

## A LITERATURE REVIEW OF TAX AVOIDANCE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide an overview of the development of tax avoidance research. Data is taken from publishers Emerald, Ebsco, Wiley, Springer, and Proquest database. Samples from 2005 to 2019 and 77 articles were obtained covering tax avoidance. The analysis method is through article classification by topic, source of scientific discipline, journal name, measurement of tax avoidance, distribution of article years, and references. In sum, the study results found that tax avoidance research has increased from year to year and still an exciting topic to study.

Keywords: Tax avoidance; bibliography study; accounting

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan memberikan gambaran tentang pengembangan penelitian penghindaran pajak. Data diambil dari penerbit Emerald, Ebsco, Wiley, Springer, dan Proquest. Sampel diambil dari tahun 2005 sampai dengan tahun 2019 sebanyak 77 artikel penghindaran pajak. Metode analisis melalui pengklasifikasian artikel berdasarkan topik, sumber disiplin ilmu, nama jurnal, pengukuran penghindaran pajak, distribusi tahun artikel dan referensi. Secara umum hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa penelitian penghindaran pajak telah meningkat dari tahun ke tahun dan menjadi topik penelitian yang masih menarik untuk diteliti.*

Kata Kunci : Penghindaran pajak; bibliografi; akuntansi  
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## INTRODUCTION

This study aims to provide an overview of the research development on tax avoidance abroad from 2005 to 2019 by involving articles indexed by Scimago. Until now, research related to tax avoidance has become a worldwide concern (Tang, 2019). Also, tax avoidance research has different perspectives, depending on the perspective from which tax avoidance is studied (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010). The tax avoidance phenomenon is critical to study from various perspectives because it can have a broad impact and be risky (Lanis, Rego & Wilson, 2012).

Tax avoidance can be understood as a process in which companies try to reduce income tax payments to tax organizations. Payment of taxes reduces retained earnings (Salehi, Ali Mirzaee, & Yazdani, 2017). We were referring to (Hanlon & Heitzman (2010), 12 proxies can be used to measure tax avoidance, including Current ETR (Lanis & Richardson, 2012; Minnick & Noga, 2010; Agnes Cheng, Huang, Li, & Stanfield, 2012), Cash ETR, book-tax difference (Gaaya, Lakhali, & Lakhali, 2017; Wilson, 2009). Tax avoidance proxies can also be seen through aggressiveness and to estimate unrecognized tax benefits, i.e., tax shelters (Chircop, Fabrizi, Ipino, & Parbonetti, 2018); (Gul, Khedmati, & Shams, 2018); (Boone, Khurana, & Raman, 2013); (Richardson, Lanis, & Taylor, 2015). In this study, we limit the articles to the definition of tax avoidance, and not including tax aggressiveness and tax evasion.

Previous studies found that tax avoidance is associated with aggressive financial reports (Frank, Lynch, & Rego, 2009), information transparency (Neuman, Omer, & Shelley, 2012), internal controls (Bauer, 2016), capital costs (Goh, Lee, Lim, & Shevlin, 2016), and audit fees (Donohoe & Robert Knechel, 2014), company value (Gallemore, Maydew, & Thornock, 2014; Desai & Dharmapala, 2006), spirituality, (Salehi et al. , 2017), religiosity (Huseynov & Klamm, 2012), environmental uncertainty (Huang, Sun, & Zhang, 2017), demographic characteristics (Hoseini, Safari Gerayli, & Valiyan, 2019), and governance (Zeng, 2019; Kovermann & Velte, 2019; Minnick & Noga, 2010; Adeyani & Winnie, 2016).

This study was motivated by the results of a study by Kovermann & Velte (2019) in which the results found that aspects of governance affect tax avoidance. We expand the discussion not only on aspects of governance, but also on aspects of religion and trust, politics, and marketing that become the dimensions found in tax avoidance.

This study is vital to provide an overview of the development of tax avoidance research. Finally, this research is expected to contribute to the following insights. First, this study provides evidence of tax avoidance studies conducted by various countries from 2005 - 2019. Second, this study provides evidence of tax avoidance research that can be done in Indonesia's context. We organized this study in the following structure. The first is an introduction, the second is the research methods, the third is the results and discussion, and the last is the conclusion.

## METHOD

The research method follows several stages. The first stage is searching for articles through Ebsco, Emerald, Proquest, Wiley, and Springer, and Scienedirect with the keyword "Tax Avoidance". These publishers are often large publishers who are mostly accessed by researchers. These keywords will filter the titles of articles containing the word "tax avoidance". In addition to using filtering through titles, the articles were also sought through 2005 to September 2019. The years were taken with consideration to provide information on the development of tax avoidance research. Besides, the year is determined for 14 years with consideration to provide information on tax avoidance research that is still relevant and up to date. In the second stage, we

filtered through the Scimago Index. Search results using the keyword Tax Avoidance obtained 136 articles. A total of 7 articles were not Scimago indexed, and as many as 52 articles we could not analyze because they included, for example, a literature review, or in which no tax avoidance measurement was found. Only articles indexed by Scimago are included in this literature review. In the third stage, the journals indexed by Scimago was again filtered. Based on these stages, as many as 77 articles were obtained, which can be reviewed. The articles are then grouped by topic, year, journal name, tax avoidance measurement, and tax avoidance references.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Article Classification

#### Articles based on the name of the Journal and Year

We classify articles by the year and the publishing journal. This analysis can help see the development trends of tax avoidance research from year to year and which journals most dominate tax avoidance research (Table 1). Besides, we also analyze the consistency of journals that publish studies on the theme of tax avoidance.

**Table 1. Articles based on Journal Name and Year**

No	Journal Name	Publication Year			Total
		2005-2010	2011-2015	2016-2019	
1	Accounting Review	1	1		2
2	Advances in Accounting			1	1
3	Advances in Taxation		1	2	3
4	Asian Journal of Accounting Research			2	2
5	Asian Review of Accounting		1		1
6	Borsa Istanbul Review			1	1
7	Chinese Management Studies			1	1
8	Contemporary Accounting Research		1		1
9	Corporate Governance			1	1
10	Economic Modelling		2		2
11	Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting			1	1
12	International Journal of Emerging Markets			1	1
13	International Journal of Law and Management			1	1
14	International Journal of Social Economics			1	1
15	Journal of Accounting and Economics		4	2	6
16	Journal of Accounting and Public Policy			1	1
17	Journal of Accounting Research			1	1
18	Journal of Banking and Finance		1	1	2
19	Journal of Business Ethics		1		1
20	Journal of Business Finance and Accounting			2	2
21	Journal of Business Research			1	1
22	Journal of Cleaner Production		1		1
23	Journal of Contemporary Accounting and Economics		1	2	3
24	Journal of Corporate Finance	1		2	3
25	Journal of Economic Psychology			1	1
26	Journal of Family Business Strategy			1	1
27	Journal of Financial Crime			1	1

No	Journal Name	Publication Year			Total
		2005-2010	2011-2015	2016-2019	
28	Journal of Financial Economics	1	2		3
29	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation			2	2
30	Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money			1	1
31	Journal of Multinational Financial Management			1	1
32	Journal of Public Affairs			1	1
33	Journal of the American Taxation Association		1	1	2
34	Managerial Auditing Journal			1	1
35	North American Journal of Economics and Finance			1	1
36	Pacific-Basin Finance Journal			1	1
37	Quality and Quantity			1	1
38	Review of Accounting and Finance		1	1	2
39	Review of Accounting Studies			2	2
40	Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting			1	1
41	Accounting Forum	1			1
42	Journal of Development Economics		1		1
43	Journal of International Accounting		1		1
44	Journal of Urban Economics		1		1
45	Scandinavian Journal of Economics			1	1
46	Journal of International Accounting		1		1
47	Financial Management			1	1
48	Journal of Corporate Accounting and Finance			1	1
49	Accounting and Finance			1	1
50	ABACUS			3	3
51	Social Responsibility Journal			3	3
Total		4	22	51	77

Based on Table 1 above, the distribution of tax avoidance research dominated the discussion from 2017 to 2019. In 2017, there were 11 studies. In 2018, there were 12 studies, and in 2019 to October, there were 11 studies from various journals. Based on our observation, starting from 2009, tax avoidance research has continued to be of interest to researchers. This is evident from the fact that tax avoidance research continues to increase from year to year.

The Journal of Accounting and Economics dominates journals that publish tax avoidance articles. A total of 6 articles have been published through this journal. The Journal of Accounting and Economics is a Scopus-indexed journal with Q1 ranking, thus attracting researchers' interest to publish articles in the journal. The next highest-ranking journals that publish tax avoidance articles, in order, are the Social Responsibility Journal, Journal of Corporate Finance, and Journal of Contemporary Accounting and Economics, and Advances in Taxation. A total of 3 articles were published through these journals. Interestingly from the results of filtering these articles, based on Table 1 above, in 2011, there was no article related to tax avoidance published in Scimago-indexed international journals. Besides, from 2005 to 2009, there was no article related to tax avoidance published in Scimago-indexed international journals.

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However, the most consistent journal for the past ten years of publishing articles with tax avoidance is the Journal of Accounting and Economics, which published four articles in the 2010-2015 period and two articles in the 2016-2019 period. Besides, the Advances in Taxation journal was also recorded to consistently issue articles with the theme of tax avoidance, i.e., 1 article in the 2010-2015 period and two articles in the 2016-2019 period. Journal of Financial Economics consistently published articles with the theme of tax avoidance in the early years before 2010. After 2010, however, this journal did not publish articles with the theme of tax avoidance. Thus, based on the consistency of article publishing, we can conclude that the journals which consistently publish articles with the theme of tax avoidance are Review of Accounting and Finance, Journal of the American Taxation Association, Journal of Financial Economics, Journal of Contemporary Accounting and Economics, Journal of Corporate Finance, Journal of Accounting and Economics, and Advances in Taxation and Accounting Review.

### Articles based on Research topics

Table 2 below illustrates the distribution of articles based on research topics. We classify articles based on auditing, behavior, employment, capital markets, marketing, politics, information systems, religiosity, ownership structure, social responsibility, good governance, and others. This analysis is essential to see the distribution or extent of avoidance topics in other fields. Besides, we also provide information on the most dominant topics, which at least discuss tax avoidance.

**Table 2. Distribution of articles based on research topics**

No	Topics	2005-2010	2011-2015	2016-2019	Total	%
1	Auditing		1 (100%)		1	1 %
2	Behavior	1 (10%)	3 (18%)	9 (72%)	13	17 %
3	Employment		1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2	3%
4	Capital Market		7 (43%)	8 (57%)	14	18%
5	Marketing			2 (100%)	2	3%
6	Politics		1 (25%)	2 (75%)	3	3%
7	Information systems		1 (100%)		1	1%
8	Spiritual and religiosity		1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2	3%
9	Ownership structure	1 (12%)		7 (88%)	7	10%
10	Social responsibility		3 (20%)	8 (80%)	12	16%
11	Good governance	1 (10%)	2 (18%)	8 (72%)	11	14%
12	Other	1 (11%)	3(33%)	4 (55 %)	8	10%
	Total	4 (5%)	23 (29%)	50 (66%)	77	100%

Based on Table 2 above, studies on tax avoidance have expanded to various fields. The examples are in the fields of politics, information systems, marketing, and even employment issues. Tax avoidance studies are dominated by capital market topics, CEO behavior or top management, social responsibility, good governance, and ownership structures. As many as 14 articles, or about 18% of the tax avoidance topics, are related to capital market activities. Examples of such articles are studies conducted by Agnes Cheng et al. (2012) and Blaufus, Möhlmann, & Schwäbe (2019). A total of 13 articles, or about 17% of the topic of tax avoidance, is related to top management or CEO behavior. Examples of such articles are research conducted by Dyreng, Hanlon, & Maydew (2010), Chyz (2013), Evertsson (2016), Gaertner (2014). A total of 12 articles, or

about 16% of articles are linking tax avoidance to the topic of social responsibility. Some of the examples are studies by Laguir, Staglianò, & Elbaz (2015), Lanis & Richardson (2015), Hasan, Hoi, Wu, & Zhang (2017). Furthermore, 11 articles are linking tax avoidance to corporate governance. The examples are studies by Minnick & Noga (2010), Armstrong, Blouin, Jagolinzer, & Larcker (2015), and Badertscher, Katz, & Rego (2013). This study's results are in line with the results of Kovermann & Velte (2019), that tax avoidance research is exciting to be discussed through the topic of corporate governance.

Research topics rarely associated with tax avoidance are studies on employment, politics, marketing, and information systems. On average, only 1 or 2 articles were published in the period 2005 to 2019. For the research topics that we cannot define, we categorize them into other topics. There are eight articles, or around 10 percent of the articles that we have collected are classified into other topics. One of these articles discusses the closeness between the head office and branches with the tax supervision office (IRS) against tax avoidance (Kubick, Lockhart, Mills, & Robinson, 2017; Rohlin, Rosenthal, & Ross, 2014), and patents company (Gao, Yang, & Zhang, 2016).

### Distribution of articles based on tax avoidance measures

Table 3 aims to analyze the tax avoidance proxies most widely used by researchers based on research topics. We identified several tax avoidance measures, including Effective Tax Rate, Effective Tax Rate, Book-Tax Difference, Residual Book-Tax Difference, Permanent Book-Tax Difference, Long Run Effective Tax Rate, GAAP Effective Tax Rate, Shelter, and UTB.

**Table 3. Distribution of articles based on proxy measurement of tax avoidance**

No	Topics	Tax Avoidance Proxy										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	Auditing		1									
2	Behavior	5	8	4	3	3	2	1	1	1		
3	Employment	1	2	2	1							
4	Capital Market	4	8	9	5	2	2			2	5	
5	Marketing	1	2	1		1		1	1			
6	Politics	2	1	1				1				
7	Information systems		1									
8	Religiosity	1	1			1	1					1
9	Ownership structure	5	4	3	1			1		1		
10	Social responsibility	8	2	8	1	1		1	1			2
11	Good governance	4	7	2	5	1	1		1	2		
12	Other	3	3	3				2	1			2
	Total	34	40	33	16	9	6	7	5	6	11	

Note:

1. ETR = Effective Tax Rate/Current ETR
2. CETR = Cash Effective Tax Rate
3. BTD = Book-Tax Difference/Discretionary Book-Tax Difference
4. GAAP ETR = GAAP Effective Tax Rate
5. Shelter
6. UTB = Unrecognized Tax Benefit
7. RESBTD = Residual Book-Tax Difference
8. PERMBTD = Permanent Book-Tax Difference

9. LongRun ETR

10. Others = Tax expense to operating Cashflow, tax paid to operating cash flow, Diff STR, Transfer Pricing Aggressiveness, Tax Return ETR Adjusted, Diff STR

Table 3 above illustrates the proxy most often used in the measurement of tax avoidance. Based on Table 3, on average, each research topic uses a useful tax rate proxy, effective cash tax rate, and book-tax difference. Studies on tax avoidance on the topic of auditing only uses the CASH ETR proxy. Studies on tax avoidance also use diverse tax avoidance proxies. However, most proxies used are Current ETR, CASH ETR, and Book-Tax Difference. From the articles collected, the least used proxy is Discretionary Book-Tax Difference (DTAX). The use of DTAX proxy is usually associated with earnings management activities in the company.

On the other hand, referring to studies by Hanlon & Heitzman (2010) and Oktavia, Siregar, Wardhani, & Rahayu (2019), many proxies can be used to measure tax avoidance. Those proxies are ETR (effective tax rate), Current ETR, CASH ETR, Long Run CASH ETR, Differential ETR, Discretionary Book-Tax Difference, Book-Tax Difference, Temporary Book-Tax Difference, BTDA Abnormal, Unrecognized Tax Benefit (UTB), Shelter and Marginal Tax. According to Hanlon & Heitzman (2010), ETR, Current ETR, CASH ETR, LRETR, or ETR Differential proxies have weaknesses. First, it does not distinguish between real activities that lead to tax savings or tax avoidance activities deliberately designed to reduce tax and lobbying activities that result in tax reductions. Second, it cannot capture tax avoidance behavior because the denominator uses book values. Third, it can cause a mismatch between the numerator and the denominator if cash paid for tax costs includes tax payments for the previous period's income. However, using the UTB proxy is only used for cases in the United States, making it suitable for similar countries like the United States.

**Distribution of articles based on tax avoidance references**

We analyzed the articles based on the references used. This study refers to the literature review proposed by Baldvinsdottir, Hagberg, Johansson, Jonäll, & Marton (2011). This analysis aims to provide an overview of the most widely used references to measure tax avoidance.

**Table 4. Reference tax avoidance used**

No	Reference	Use in articles
1	Dyreng et al. (2008)	21
2	Chen et al. (2010)	12
3	Rego and Wilson (2012)	7
4	Frank et al. (2009)	8
5	Lanis & Richardson (2011)	5
6	Hanlon and Heitzman (2010)	17
7	Desai and Dharmapala (2006)	15
8	Wilson's (2009)	10
9	Manzon-Plesko (2002)	5

Table 4 above provides reference information on tax avoidance. Based on Table 4 above, tax avoidance refers the most to Dyreng et al. (2010) with 21 times, Hanlon & Heitzman (2010) 17 times, Chen, Chen, Cheng, & Shevlin (2010) 12 times, Desai & Dharmapala (2006) 15 times, Wilson (2009) 5 times, and others. Another reference used



but does not dominate tax avoidance articles is the research conducted by Kim, Li, & Zhang (2011). Kim, Li, & Zhang (2011) formulate a model in measuring tax avoidance through tax shelters. Kim et al.'s model can predict tax sheltering events. The tax avoidance proxy recommended by Dyreng et al. (2010) and Hanlon & Heitzman (2010) measures tax avoidance using current ETR tax. Current ETR tax is obtained from the division of current income tax expense or current income tax expense by profit before tax. Current income tax expense is income tax expense calculated based on tax rates multiplied by taxable income. The approach of Wilson (2009) is more widely used to measure tax sheltering. The approach (Wilson, 2009) uses modeling by involving Book-Tax Difference, Discretionary Accrual, Leverage, Return on Assets, and Research & Development variables. The measurement recommended by Desai & Dharmapala (2006) uses the Discretionary Book-Tax Difference to calculate tax avoidance. Meanwhile, the measurement used by Rego & Wilson (2012) uses the Total Book-Tax Difference. Total Book-Tax Difference is obtained from income before tax less estimated income tax plus tax rates determined under the Act. The calculation results are then divided by total assets. The measurement of tax avoidance recommended by Manzon & Plesko (2001) uses the Book-Tax Difference. The Book-Tax Difference is regressed on changes in net sales, gross property, factories and equipment (PP&E), the ratio of net PP&E to gross PP&E, changes in goodwill, intangible assets, goodwill, changes in post-retirement benefits, changes in net operating losses that are not using pre-tax income from abroad, fewer total PP&E and intangible assets, and dummy variables for pre-tax income. High residuals from the regression model indicate tax avoidance.

#### Articles based on the discipline of scientific sources

We classify articles from the discipline of scientific sources based on the sources of economics, economics and auditing, economics and finance, economics and marketing, economics and politics, economics and information systems, economics and sociology, economics and religiosity, and economics and the military. We adopt and develop classifications made by Herawati & Bandi (2017). Table 5 below presents articles based on the discipline of the source of knowledge.

**Table 5. Articles based on the discipline of scientific sources**

No	The discipline of scientific sources	2005-2010	2011-2015	2016-2019	Total	%
1	Economics	4 (10%)	8 (23%)	27 (68%)	39	52%
2	Economics and Auditing		1 (100%)		1	1%
3	Economics and finance		7 (35%)	11 (65%)	18	22%
4	Economics and Marketing			2 (100%)	2	3%
5	Economics and Politics		1 (100%)		1	1%
6	Economics and Information systems		1 (100%)		1	1%
7	Economics and Sociology		3 (35%)	9 (25%)	12	16%
8	Economics and religiosity		1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2	3%
9	Economics and Military			1 (100%)	1	1%
	Total	4 (5%)	22 (29%)	51 (66%)	77	100%

Based on Table 5 above, articles discussing tax avoidance are dominated by articles with the discipline of the source of knowledge from economics in general. As many as 52% or as many as 39 articles were successfully analyzed. These were articles

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from the discipline of economics. The review of these articles links tax avoidance with macroeconomic conditions. A total of 18 articles, or about 22 percent, are articles from the discipline of economics and finance. These articles link tax avoidance with financial statements or financial conditions (Bandyopadhyay, Chen, Huang, & Jha, 2010; Richardson, Taylor, & Lanis, 2015). The third most articles from the scientific discipline were taxation articles regarding the disciplines of economics and sociology, especially social responsibility. A total of 12 articles, or about 16% of the total articles, link tax avoidance with social responsibility (Laguir et al., 2015), (Lanis & Richardson, 2015), (Xia, Cao, & Chan, 2017). Other research links tax avoidance with scientific disciplines such as politics, religiosity, military, marketing, and information systems. However, based on Table 5 above, these studies are still very few. For tax avoidance articles associated with military disciplines, for example, only 1 article was collected during the range from 2005 to 2019 (Law & Mills, 2017).

The source of economics is also consistent in discussing tax avoidance from year to year. During the 2005-2010 period, there were four articles, or 10% of the total articles, during the 2005-2019 period that were successfully analyzed. During the 2011-2015 period, there were eight articles, or 20% of the total articles during the 2005-2019 period that were successfully analyzed. From 2016 to October 2019, 27 articles, or 52% of the total articles during 2005-2019, were successfully analyzed. Seeing this percentage, the topic of tax avoidance tends to increase from year to year, and in general, was discussed through the discipline of economics. The tabulation presented in Table 5 above also finds that tax avoidance is the least discussed through economics and politics, military, religiosity, auditing, and information systems. Thus, it can be concluded that the discussion of tax avoidance is largely discussed through economics in general, finance, and sociology, and only a few are discussed through economics and politics, military, religiosity, auditing, and information systems.

## CONCLUSION

Scimago indexes the articles that we have collected. Based on the mapping analysis of the collected articles, we conclude that tax avoidance studies from year to year continues to increase. The topics that interest researchers mostly consist of capital markets, corporate governance, social responsibility, and the CEO or top management's behavior. Only a few tax avoidance type of research were found that discussed religiosity, military, political, and even marketing aspects.

Studies on tax avoidance abroad use measurement proxies that refer to Dyreng et al. (2010) with an occurrence of 21 times, Hanlon & Heitzman (2010) 17 times, Chen et al. (2010) 12 times, Desai & Dharmapala (2006) 15 times, and Wilson (2009) 5 times. Another reference used but does not dominate the tax avoidance article is Kim et al. (2011). This reference used tax avoidance measurement that refers to the long-term time dimension. It uses the five-year dimension of the amount of tax paid and the amount of cash flow from operating activities generated to measure tax avoidance. On the other hand, the discussion of tax avoidance is dominated by articles with the discipline of the source of knowledge from economics. As many as 52% or as many as 39 articles of the successfully analyzed articles come from the economics discipline. The reviews of these articles link tax avoidance with macroeconomic conditions. A total of 18 articles, or about 22 percent, are articles from the discipline of economics and finance. These articles link tax avoidance with financial statements or financial conditions. Studies in the Indonesian context can replicate studies abroad with a focus on measuring tax avoidance. For example, in banking, Indonesian researchers can use a

Shelter proxy or use other theories such as psychology and social studies. Our current study is relevant for researchers with the same theme. We provide information on the relationship of tax avoidance with other topics.

This study has limitations. First, the researchers exclude articles that do not explicitly measure tax avoidance through financial data. Second, the classification of disciplines of knowledge sources and research topics is still based on the researchers' judgment. This study is expected to have positive implications for further research. First is by emphasizing that tax avoidance research is still an interesting issue to study. There are still many rarely studied topics such as religiosity, politics, military, and marketing with e-commerce, which can be used for further research under Indonesia's context. Second, referring to Hanlon & Heitzman (2010) and Herawati & Bandi (2017), the research in taxation can still be developed with a variety of theories, not only from economics. Thus, this study opens up opportunities for researchers to study tax avoidance through various theories, for example, marketing theory and behavioral theory.

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