

# Corporate Social Responsibility as a Mediating Influence of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance

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## Abstract

The main focus of this research is to investigate how corporate social responsibility, influenced by corporate governance, impacts tax evasion. This study adopts a quantitative methodology. The sampling approach utilised was purposive, resulting in the selection of 23 companies from the Energy Sector of the Indonesia Stock Exchange. Secondary data was gathered through a review of existing literature. Path analysis, aided by the SmartPLS 4 software, was employed to assess both direct and indirect effects. The findings revealed that corporate governance has a favourable impact on corporate social responsibility and tax avoidance. Additionally, corporate social responsibility plays a role in mediating the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance.

**Keywords:** Corporate Governance, Corporate Social Responsibility, Tax Avoidance

## 1. Introduction

The energy industry, which has three clarifications within it, including new, renewable and non-renewable energy, actually holds several things related to energy prices. Energy itself is universally defined as a material in various forms that must be transformed to be able to perform an activity. The concept of energy is not static and evolves with advancements in technology and society, highlighting its dynamic characteristics. This dynamism is attributed to energy following the First Law of Thermodynamics, which states that energy cannot be created or destroyed but can only change forms (Sari, 2020).

The dilemma arises when problems are identified in companies operating in the energy sector, particularly related to financial statements, raising concerns about the need for industry regulations. In 2019, tax avoidance issues came to light, with one notable case involving PT Adaro Energy Tbk and its subsidiary in Singapore, Coaltrade Services International. It was alleged that Adaro avoided paying US\$ 125 million in taxes to Indonesia by engaging in transfer pricing tactics. By selling coal to its subsidiary at a lower price, which was then resold overseas at a higher price, Adaro managed to lower its taxable income in Indonesia. This led to concerns among tax experts such as Yustinus Prastowo about the company's tax evasion practices and exploitation of legal loopholes (Avianita, 2020).

Similarly, PT Kaltim Prima Coal was found guilty of engaging in fraudulent practices in 2007 by manipulating sales to evade taxes. Instead of conducting sales directly with overseas companies, the coal sales were first redirected to PT Indocoal Resource Limited, a subsidiary of PT Bumi Resources



Tbk. Transactions with the affiliated company were priced at half the market rate compared to direct sales. This resulted in a significant decrease in PT Kaltim Prima Coal's coal sales turnover, leading to a reduction in tax liabilities and a loss of state revenue amounting to Rp 1.7 trillion (Suryaningsi et al., 2024).

The following legal case involved DGT taking legal action against a coal company PT Multi Sarana Avindo due to the suspected transfer of mining authority leading to a shortfall in Value Added Tax (VAT) payments. The lawsuit was initiated on three occasions - in 2007, 2009, and 2010 - seeking 7.7 billion in damages each time, but DGT ultimately failed in court. To this day, DGT continues to pursue the same legal action against the company.

The reason for this evasion is believed to be impacted by the presence of Corporate Governance, which can create a clear, open and expert management style. This framework oversees the interactions between the board of directors, executives, shareholders and other interested parties. It can also be described as an open method for establishing and achieving business objectives, as well as evaluating their effectiveness. The coordination of the connection between shareholders and corporate executives will impact the tax strategies that are implemented.

In addition to Corporate Governance, tax avoidance is also thought to be influenced by Corporate Social Responsibility. Companies that do CSR indirectly affect the decision to what extent and how prepared they are not to reduce their tax obligations and engage in tax avoidance. Engaging in CSR initiatives is viewed as a strategic approach to minimise risks and enhance the positive image of the organisation (Hoi et al., 2013). By not engaging in tax avoidance, the company can manage its reputation by increasing the company's CSR activities or reducing irresponsible behavior (Godfrey, 2005).

Tax Avoidance, which is a target for companies with various motives, is a link to the system inherent in the company, with regard to this in research by Pramiana (2022), many businesses, particularly those in the mining industry, have been involved in numerous instances of tax evasion on the Indonesian Stock Exchange. These illegal activities have been motivated by transfer pricing, manipulating earnings, and the heavy reliance on capital investment. In Setyawan (2021) states that Corporate Governance has a significant positive effect on Tax Avoidance. On the other hand, Pramiana (2022) states that it is not the same as the position of the confident variable Corporate Governance which is proxied by the independent board of commissioners, institutional ownership, managerial ownership and audit committee has no effect on Tax Avoidance. Meanwhile, Corporate Social Responsibility has a significant positive effect on Tax Avoidance (Rahardjo et al, 2019). However, this research is not in line with Setyawan (2021) which states that Corporate Social Responsibility has a negative effect on Tax Avoidance.

The aims of this study include exploring whether Corporate Governance contributes positively to Corporate Social Responsibility. Investigating if Corporate Governance has a beneficial impact on Tax Avoidance. Examining whether Corporate Social Responsibility plays a positive role in Tax Avoidance. Evaluating the influence of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance, using Corporate Social Responsibility as a mediating factor.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Legitimacy Theory

Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) state that the theory of corporate legitimacy constantly aims to find harmony between the values of a company and the cultural standards in its community, where the company plays a role. This is to establish credibility with society. One way to achieve public trust is by

adhering to tax laws and regulations while avoiding actions that could negatively impact various stakeholders and individuals.

## 2.2. Stakeholder Theory

The theory suggests that the company's operations do not solely serve the interests of the company owners impacted by those operations (Chariri & Ghazali, 2007). According to this assertion, the company ought not to function for individual profit, but should instead offer advantages to various entities linked to the company, like shareholders, lenders, customers, vendors, authorities, the public, and others.

## 2.3. Agency Theory

Agency theory is the concept that focuses on the dynamic between shareholders and management. Management acts as an agent hired by shareholders to represent their best interests. According to Suharto (2023), company owners empower managers by entrusting them with decision-making responsibilities, which can lead to a conflict of interest according to agency theory. The concept of agency theory is widely recognised for its accurate representation of real-world dynamics.

## 2.4. Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance is a system of supervision and direction that is carried out for better company management. According to Winata and Anisykurlillah (2017) Corporate Governance is a structure that supervises and manages a business in order to enhance the interests of all parties involved in the company. Corporate Governance also requires how companies carry out rules and policies in making decisions so that company performance can be monitored, carried out, and accounted for (Putri & Prasetyo, 2020).

The CG score calculation for each sample is :

**(Score obtained : highest score) x % Weighting**

Total Score = The sum of the scores of each point.

## 2.5. Tax Avoidance

According to (Dyrenge, et al., 2008) tax avoidance involves engaging in activities that impact tax responsibilities, whether they are legal methods or specific strategies aimed at decreasing taxes. Typically, tax avoidance involves exploiting loopholes in tax legislation rather than breaking the law.

In this study, the measurement uses measurements in accordance with Chen et al. (2010) and Minnick and Noga (2017).

1. ETR (Effective Tax Rate)

$$ETR = \frac{\text{Tax Expense } i, t}{\text{Pretax Income } i, t}$$

2. CETR (Cash ETR)

$$\text{Cash ETR} = \frac{\text{Cash Taxes Paid } i, t}{\text{Pretax Income } i, t}$$

## 2.6. Corporate Social Responsibility

The term CSR refers to how companies are responsible for managing the impact of their business processes on stakeholders and delivering positive outcomes to society. CSR can be defined as the concept of operating a business by considering various aspects such as ethical, legal, commercial, and social. In contrast, according to the European Commission, CSR is when companies choose to actively participate in promoting a more just society, protecting the environment, and raising the social and environmental consciousness of those involved (Fontaine, 2013).

In this study, the calculation of CSR is proxied by GRI 4 as follows:

$$\text{CSRIj} = \frac{n}{k}$$

## 2.7. Influence between Variables

### 1. Influence Corporate Governance to Corporate Social Responsibility

The company's main objective is to establish Corporate Governance to enhance its reputation and meet its obligations to stakeholders. By fulfilling these obligations, the company can also engage in Corporate Social Responsibility activities. The practice of Corporate Social Responsibility is closely linked to the adoption of Good Corporate Governance principles within the company. Through effective corporate governance, companies are motivated to enhance their disclosures on Corporate Social Responsibility (Ramdhaningsih & Utama, 2013).

H<sub>1</sub> = Corporate Governance has a positive effect on Corporate Social Responsibility.

### 2. Effect of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance

Wahyudin and Solikhah (2017) state that the strategic decisions of a company are influenced by the way corporate governance is implemented within the organisation. Ensuring a well-structured corporate governance system in place will encourage compliance with various regulations, such as refraining from engaging in aggressive tax planning strategies. This measure is intended to enhance the performance of individuals within the company.

In accordance with the findings from the Forum For Corporate Governance on Indonesian (FCGPI) as mentioned in Fidiyyah (2022) Corporate governance comprises a set of rules that govern the interactions between shareholders, company executives, creditors, government entities, employees, and other stakeholders internally and externally in relation to their rights and responsibilities, or the mechanism that oversees the operations of the company. Companies that adopt corporate governance practices are more likely to adhere to all relevant business laws, including tax-related statutes (Kovermann & Velte, 2019).

H<sub>2</sub> = Corporate Governance has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance

### 3. Influence Corporate Social Responsibility towards Tax Avoidance

CSR disclosure aims to gain positive legitimacy from society. Businesses are becoming increasingly aware that establishing a social contract with society is vital for their longevity, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one way to fulfil their obligations to the community. Companies who have shared extensive CSR details in their annual reports to build a positive reputation are making continuous efforts to uphold it. For instance, they are striving to avoid engaging in tax avoidance practices that could tarnish their established good image through their CSR initiatives (Ratmono & Sagala, 2015). This shows that the more companies disclose CSR, the lower the level of tax avoidance by the company, as measured by the ETR value. A higher ETR value indicates that the company does not practice tax avoidance.

H<sub>3</sub> = Corporate Social Responsibility has a positive effect on Tax Avoidance

#### 4. Corporate Social Responsibility as a mediating variable of the effect of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance.

Corporate Social Responsibility cannot be carried out effectively without incorporating the principles of Good Corporate Governance within the company. The practice of good corporate governance serves as a catalyst for companies to enhance their transparency and accountability in disclosing their Corporate Social Responsibility efforts (Ramdhaningsih & Utama, 2013).

Utilizing CG and CSR in the business helps reduce tax avoidance. This aligns with stakeholder theory, which suggests that companies should not solely focus on shareholder benefits but consider all parties involved. The government, as a regulator, is considered a stakeholder of the company. Hence, it is essential for the company to prioritize the government's interests. This includes complying with all government regulations, paying taxes obediently, and refraining from tax avoidance, all of which are obligations that the company must meet. .

$H_4$  = Corporate Social Responsibility mediates the effect of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance.

### 3. Methods

#### a. Population and Sample

The research methodology utilised in this study involved quantitative research with a descriptive perspective. The study focused on energy sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) from 2019 to 2021. Panel data from the years 2019 to 2020 was analysed to gather financial information on the companies. A total of 71 companies were included in the population of the study. Purposive sampling was employed to select the sample based on specific criteria.

**Table 1. Table of Sample Determination Results**

| No  | Sample Criteria   | Total     |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1   | Energy sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange from 2019 to 2021. | 71        |
| 2   | Companies that did not publish complete annual reports from 2019 to 2021.         | (14)      |
| 3   | Energy sector companies that suffered losses                                      | (27)      |
| 4   | Companies that do not disclose the amount of cash paid for taxes.                 | (3)       |
| 5   | Companies that do not disclose CSR and CG during the 2019-2021 period.            | (4)       |
| Number of companies that meet the criteria                          |   | 23        |
| <b>Total Research Data 2019 - 2021<br/>(23 companies x 3 years)</b> |   | <b>69</b> |

#### b. Data Collection Technique

The data collection method employed in this research is through documentation, which involves gathering records and documents important for the company. Secondary data in the form of financial reports from energy sector companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange is utilised for this study. Financial statements and sustainability reports from the years 2019 to 2021 are the main data sources. The financial reports of mining companies listed on the IDX from 2019 to 2021 were accessed through the official website of the Indonesia Stock Exchange at [www.idx.co.id](http://www.idx.co.id).

#### c. Variable Operation

To obtain comprehensive research results, each research variable is measured using more than one indicator. CG uses 4 variables, namely the board of commissioners, audit committee, management,

shareholders. CSR uses three variables, namely economic, environment, and society. Tax avoidance is measured using ETR and Cash ETR.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1. Research Results

##### 4.1.1. Partial Least Squares Model Scheme (PLS)

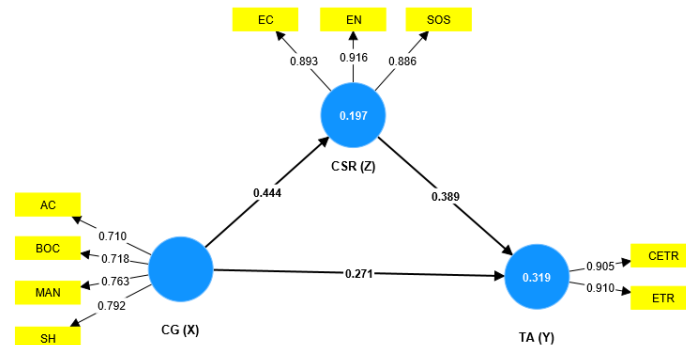


Figure 1. Estimation results of the research model

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

##### 4.1.2. Outer Model Test

##### 1. Convergent Validity

Table 2. Outer Loading

|      | CG (X)       | CSR (Z)      | TA (Y)       |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| BOC  | <b>0,718</b> |              |              |
| AC   | <b>0,710</b> |              |              |
| MAN  | <b>0,763</b> |              |              |
| SH   | <b>0,792</b> |              |              |
| EC   |              | <b>0,893</b> |              |
| EN   |              | <b>0,916</b> |              |
| SOS  |              | <b>0,886</b> |              |
| CETR |              |              | <b>0,905</b> |
| ETR  |              |              | <b>0,910</b> |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the information provided, it is evident that all indicators with outer loading values above 0.7 are considered suitable for research purposes and can be utilised in additional analytical processes.

##### 2. Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Cross-loading

|      | CG (X)       | CSR (Z)      | TA (Y)       |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| BOC  | <b>0,718</b> | 0,388        | 0,282        |
| AC   | <b>0,710</b> | 0,206        | 0,343        |
| MAN  | <b>0,763</b> | 0,367        | 0,315        |
| SH   | <b>0,792</b> | 0,345        | 0,388        |
| EC   | 0,462        | <b>0,893</b> | 0,466        |
| EN   | 0,408        | <b>0,916</b> | 0,425        |
| SOS  | 0,318        | <b>0,886</b> | 0,481        |
| CETR | 0,404        | 0,451        | <b>0,905</b> |
| ETR  | 0,403        | 0,473        | <b>0,910</b> |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the data in table 3, it is evident that the indicators have the highest cross loading values with other variables. This suggests that the indicators are not strongly related to other variables, indicating their validity. In addition to examining cross loading values, discriminant validity can also be assessed by considering the average variance extracted (AVE) for each indicator, which should ideally be above 0.5 to indicate a robust model.

**Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

|         | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| CG (X)  | 0,557                            |
| CSR (Z) | 0,807                            |
| TA (Y)  | 0,823                            |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the findings in table 4, the AVE value for each variable exceeds 0.5, indicating strong discriminant validity for each variable.

### 3. Composite Reliability

**Table 5. Composite Reliability**

|         | Composite Reliability |
|---------|-----------------------|
| CG (X)  | 0,834                 |
| CSR (Z) | 0,926                 |
| TA (Y)  | 0,903                 |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the data in the table above, it is evident that the composite reliability value for all research variables is greater than 0.7. This suggests that each variable has achieved the required reliability threshold, leading to the conclusion that all variables are highly reliable.

### 4. Cronbach's Alpha

**Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha**

|         | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---------|------------------|
| CG (X)  | 0,736            |
| CSR (Z) | 0,881            |
| TA (Y)  | 0,786            |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the data in table 4.5, it is evident that the Cronbach alpha value for each research variable exceeds 0.7. This indicates that each research variable satisfies the criteria for the Cronbach alpha value, suggesting that the overall variable exhibits a high level of reliability.

#### 4.1.3. Inner Model

##### 1. R-square

**Table 7. R-square**

|         | R-square |
|---------|----------|
| CSR (Z) | 0,197    |
| TA (Y)  | 0,319    |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

According to the R-square ( $R^2$ ) Output provided in the table above, it appears that the inner model in this study is categorised as having a "low influence". Looking at table 4.6, the R-square Output interpretation for the CSR construct is shown as 0.20. This indicates that corporate governance variables have a 20% impact on corporate social responsibility, with the remaining influence being attributed to other variables not accounted for in the model.

Similarly, the R-square Output interpretation for the TA construct is displayed as 0.32. This suggests that corporate governance and corporate social responsibility variables contribute to 32% of the influence on tax avoidance, while the remaining impact is determined by variables outside the model.

## 2. Q-square

To calculate the Q-square value, you can use the formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Q-square} &= 1 - [(1-R_1^2) \times (1-R_2^2)] \\ &= 1 - [(1-0,197) \times (1-0,319)] \\ &= 1 - (0,803 \times 0,681) \\ &= 1 - 0,55 \\ &= 0,55 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the calculations provided, the predictive relevance value for Q2 in this research stands at 0.55. This suggests that the inner model used in the study can be deemed to have a significant impact.

## 3. Effect size (F-square)

**Table 8. F-square**

|                   | F-square |
|-------------------|----------|
| CG (X) -> CSR (Z) | 0,246    |
| CG (X) -> TA (Y)  | 0,087    |
| CSR (Z) -> TA (Y) | 0,178    |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

Based on the F-square results shown in the table, we can infer that CG's impact on CSR is moderately influential at a structural level (F-square = 0.246). In contrast, the influence of CG on TA is minimal (F-square = 0.087), while the impact of CSR on TA is moderately significant (F-square = 0.178).

## 4. Goodness of fit (Gof)

**Table 9. Quality Criteria (Model Fit)**

| Model Fit | Results | Criteria    | Description |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-------------|
| SRMR      | 0,054   | SRMR < 0,08 | Model Fit   |
| NFI       | 0,930   | NFI > 0,90  | Model Fit   |

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

It can be inferred from the findings in table 9 that the inner model meets the specified criteria, suggesting that the overall model of the study displays a satisfactory level of goodness of fit. .



4.1.4. Hypothesis Test

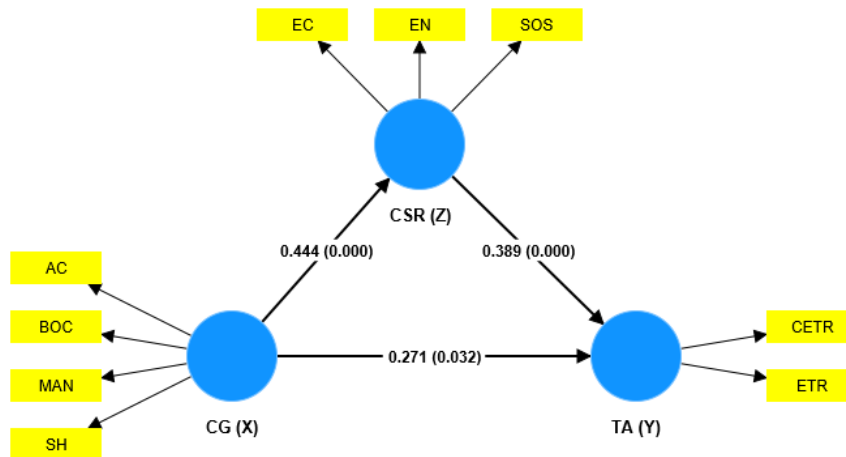


Figure 2. Estimation results of the research model

Source: Smart PLS 4.0 Output

1. Direct Effect
  - a. The relationship between Corporate Governance and Corporate Social Responsibility can be observed in the path coefficients table showing a positive coefficient of 0.444 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating significance. This suggests a notable positive impact of Corporate Governance on Corporate Social Responsibility, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis.
  - b. The data in the path coefficients table shows a positive coefficient of 0.271 for the impact of Corporate Governance on tax avoidance, which is considered significant with a p-value of 0.032. This indicates a clear positive influence of Corporate Social Responsibility on tax avoidance, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis. .
  - c. The correlation between Corporate Social Responsibility and tax avoidance, as indicated by the path coefficients table, is 0.389 with a positive coefficient. In the p-value table, the result of 0.000 is deemed significant. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is a noteworthy positive impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on tax avoidance, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis. .
2. Indirect Effect
 

The indirect path coefficient value on the CG variable on tax avoidance through CSR is 0.173 with a P-value of 0.001, so it is said to be significant. Thus CSR can mediate between CG and TA variables.
3. Total Effect
  - a. As illustrated in the above table, the total effect of CG on CSR is determined to be 0.444 with a positive coefficient. The p-values for the total effect are 0.000, indicating a significant result. This suggests a notable beneficial impact of CG on CSR. .
  - b. Based on the information provided in the table, it appears that corporate governance has a total effect value of 0.444 on tax avoidance. The positive coefficient and the low p-values for total effect indicate that this relationship is significant. Therefore, we can infer that corporate governance has a significant positive impact on tax avoidance.
  - c. Based on the information in the table, it can be observed that the impact of CSR on tax avoidance has a value of 0.389, showing a positive association. With a p-value of 0.000 indicating significance, it is evident that CSR has a significant positive influence on tax avoidance.

#### 4.1.5. Mediation Test

##### 1. Direct Effect Model

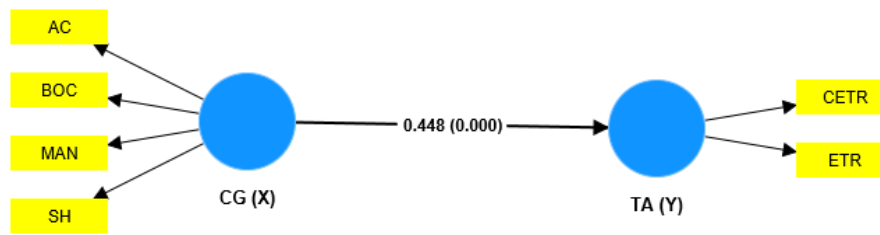


Figure 3. Direct Effect

##### 2. Indirect Effect Model

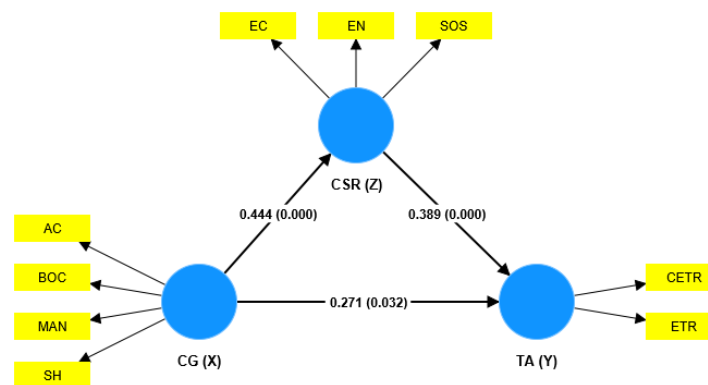


Figure 4. Indirect Effect

In Figure 4, the results of the estimation indicate that the direct impact coefficient of corporate governance on tax evasion is 0.448 and highly significant at 0.000. The findings in Figure 4.3, regarding the indirect impact, reveal that the coefficient of corporate governance on tax evasion decreases to 0.271 but remains statistically significant. This suggests that corporate social responsibility partially mediates the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance.

#### 4.2. Discussion

##### 1. The Effect of Corporate Governance on Corporate Social Responsibility

Testing the initial hypothesis has shown that Corporate Governance has a notable influence on Corporate Social Responsibility. The analysis has generated a path coefficients value of 0.444 with a positive coefficient at a p-value of 0.000, indicating significance and acceptance of the hypothesis. In essence, stronger corporate governance leads to increased social responsibility disclosure, while weaker governance results in lower disclosure of social responsibility. .

##### 2. Effect of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance

The findings from testing the second hypothesis demonstrate a notable correlation between Corporate Governance and tax avoidance. The data analysis reveals a path coefficients value of 0.271, indicating a positive impact at a p-value of 0.032, thus deeming it statistically significant and confirming acceptance of the hypothesis. In essence, superior corporate governance leads to decreased tax avoidance, whereas inferior corporate governance results in increased tax avoidance. .

##### 3. Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility towards Tax Avoidance.

The outcomes of evaluating the third hypothesis demonstrate that Corporate Social Responsibility has a notable advantageous impact on tax evasion. The findings show a path coefficients value of 0.389 with a favourable coefficient, and at a significant p-value of 0.000, it confirms the hypothesis. This suggests that the higher the company communicates its social responsibility, the less

likely it is to engage in tax evasion, and conversely, the less the corporate social responsibility disclosure, the more likely the company is to engage in tax evasion.

#### 4. Corporate Social Responsibility as a mediating variable for the effect of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance.

The findings from testing the fourth hypothesis demonstrate the capability of CSR to act as a mediator between CG and tax avoidance. Examining the results reveals that the direct impact of CG on tax avoidance (c) is 0.448, with a significant value of 0.000. The analysis of the indirect effect coefficient of CG on tax avoidance (c") shows a decrease to 0.271, however it remains significant, indicating partial mediation has occurred.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how corporate social responsibility acts as a mediator in the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance in energy sector companies from 2019 to 2021 BEI. Following the analysis of the research findings and data, it can be inferred that corporate governance has a significant and positive influence on corporate social responsibility, thereby supporting the hypothesis. This suggests that the disclosure of social responsibility is adequate. It is evident that energy sector companies implement effective governance practices, allowing them to fulfil their social responsibilities adequately. The positive impact of corporate governance on tax avoidance is significant, indicating that the hypothesis is supported. Energy sector companies with strong governance structures tend to engage in lower levels of tax avoidance. Similarly, the positive influence of corporate social responsibility on tax avoidance is significant, confirming the hypothesis. This suggests that energy sector companies that disclose their social responsibilities effectively are less likely to engage in tax avoidance. Corporate social responsibility acts as a mediator in the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance. As corporate social responsibility is seen as an integral part of corporate governance, it is anticipated that the presence of both factors will help reduce levels of corporate tax avoidance.

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