quality at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### **Relationship between Professional Skepticism and Audit Quality**

The attitude of professional skepticism is an attitude that absolutely must be owned by the auditor. Auditors who have a skeptical attitude tend not to easily accept evidence and management confirmation of the audited financial statements. Auditors who have high skepticism will try to pursue deeper information on the audited financial statements. This illustrates the condition of the audit conducted by auditors with a high attitude of skepticism and has good quality. Therefore, the auditor's professional skepticism will provide good audit quality results. Thus it is clear that the attitude of skepticism affects audit quality. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Sari et al., (2015); Handayani & Merkusiwati, (2015); Dharmadiaksa & Utama, (2017) which states that the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism has an influence on audit quality. Thus, the

second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H5: There is a significant influence of the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism on the quality of the audit at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### **The relationship between auditor experience and audit quality attitudes mediated by professional skepticism**

The audit experience possessed by the auditor is important for him to increase his knowledge in completing each audit finding. Knowledge from this experience tends to make the auditor understand the problems he gets in carrying out the audit. This condition will increase his skepticism to obtain more complete information about the financial statements being audited, so that it will produce audit quality as expected. Dharmadiaksa & Utama's research, (2017) states that professional skepticism mediates the effect of auditor experience on audit quality. Thus, the second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H5: There is a significant effect of skepticism on the professionalism of auditors mediating the effect of auditor experience on audit quality at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

### **The relationship between auditor competence and audit quality attitudes mediated by professional skepticism**

When the auditor has good competence related to the audit work he does, his attitude of professional skepticism will increase which in turn will encourage quality audit results. In other words, the more competent the auditors will create a skeptical attitude towards all the evidence and information they receive, and the auditor will validate the evidence and information to provide final conclusions on the audit reports they do. This will certainly create an excellent audit quality. This is in accordance with the results of research

conducted by Rifoaffa & Zaldin, (2020) which states that the attitude of professional skepticism of auditors can mediate the effect of competence on audit quality. Thus, the second hypothesis of this research can be formulated as follows:

H6: There is a significant effect of skepticism on the professionalism of auditors mediating the effect of auditor competence on audit quality at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at a public accounting firm operating in the city of Medan. This study uses the auditor's perception of audit experience, the competence of the auditor, the attitude of professional skepticism of the auditor which is associated with the quality of the resulting audit. It is known that there are 23 public accounting firms that have obtained permits from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia as of June 2021. Of the 23 public accounting firms, there are 201 active auditors. In determining the number of samples, this study uses the Slovin technique, with a sampling error rate of 5% (0.05), so the resulting number of samples is 133 respondents. While the sampling technique used simple random sampling.

This research instrument uses a questionnaire distributed to auditors who are active in the city of Medan. Previously, this instrument had fulfilled the assumption of validity testing with a significance less than 0.05 and reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha greater than 0.70.

The analysis technique to answer the research hypothesis is using analysis (path analysis). This technique is effective and appropriate to determine either directly or indirectly the effect of exogenous variables with endogenous variables. However, to determine the level of significance of the indirect effect, the Sobel test was used. The

path analysis equation model in this study is divided into 2 sub-structures as follows:

$$Y_1 = \beta_{y_1x_1} X_1 + \beta_{y_1x_2} X_2 + \epsilon_1$$

Substructure Model 1

$$Y_2 = \beta_{y_2x_1} X_1 + \beta_{y_2x_2} X_2 + \beta_{y_2y_1} Y_1 + \epsilon_2$$

Substructure Model 2

Explanation:

Y1 = Auditor Professional Skepticism

Y2 = Audit Quality

X1 = Audit Experience

X2 = Auditor Competence

$\epsilon_1$  = Margin Error Substructure Model 1

$\epsilon_2$  = Margin Error Substructure Model 2

The results of the path analysis test and the Sobel test can be interpreted, if all the assumptions in the test are met. The assumptions for testing the requirements of this research model are testing the normality of the data to see the even distribution of the data in the population, testing the multicollinearity to see the relationship between variables using the value of variance of inter-factor diagnostic collinearity, and testing heteroscedasticity to see the level of homogeneity of the population using the Glejser test.

## RESULTS

### Research Instrument Measurement

This research is a survey research using the research instrument is a questionnaire. This study examines the perceptions of the auditors who are active in the city of Medan in relation to the experience of the auditor, the competence of the auditor, the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism and the quality of the audit that has been carried out by the auditor. The results of the instrument test use the r product moment test to test the validity of the instrument and use Cronbach Alpha to test the consistency level of the instrument measuring each variable. The test results can be seen in the following table:

**Tabel 1. Validity and Reliability Testing**

Variable	Number of Instruments	Research Instrument Testing Results					Conclusion
		Research Instrument Validity			Research Instrument Reliability		
		r <sub>hitung</sub>	Cut Off	Sig	Cronbach Alpha	Cut Off	
Auditor Experience	6	0,664**	0,170	0,000	0,761	0,700	Fulfilling Assumptions
		0,784**		0,000			
		0,674**		0,000			
		0,675**		0,000			
		0,684**		0,000			
		0,566**		0,000			
Auditor Competence	6	0,612**	0,170	0,000	0,792	0,700	Fulfilling Assumptions
		0,682**		0,000			
		0,736**		0,000			
		0,802**		0,000			
		0,663**		0,000			
		0,699**		0,000			
The attitude of skepticism	6	0,697**	0,170	0,000	0,755	0,700	Fulfilling Assumptions
		0,770**		0,000			
		0,716**		0,000			
		0,690**		0,000			
		0,688**		0,000			
		0,366**		0,000			
Audit Quality	8	0,627**	0,170	0,000	0,747	0,700	Fulfilling Assumptions
		0,607**		0,000			
		0,590**		0,000			
		0,652**		0,000			
		0,589**		0,000			
		0,548**		0,000			
		0,654**		0,000			
		0,550**		0,000			

Note: \*\* p < 0,01

Table 1 shows that all of the research instruments have a probability value (p) less than 0.01 with a Cronbach Alpha value greater than 0.700 so it can be concluded that all of these instruments meet the assumptions. Thus, all of these instruments are stated to be able to measure the variables in this study.

### Path Analysis Test

This analysis is used to see the influence and relationship between exogenous variables and endogenous variables in this study. The results of the path analysis test can be seen in the following table:

**Table 2. Path Analysis Model Test Results**

Model Substructure	Endogenous Variables	Error Model (E)		Fit Model (Anova Test)	Coef.	Coef. Error	Sig.
		R <sup>2</sup>	E				
I	Auditor Experience	0,559	0,441	0,000**	0,332	0,060	0,000**
	Auditor Competence				0,531	0,051	0,000**
II	Auditor Experience	0,523	0,477	0,000**	0,305	0,103	0,000**
	Auditor Competence				0,240	0,097	0,005**
	The attitude of skepticism				0,305	0,138	0,001**
Experience ← Skepticisme ← Audit Quality					0,101		0,040*
Competence ← Skepticisme ← Audit Quality					0,162		0,031*

Note: \*\* p < 0,01; \* p < 0,05

Table 2 shows the results of the path analysis test in this study. It is known that this path analysis model is formed from 2 substructures of the regression analysis model. In the substructure of the first regression model, the Anova test resulted in a p value of less than 0.01 so it can be stated that the path analysis model of this study

was fit with a model error value of 0.441. The model error value is quite high, but not greater than 0.5 so that the first regression model is worthy of further interpretation. Then in the substructure of the second regression model, the Anova test produces a p value less than 0.01 so it can be stated that the path analysis model of this study is fit



with a model error value of 0.477. The error value of the model is quite high, but not greater than 0.5 so that this second regression model is worthy of further interpretation.

By using the data in Table 2, it can be arranged the analysis model of this research path as follows:

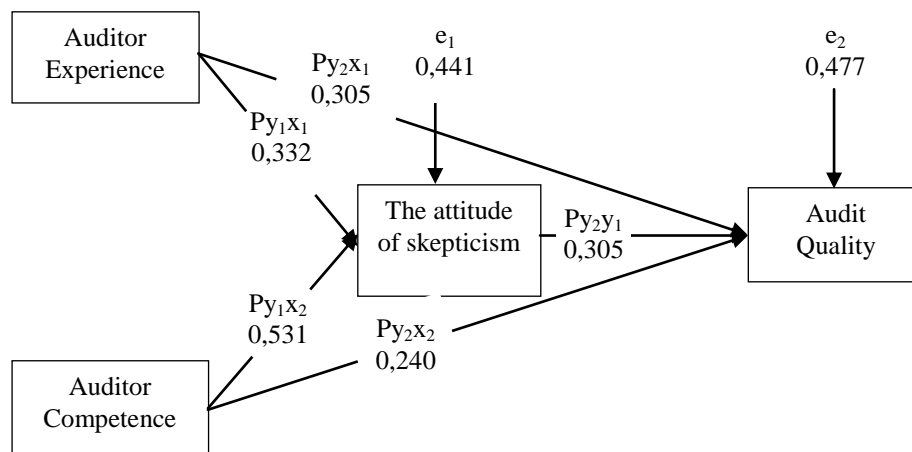


Figure 1. Path Analysis Model

### Hypothesis Test

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the experience of the auditor has a significant direct effect on the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism. The conclusion is seen from the p value  $< 0.01$  with a positive direction of influence, while the magnitude of the effect of the auditor's experience with the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism is 0.332. Then the results of the next study show that auditor competence has a significant direct effect on the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism. These results are seen from the p value  $< 0.01$  (see table 2) with a positive direction of influence, while the influence of auditor competence on the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism is 0.531. It can be seen that competence is the dominant variable affecting the auditor's professionalism skepticism attitude variable.

Judging from the other results, it can be seen that the experience of the auditor has a significant direct effect on audit quality. The results of this test are based on the p value  $< 0.01$  (see table 2) with a positive direction of influence, while the effect of auditor experience on auditor

quality is 0.305. Furthermore, from the results of testing the competence variable, it is known that competence has a significant direct effect on audit quality. The results of this test are based on the p value  $< 0.01$  (see table 2) with a positive direction of influence, while the influence of auditor competence on auditor quality is 0.240. Other test results show that the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism has a significant direct effect on audit quality. The results of this test are based on the p value  $< 0.01$  (see table 2) with a positive direction of influence, while the influence of the auditor's professionalism skepticism on audit quality is 0.305.

Overall, exogenous variables have a positive and significant direct effect on the endogenous variables. In other words, the variables of auditor experience, auditor competence and skepticism of auditor professionalism are explanatory variables for audit quality. This means that the results of this study indicate a match between expectations and reality or the results of this study have confirmed the theory used.

Furthermore, it is necessary to determine the level of significance and the magnitude of the indirect effect between

exogenous variables, mediating variables and their endogenous variables. It can be seen that the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism mediates the direct effect of the auditor's experience on audit quality, with a p value of  $<0.05$  (see table 2), with a large indirect effect of 0.101. So it can be said that the experience of the auditor will encourage the growth of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism which ultimately results in a quality audit that has a presentation opportunity of 0.101x compared to other variables tested in this study. Then seen from the results of other tests, it can be seen that the attitude of skepticism of the auditor's professionalism is able to mediate the direct influence of competence on audit quality based on the p value  $<0.05$  (see table 2), with a large indirect effect of 0.162. So it can be said that the competence of auditors will encourage the growth of skepticism of auditor professionalism which in the end produces a quality audit that has a 0.162x chance of occurrence compared to other variables tested in this study.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study provide information that auditor experience and auditor competence are variables that have a direct influence on auditors' professional skepticism. These results basically support the results of research conducted by Hadi & Hardiyati, (2014); Dharmadiaksa & Utama, (2017); Basuki et al., (2020) which states that experience has a significant effect on auditors' professional skepticism. As well as research conducted by Komala & Suryani, (2019); Rifoaffa & Zaldin, (2020); Basuki et al., (2020) which shows that the results of auditor competence research have a significant effect on the attitude of auditors' professional skepticism. This means that audit experience and competence for an auditor is something that must be owned to foster an attitude of professional skepticism as an auditor who works and acts professionally.

Public Accounting Firms (KAP) should provide an equal portion to each auditor to gain experience in conducting audits. Giving this portion will ultimately benefit KAP to get a quality auditor who has good attitude and integrity. Because of the experience and competence of the auditor, one way to get it is to provide a portion of carrying out audit tasks as often as possible. Auditors who rarely get audit assignments tend not to have good quality. Of course, unqualified auditors are avoided by all KAPs because they will only give the KAP a bad image. In addition, providing training, formal and non-formal education to auditors is another way to improve the quality of auditors, which requires good audit experience and competence.

The results of other studies indicate that the auditor's experience, auditor competence and skepticism of auditor professionalism have a direct effect on audit quality. The results of this study support the results of research conducted by Furiady & Kurnia, (2015); Zahmatkesh & Rezazadeh, (2017); Kuntari et al., (2017); Susanti, (2018) which shows that auditor experience has a significant effect on audit quality. The results of this study also support the results of research conducted by Mahdi, (2014); Furiady & Kurnia, (2015); Hajering et al., (2019) which states that auditor competence has a significant effect on audit quality. And research conducted by Sari et al., (2015); Handayani & Merkusiwati, (2015); Dharmadiaksa & Utama, (2017) which states that the attitude of skepticism of auditor professionalism has an influence on audit quality. These results provide information that audit quality will be produced in the audit task process, if the auditor carrying out the task has a lot of audit experience, a very good level of competence and within the auditor there is an attitude of professional skepticism that is upheld by him, so it is not rash in making an audit conclusion decision.

An audit will be of high quality if the auditor who carries out the audit process is an auditor who controls and understands

all the audit processes he carries out. Auditors who understand and control audit operational activities tend to be skeptical of the information received, so there will be an auditor's effort to obtain information that has a very high level of validity. The auditor's skepticism is driven by the experience and competence of the auditor. In other words, the auditor's skepticism will result in a quality audit, but to increase the auditor's skepticism, the auditor must have good experience and competence related to his work and responsibilities in carrying out audit duties. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Dharmadiaksa & Utama, (2017) which states that the attitude of professional skepticism mediates the effect of auditor experience on audit quality. As well as research by Rifoaffa & Zaldin, (2020) which states that the attitude of professional skepticism of auditors can mediate the effect of competence on audit quality.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is a significant direct effect of auditor experience and auditor competence on the attitude of professional skepticism of auditors at the Medan City Public Accounting Firm (KAP). Other results show that there is a significant direct effect of auditor experience, auditor competence and skepticism of auditor professionalism on audit quality. Judging from the indirect effect, it is known that both the experience and competence of the auditors are mediated by the skepticism of the auditor's professionalism to obtain quality audit results.

So the recommendation given is that KAP provides equal opportunities to all auditors to gain a lot of experience in carrying out audit tasks. At the same time, KAP should provide equal opportunities to all auditors, whether junior, middle or senior auditors, to improve their capabilities both through formal and non-formal institutions. The experience and competence of the auditor creates a strong impetus for the

auditor to increase his skepticism. With this skepticism, the auditor will produce a quality audit. KAP has a moral responsibility to provide experience and competence to all its auditors.

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