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The Influence of Good Corporate Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility on Tax Avoidance with Political Connections as a Moderating Variable

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the relationship between GCG and CSR on tax avoidance, with political connections as a moderating variable. The study employs a quantitative approach using Moderated Regression Analysis. The data were obtained from annual reports of companies selected through purposive sampling, resulting in a total of 96 observations from 16 companies over a six-year period. The findings indicate that GCG has a negative and significant effect on tax avoidance suggesting that the better the corporate governance practices the lower the likelihood of companies engaging in tax avoidance. Conversely, CSR is not proven to affect tax avoidance indicating that corporate social activities have not yet played a role in enhancing tax compliance. In addition, political connections are not able to moderate the relationship between GCG or CSR and tax avoidance, implying that closeness to political actors does not influence the effectiveness of governance practices or CSR initiatives in reducing opportunistic tax-related behaviors.

Keywords: tax avoidance, GCG, CSR, political connections.

INTRODUCTION

Tax avoidance is a serious global issue because it harms the state when companies fail to fulfill their tax obligations. One common method used in tax avoidance is transfer pricing, which involves shifting profits to countries with lower tax rates. Transfer pricing is carried out, for example, by setting selling or purchasing prices that do not reflect market values. As a result, the home country suffers losses because companies do not pay taxes in accordance with their actual profits. Tax avoidance practices can occur through exploiting differences in tax regulations across countries, such as by shifting business activities to low-tax jurisdictions. To curb such practices, Indonesia issued Government Regulation No. 55 of 2022, which includes five prevention instruments, with transfer pricing supervision being the most crucial (Bauer, 2016). The Tax Justice Network estimates that Indonesia loses approximately US$4.86 billion (Rp68.7 trillion) annually due to tax avoidance, with the majority coming from corporate

taxpayers at US$4.78 billion (Rp67.6 trillion) and the remainder from individual taxpayers at US$78.83 million (Rp1.1 trillion). Multinational companies also frequently shift profits to countries with very low tax rates to reduce the amount of tax reported and paid (Astuti & Nafis, 2024).

The phenomenon of tax avoidance by corporate taxpayers in Indonesia can be seen in several major corporate cases. PT Toyota Motor Manufacturing, the parent company of Astra International Tbk, is suspected of using transactions with affiliated companies to redirect sales to Toyota Motor Asia Pacific Ltd in Singapore before entering the Philippine and Thai markets. This transfer pricing strategy takes advantage of Singapore's low tax rates as a tax haven (Awaliah et al., 2022). Another case occurred at PT Adaro Energy Tbk, which in 2019 was accused of shifting approximately US$125 million abroad, resulting in lower tax payments than its actual obligations (Wahyuningtias et al., 2025). PT Kaltim Prima Coal was also suspected of selling coal to its subsidiary in the Cayman Islands at lower prices to reduce taxable income. These practices reduce reported profits and diminish state revenue.

This phenomenon indicates that tax avoidance is widespread, particularly in the mining sector. This sector is a vital pillar of the economy, requiring substantial investment and contributing significantly to state revenue. The profits of mining companies serve as indicators of firm value that attract investors, making tax avoidance practices potentially influential on investor perception while also harming the state (Keristina et al., 2024). Although the mining sector in Indonesia generates substantial economic value, its tax contribution remains relatively low. In the first quarter of 2019, the sector contributed only Rp33.43 trillion to the national tax revenue of Rp160.62 trillion (Setiawati & Ammar, 2022). PricewaterhouseCoopers Indonesia also reported that 70% of the 40 major mining companies had not implemented tax transparency. Indonesia is the world's fifth-largest coal producer, with an output of 485 million tons (7.2% of global production), and the second-largest coal exporter after Australia, exporting 80% of its production. This imbalance between economic value and tax contribution indicates a risk of tax avoidance practices.

Good Corporate Governance (GCG) is a crucial element in encouraging companies to comply with tax obligations. GCG functions to direct and control companies through accountability mechanisms toward stakeholders (Purnamawati et al., 2017; Dwiridotjahjono, 2009) implementation of GCG can strengthen stakeholder trust and create a healthy business climate (Gayatri & Yuniarta, 2024; Hidayah et al., 2023). Corporate governance in this case has been considered as a part that plays a very essential role for company management, stakeholders and also provides great benefits for the board of directors (Stiawan et al., 2025). The audit committee, according to the Indonesian GCG Guidelines (2006), plays a strategic role in ensuring the quality of financial reports, the implementation of GCG principles, and the effectiveness of corporate oversight. With these functions, the audit committee holds strong potential to prevent reporting irregularities, including tax avoidance (Carolina et al., 2014). Effective GCG fosters transparency and accountability, aligning the interests of all parties and minimizing tax avoidance practices.

Various studies have shown mixed findings regarding the influence of corporate governance on tax avoidance. Prastya & Handayani (2024) found that GCG influences tax avoidance in mining companies. Ichwan et al. (2023) also demonstrated a negative effect of GCG on tax aggressiveness in the healthcare sector. However, other studies report different results. Kudiono & Prasasyaningsih (2021) found that GCG, proxied by the proportion of independent commissioners, does not affect tax avoidance. Suwandi (2021) also reported that GCG has no effect on tax avoidance. Similarly, Jamilah & Agustini (2024) found that GCG, measured using proxies of independent commissioners and audit committees, does not influence tax avoidance practices.

H_1: GCG has a negative and significant effect on tax avoidance

CSR represents a company's commitment to consider social and environmental impacts as part of its business strategy to maximize benefits and minimize harm (Werastuti et al., 2024). CSR disclosure through various media serves as a form of accountability to stakeholders and an effort to maintain the company's reputation (Pramita & Susanti, 2023). Pressure to disclose non-financial information, particularly related to CSR initiatives, has continued to increase (Seow, 2024). Although it requires financial investment, voluntary corporate spending on CSR activities can reduce the negative impacts of operations on the environment and society (Canh et al., 2019). In relation to tax avoidance, CSR encourages companies to pay taxes according to regulations as part of their social responsibility. Tax avoidance does not only reduce state revenue but also has the potential to damage a company's reputation (Kudiono & Prasasyaningsih, 2021). Tax avoidance can be carried out by management to increase short-term profits and reduce the company's tax burden. CSR, on the other hand, can enhance the company's reputation and long-term value. Therefore, companies with higher levels of CSR tend to have lower incentives to engage in tax avoidance.

Research on the influence of CSR on tax avoidance shows inconsistent results. Hidayati & Fidiana (2017) and Pramita & Susanti (2023) found that CSR positively affects tax avoidance. Conversely, Kudiono & Prasasyaningsih (2021) reported that CSR measured using GRI 4 disclosure has a negative effect on tax avoidance. Similarly, (Azahra & Handayani, 2023) found a negative relationship between CSR and tax avoidance. Meanwhile, (Ishak & Asalam, 2023) revealed that CSR has no effect on tax avoidance.

H_2: CSR has a negative and significant effect on tax avoidance

According to positive accounting theory, particularly the political cost hypothesis, large companies are more likely to take actions that reduce accounting profits to decrease political attention or pressure. One way to do this is by increasing CSR expenses as a form of profit allocation. Large companies are also more likely to have political connections, meaning that shareholders, executives, or related parties have relationships with parliament members, ministers, or political parties. Political connections may encourage companies to engage in aggressive tax avoidance due to the perception of preferential treatment and a lower risk of tax audits (Ishak & Asalam, 2023). In the Indonesian context, companies with political connections often gain special access or treatment from the government (Apriliani & Wulandari, 2023). With such support, politically connected companies can more easily conduct transactions with related parties for various strategic purposes, including those that potentially reduce tax obligations (Hadiyarroyyan, 2022). However, political experience in management may also encourage more cautious behavior, as these relationships lead managers to make decisions that align with government policies and avoid overly aggressive tax-avoidance strategies (Diningrum & Kurniawati, 2024).

Studies on the influence of political connections on tax avoidance also show mixed results. Several studies such as (Darmawansyah, 2019), (Aynda, 2020) and (Manihuruk & Novita, 2022) found that political connections increase a company's tendency to engage in tax avoidance. However, other studies such as (Apriliani & Wulandari, 2023), (Priady, 2020) found that political connections do not affect tax-avoidance practices.

H_3: Political connections weaken the significant negative effect of GCG on tax avoidance

H_4: Political connections weaken the significant negative effect of CSR on tax avoidance

Agency theory is closely related to tax-avoidance practices because it explains the relationship between the principal (shareholders) and the agent (management), who work together to achieve corporate objectives, particularly profit maximization (Palgunadi et al., 2024). The principal delegates authority to the agent to manage the company through a contractual relationship that forms an agency relationship (Prastya & Handayani, 2024).

However, this relationship often creates information asymmetry because management possesses more information than the owners. This condition can trigger opportunistic actions by managers. In preparing financial statements, management may be opportunistically motivated to increase profits to obtain incentives or motivated to signal strong performance to investors through high-quality reporting (Aryotama & Firmansyah, 2020). The conflict of interest between the principal and the agent becomes more apparent when the company must pay taxes, as agents tend to minimize tax expenses even when doing so may pose risks to the company.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating political connections as a moderating variable in the relationship between GCG, CSR, and tax avoidance. Ubaidillah (2022) showed that political connections can moderate the relationship between earnings management, profitability, and tax avoidance in manufacturing companies. This finding provides the foundation that financial aspects can be influenced by political connections in driving tax avoidance. This study expands the context by examining non-financial aspects GCG and CSR which fundamentally serve to reduce tax avoidance. However, the presence of political connections may weaken the negative effects of GCG and CSR on tax avoidance because it offers opportunities for companies to exploit political relationships as loopholes in taxation practices.

To date, most studies have not deeply explored how political connections moderate the relationships between GCG, CSR, and tax avoidance. In fact, political connections can influence the effectiveness of governance practices and social-responsibility activities, as well as create certain privileges that affect corporate tax behavior. Therefore, this study is important to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of GCG and CSR in reducing tax avoidance and to explain the moderating mechanism of political connections. Besides enriching the literature in the Indonesian context which has unique economic and political characteristics this research is expected to offer clearer insights for regulators, businesses, and stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of GCG and CSR as instruments for controlling tax avoidance, particularly in politically connected companies. The findings of this study may also serve as a basis for developing governance strategies, integrity-based business models, and tax policies that are more adaptive, transparent, and equitable.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative design, aiming to examine the causal relationship between GCG and CSR on tax avoidance, as well as to assess the role of political connections as a moderating variable. The research population consists of all mining-sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) during the 2019–2024 period. Through purposive sampling, 16 companies that met the research criteria were selected, resulting in a total of 96 financial-report observations across the six-year study period. The research data were collected using documentation methods by reviewing annual reports, sustainability reports, and other relevant financial information needed to construct the dataset. Subsequently, data analysis was conducted using Moderated Regression Analysis to test the moderating effect of political connections on the relationships among the variables. Statistical processing and testing were carried out using STATA software to ensure that the analytical results are measurable, accurate, and aligned with quantitative research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting the hypothesis testing stage, it is necessary to first perform descriptive statistical analysis to examine the data by describing the collected variables. The results of the descriptive statistical test are presented as follows.

Table 1. Descriptive statistical test results

	Obs	*Mean*	*Std. Dev*	*Min*	*Max*
GCG (X_1)	96	0,390	0,107	0,000	0,666
CSR (X_2)	96	0,390	0,201	0,121	0,670
POC (Z)	96	0,488	0,261	0,000	1,000
TAV (Y)	96	0,761	0,453	0,000	2,319

Source: Data is processed (2025)

Note:
GCG : Good Corporate Governance
CSR : Corporate Social Resposibility
POC : Political Connection
TAV : Tax Avoidance

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical test in Table 1, the GCG variable has a minimum value of 0.000 and a maximum value of 0.666, with an average of 0.390 and a standard deviation of 0.107. The mean value, which is close to the maximum, along with the relatively small standard deviation, indicates that the implementation of GCG in mining companies listed on the IDX tends to be consistent, although there are still companies with very low governance quality. The maximum value was achieved by PT Timah Tbk (TINS) in 2019, while the minimum value was recorded by PT Central Omega Resources Tbk (DKFT) in 2024.

The CSR variable has a minimum value of 0.121 and a maximum value of 0.670, with an average of 0.390 and a standard deviation of 0.201. This average indicates that the level of CSR disclosure is in the moderate category, but the relatively high standard deviation shows substantial variation among companies. PT Aneka Tambang Tbk (2019) and PT Indo Tambangraya Megah Tbk (2019, 2021 – 2024) recorded the maximum values, while the minimum value was recorded by PT Central Omega Resources Tbk (DKFT) in 2019.

The political connection variable has a minimum value of 0.000 and a maximum value of 1.000, with an average of 0.488 and a standard deviation of 0.261. The average suggests that nearly half of the companies have political ties. The relatively high standard deviation indicates a substantial difference among companies in terms of their use of political connections. The maximum value (1.000) was recorded by several issuers, including PT Aneka Tambang (2019–2024), PT Central Omega Resources (2024), PT Bukit Asam (2019 and 2024), and PT Timah (2020 – 2022). The minimum value of 0.000 was recorded by PT Mitrabara Adiperdana (MBAP) in 2024.

The tax avoidance variable shows a minimum value of 0.000 and a maximum value of 2.319, with an average of 0.761 and a standard deviation of 0.453. The positive mean value indicates that most companies still engage in tax avoidance at certain levels. The wide range of values demonstrates significant variation among companies in their tax-avoidance practices. The maximum value of 2.319 was recorded by PT Vale Indonesia Tbk (INCO) in 2022, while the minimum value of 0.000 was recorded by PT Bumi Resources Tbk (BUMI) in 2019 and 2020.

Next, a model feasibility test was conducted using several assessments, including the Chow test and the Lagrange Multiplier test. The results of the model feasibility tests are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Model feasibility test results

Testing	Standard	Results	Selected model
Chow test	Prob Cross Section > 0,05 (CEM)	Prob Cross Section 0,000 < 0,05	Fixed Effect Model

	Prob Cross Section < 0,05 (FEM)		
Hausman Test	Prob chi2 < 0,05 (FEM) Prob chi2 > 0,05 (REM)	Prob chi2 0,7332 > 0,05	Random Effect Model
Lagrange Multipier Test	Prob chi2 < 0,05 (REM) Prob chi2 > 0,05 (CEM)	Prob chi2 0,000 < 0,05	Random Effect Model

Source: Data is processed (2025)

Referring to the results of the mode feasibility test, it was found that the selected model was the Random Effect Model (REM). Furthermore, the results of the Random Effect Model regression test are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Direct influence regression model

TAV	*Coef.*	*Std. Err*	*t*	*P>|t|*	*[95% Conf. Interval]*	
GCG (X_1)	-1,068	0,415	-2,57	0,010	-1,882	0,254
CSR (X_2)	0,374	0,375	1,00	0,319	-0,361	1,110
POC (Z)	-0,585	0,236	-2,48	0,013	-1,048	-0,122
cons	1,318	0,278	4,73	0,000	0,772	1,865

Source: Data is processed (2025)

TAV = 1,318 – 1,068GCG + 0,374CSR - 0,585POC + e … (1)

Note:
GCG : Good Corporate Governance
CSR : Corporate Social Resposibility
POC : Political Connection
TAV : Tax Avoidance

The coefficient value of the GCG variable of -1.068 indicates that for every one-unit increase in GCG, tax avoidance decreases by 106.8 percent, assuming other variables remain constant, and vice versa. The hypothesis testing for H_1 shows a probability value of 0.010 < 0.05 with a negative t-value. This means that GCG has a negative and significant effect on tax avoidance, and therefore **H_1 is accepted**.

The coefficient value of the CSR variable of 0.374 indicates that for every one-unit increase in CSR, tax avoidance increases by 37.4 percent, assuming other variables remain constant, and vice versa. The hypothesis testing for H_2 shows a probability value of 0.319 > 0.05 with a positive t-value. This indicates that CSR does not have a significant effect on tax avoidance, and therefore **H_2 is rejected.**

The moderation test aims to determine whether the moderating variable can strengthen or weaken the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The results of the regression model after including the moderating variable are presented as follows.

Tabel 4. Model regresi moderasi

TAV	*Coef.*	*Std. Err*	*t*	*P>|t|*	*[95% Conf. Interval]*	
GCG.POC	-0,850	0,495	-1,71	0,090	-1,834	0,134
CSR.POC	0,087	0,322	0,27	0,786	-0,552	0,728
cons	0,905	0,085	10,63	0,000	0,737	1,075

Source: Data is processed (2025)

TAV = 0,905 - 0,850GCG*POC + 0,087CSR*POC + e … (2)

Note:
GCG : Good Corporate Governance

CSR : Corporate Social Resposibility
POC : Political Connection
TAV : Tax Avoidance

The coefficient value of the GCG variable after including political connections is –0.850, indicating that for every one-unit increase in GCG, tax avoidance decreases by 85.0 percent indirectly through political connections, assuming other variables remain constant. The hypothesis test for H_3 shows a probability value of 0.090 > 0.05, meaning that political connections do not moderate the relationship between GCG and tax avoidance, and therefore **H_3 is rejected.**

The coefficient value of the CSR variable after including political connections is 0.087, indicating that for every one-unit increase in CSR, tax avoidance increases by 8.7 percent indirectly through political connections, assuming other variables remain constant. The hypothesis test for H_4 shows a probability value of 0.786 > 0.05, meaning that political connections do not moderate the relationship between CSR and tax avoidance, and therefore **H_4 is rejected.**

Overall, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between GCG, CSR, and political connections in influencing tax avoidance in mining companies in Indonesia. First, evidence that GCG has a significant negative effect on tax avoidance reaffirms that strong governance can restrict managerial opportunistic behavior in tax management. Mechanisms such as independent commissioners and audit committees enhance oversight effectiveness, thereby reducing tax avoidance practices. These findings align with agency theory and are supported by the studies of (Prastya & Handayani, 2024), (Ichwan et al., 2023) (Solihati et al., 2025) which confirm that better governance reduces the likelihood of tax avoidance.

In contrast to GCG, CSR is not proven to influence tax avoidance. This suggests that CSR practices in the mining sector tend to be regulatory compliance measures mandated by Law No. 40/2007, rather than ethical commitments related to fiscal compliance. Within the framework of legitimacy theory, CSR serves as a tool for gaining social acceptance rather than a mechanism to enhance tax compliance. This finding is consistent with the studies of (Achmad Hidayat & Novita, 2023), (Pratama & Wicaksono, 2021), (Nurtanto & Wulandari, 2024) and (Yusnita, 2023), which also demonstrate that CSR has no significant effect on tax avoidance.

Furthermore, the moderation analysis indicates that political connections neither strengthen nor weaken the influence of GCG on tax avoidance. This means that internal governance quality remains the dominant determinant of corporate tax behavior, regardless of political affiliations. In the mining industry, which is highly regulated, the space for political intervention in tax policy is relatively limited. These findings are consistent with (Fitriyana & Kamil, 2024), (Kartiko & Firmansyah, 2023) and (Setiawan & Sastrodiharjo, 2023), who also find that political connections do not significantly affect tax avoidance or the effectiveness of governance.

Another finding shows that political connections do not moderate the relationship between CSR and tax avoidance. Although theoretically, political connections may provide policy access or regulatory protection, in practice this variable is not strong enough to alter the CSR tax avoidance relationship. In the mining sector, CSR practices are driven more by social legitimacy needs and regulatory obligations than by political affiliations. This is consistent with the findings of (Ishak & Asalam, 2023), (Fransiska et al., 2024), (Ubaidillah, 2022) and (Widarjo et al., 2021), which indicate that political connections do not play a moderating role in the relationship between CSR and corporate tax behavior.

Taken together, this study affirms that corporate governance is the most consistent and effective internal mechanism for reducing tax avoidance practices in the mining sector.

Meanwhile, CSR and political connections do not contribute significantly, either directly or as moderating variables. These findings enrich the literature by highlighting that in highly regulated industries such as mining, governance integrity remains the primary determinant of tax compliance, while social legitimacy factors and political ties do not exert substantial influence on corporate tax avoidance strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that GCG has a negative and significant effect on tax avoidance in mining companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) during the 2019–2024 period. This indicates that the more effectively governance principles are implemented, the lower the tendency of companies to engage in tax avoidance. Meanwhile, CSR is not proven to influence tax avoidance, suggesting that the implementation of social responsibility has not yet become a factor that drives improved tax compliance. The study also shows that political connections are unable to moderate the relationship between GCG and tax avoidance, indicating that political ties do not affect the effectiveness of internal oversight in limiting opportunistic practices. A similar pattern is found in the relationship between CSR and tax avoidance, where political connections do not provide a moderating effect and therefore do not influence how socially active companies implement their tax strategies. Overall, these findings indicate that political connections are not an important determinant influencing the relationship among governance, social responsibility, and tax avoidance practices in the mining sector.

The implications are that mining companies need to strengthen GCG implementation in a more substantive manner, particularly through enhancing transparency, accountability, and the independence of the board of commissioners to minimize opportunistic actions such as tax avoidance. CSR implementation should also be oriented as part of the company's values and strategy rather than merely regulatory compliance, thereby functioning as an informal control mechanism while enhancing corporate legitimacy. Additionally, political connections should be managed carefully and directed toward productive purposes rather than used as an opportunity to evade tax obligations. Improving tax compliance also requires strengthening human resource competencies, maintaining consistent internal audits, and ensuring transparent reporting systems to uphold stakeholder trust and corporate reputation.

For future research, adding variables such as profitability, leverage, firm size, and audit quality may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing tax avoidance. Expanding the research period and industrial scope is also recommended to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Beyond quantitative methods, qualitative approaches such as interviews or case studies can offer insights into non-financial factors that are not reflected in annual reports. Developing more robust indicators of GCG, CSR, and political connections through governance indices, sustainability reports, and independent databases is also advisable to produce more objective measurements. Although rarely used due to data limitations and analytical complexity, such approaches have the potential to generate more accurate findings that better represent actual corporate practices.

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