

# Corporate Governance and Tax Avoidance: A Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Assessment of Research Trends

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## Abstract

This study provides a systematic literature review and bibliometric assessment of research on corporate governance and tax avoidance to examine its intellectual development, dominant themes, theoretical foundations, and future research directions. Using the PRISMA framework, 142 peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus were analyzed using bibliometric techniques and qualitative synthesis. The findings indicate that corporate governance mechanisms, including board characteristics, audit committee effectiveness, ownership structure, and institutional monitoring, remain the primary determinants of corporate tax behavior. While Agency Theory continues to dominate literature, emerging perspectives such as Stakeholder Theory, Institutional Theory, and Legitimacy Theory have gained increasing attention. The review further reveals a growing research focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental Social Governance (ESG), digital governance, artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and tax risk management, reflecting a shift toward sustainability and technology-oriented governance frameworks. The study contributes to the literature by integrating fragmented evidence into a comprehensive framework and identifying critical research gaps.

**Keywords:** Corporate Governance; Tax Avoidance; Systematic Literature Review; Bibliometric Analysis; Agency Theory.

## 1. Introduction

Corporate tax avoidance has become an important topic in corporate governance, accounting, and taxation due to its far-reaching consequences for corporate transparency, government revenues, stakeholder trust, and sustainable economic development. Tax avoidance is usually regarded as a legal way to reduce a corporation's tax burden within existing tax regulations. Still, aggressive tax planning practices are often questioned for ethical responsibility, legitimacy, and the fair distribution of tax obligations across society. In recent decades, the increasing public scrutiny of multinational corporations, along with the more intense regulatory reforms launched by governments and international organizations, has elevated tax avoidance from a technical tax management issue to a broader governance issue. Consequently, the organizational mechanisms that influence corporate tax behavior have become an important area of research for scholars, regulators, investors, and policymakers (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010)

In this respect, corporate governance is considered one of the most important determinants of tax avoidance behavior. Corporate governance mechanisms are monitoring and control systems designed to reduce information asymmetry, mitigate agency conflicts, and align managerial decisions with the interests of shareholders and stakeholders. Agency theory suggests that managers may pursue aggressive tax strategies to enhance short-term financial performance, boost incentive compensation, or mask opportunistic activities that yield private benefits. Thus, effective governance structures are likely to decrease managerial discretion and the probability of excessive tax avoidance (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Thus, a vast body of research has investigated the influence of board characteristics, audit committees, executive attributes, ownership structures, institutional investors, and governance quality on corporate tax behavior (Bayar et al., 2018; Salehi et al., 2024).

Despite considerable scholarly attention, there remains inconclusive empirical evidence on the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance.

Previous studies have yielded mixed findings on the effectiveness of governance mechanisms in curbing tax avoidance. For example, some studies find that board independence reduces tax avoidance by enhancing monitoring effectiveness, whereas other studies report insignificant or context-dependent relationships (Ali et al., 2024; Pavlou et al., 2025). Similar inconsistencies have been found for ownership concentration, family ownership, institutional ownership, CEO duality, and audit committee characteristics (Deslandes et al., 2020a; Yahaya et al., 2024a). Kovermann & Velte (2019) attribute these inconsistencies primarily to differences in institutional environments, governance quality, regulatory systems, and methodological approaches. Consequently, the current evidence remains fragmented, making it difficult to draw robust conclusions about the effectiveness of governance mechanisms in shaping corporate tax behavior.

The relationship between governance and tax avoidance has become more complex due to major changes in the global business environment. New developments in sustainability reporting, ESG efforts, digital transformation, and stakeholder capitalism have fundamentally changed how corporations are monitored and judged. Stakeholders increasingly expect corporations not only to comply with tax laws but also to take responsibility for demonstrating that their tax behavior is consistent with broader sustainability goals. Emerging evidence suggests that ESG practices and corporate social responsibility activities may affect tax avoidance directly or indirectly by interacting with governance mechanisms (Khlifi et al., 2025; Velte, 2026). Similarly, ethical leadership, green innovation, and responsible governance practices are considered possible determinants of corporate tax behavior in modern governance systems (Mlaiki et al., 2026). However, it is not yet well understood to what extent these sustainability-related factors complement or substitute traditional governance mechanisms.

At the same time, digital transformation has introduced a new dimension into the governance and taxation landscape. The growing adoption of artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, advanced analytics, and digital governance platforms is changing the way organizations monitor systems and manage taxes. Digital technologies can improve transparency, strengthen internal controls, improve compliance systems, and help to engage with stakeholders. However, they may also provide opportunities for increasingly sophisticated tax planning strategies that challenge traditional regulatory oversight (AlShamsi et al., 2021; Salamzadeh et al., 2024). Recent evidence shows that corporate digital transformation may influence tax-related behavior in complex ways, depending on governance quality, audit effectiveness, and regulatory context (Weichen & Mayburov, 2025). These developments are becoming increasingly

relevant, yet digital governance remains largely detached from mainstream tax avoidance research.

Literature on corporate governance and tax avoidance has grown considerably, but several important gaps remain unresolved. First, there is a major empirical gap, with results still highly fragmented between countries, industries, governance mechanisms, and measurement approaches. The current evidence was marked by significant heterogeneity and often yields contradictory findings on the determinants of tax avoidance (Koay & Sapiei, 2025; Yahaya et al., 2026). Such fragmentation thwarts the building of coherent knowledge and the development of theoretical explanations that apply more generally.

Second, a significant theoretical gap remains visible. The main explanatory framework for understanding tax avoidance behavior in most studies remains agency theory (Suprapti et al., 2016). Agency theory provides valuable insights into managerial incentives and oversight mechanisms, yet corporate tax behavior today is increasingly influenced by broader institutional, social, ethical, and technological factors. The increasing importance of ESG practices, stakeholder engagement, legitimacy concerns, digital governance, and sustainability goals suggests that stakeholder theory, institutional theory, legitimacy theory, resource dependence theory, and upper echelons theory may offer complementary explanations. However, existing research seldom brings these theoretical perspectives together into an integrated framework that accounts for the multidimensional nature of corporate tax avoidance.

Third, there is a methodological void in literature. Most previous reviews have taken a narrative approach or focused on specific governance mechanisms, such as board characteristics, ownership structures, or executive attributes (Kovermann & Velte, 2019; Yahaya et al., 2024b). These studies provide us with valuable insights but a limited understanding of the field's intellectual structure, thematic evolution, collaboration networks, and emerging research frontiers. Recent methodological advances demonstrate that integrating systematic literature review techniques with bibliometric analysis can offer a more rigorous and comprehensive understanding of knowledge development by identifying influential authors, dominant themes, conceptual clusters, and emerging trends (Donthu et al., 2021; Sumantri et al., 2024). However, such integrated approaches are still relatively rare in the corporate governance and tax avoidance literature.

Fourth, the growing gap in phenomena has become increasingly evident. Fast-evolving research areas such as tax risk, digital governance, AI-enabled monitoring systems, blockchain-based transparency mechanisms, and ESG-oriented governance practices received little attention in previous reviews. As noted by Saragih &

Ali (2023), tax risk remains one of the least mature constructs in the taxation literature, despite its growing importance for corporate decision-making and regulatory oversight. Similarly, research on the relationship between digital transformation and tax avoidance was fragmented and conceptually underdeveloped (Mary Aruja & Thomas, 2025; Weichen & Mayburov, 2025). What is required is a comprehensive synthesis of these emerging trends to improve our understanding of the impact of modern governance systems on corporate tax behavior.

These limitations collectively point to the need for a comprehensive, up-to-date synthesis of the corporate governance and tax avoidance literature. A rigorous integration of fragmented evidence, while simultaneously mapping the field's intellectual evolution, makes a systematic literature review, combined with a bibliometric assessment, a suitable methodological approach. Bibliometric techniques allow researchers to identify seminal publications, collaboration networks, thematic structures, and emerging research trajectories, thus complementing traditional qualitative synthesis and enhancing the robustness of review findings (Donthu et al., 2021).

Hence, this study offers a systematic literature review and bibliometric evaluation of corporate governance and tax avoidance research. The study aims to integrate existing evidence, map the field's intellectual and conceptual structure, identify dominant governance mechanisms and theoretical perspectives, assess methodological developments, and develop a future research agenda. This study employs systematic review methods and bibliometric analysis to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of research on corporate governance and tax avoidance and to identify future research directions.

This research presents four contributions. Firstly, it offers a comprehensive review of the literature on corporate governance and tax avoidance by collating results across a variety of governance mechanisms, institutional contexts, and regulatory environments. Secondly, it combines the procedures of systematic literature review and bibliometric assessment, offering insights into both substantive findings and intellectual development of the field. Thirdly, it complements previous reviews by incorporating new research streams on tax risk, ESG, CSR, digital governance, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technologies. Finally, it provides an integrated future research framework that links traditional governance mechanisms with modern sustainability and technological developments, offering a broader view of corporate tax behavior in a more dynamic global setting.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses three **research questions (RQ)**. **RQ1:** How has research on corporate governance and tax avoidance evolved in

terms of publication trends, influential contributors, and scientific collaboration networks? **RQ2:** How is the distribution of research related to Tax avoidance and corporate governance? **RQ3:** What were the dominant thematic, theoretical, and practical implications that can be identified as future research directions related to Tax avoidance and corporate governance?

To answer these research questions, this study employs a Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis approach. The systematic literature review method is particularly appropriate because it enables rigorous, transparent synthesis of existing evidence, facilitates identification of knowledge gaps, and supports the development of future research agendas. At the same time, bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative assessment of the field's intellectual structure by examining publication patterns, citation networks, collaboration networks, and thematic developments. The integration of these two approaches offers a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of research on corporate governance and tax avoidance. It allows for the identification of emerging research streams that may shape future scholarly inquiry. Using bibliometric visualization techniques and a comprehensive database of peer-reviewed publications, this study aims to provide robust evidence on the development, current state, and future trajectory of research in corporate governance and tax avoidance.

Based on the search results obtained on **May 30, 2026** through the Scopus.com database using keywords in the article title, abstract, and keywords "**Tax avoidance**" **OR** "**corporate tax avoidance**" **AND** "**Corporate Governance**" **OR** "**Tax avoidance**" **OR** "**corporate tax avoidance**" **OR** "**Corporate Governance**" in various disciplines, as many as 587 documents were found that discussed tax avoidance with corporate governance. Based on these findings, a screening process was conducted to classify documents by type. Several types of publications were eliminated, including subject area (35), document type (75), publication stage (32), keywords (98), source type (2), language (4), and open access (199), leaving 142 relevant article documents. The screening identified 142 articles, which were then further analyzed in this study.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study used a systematic literature review approach with a bibliometric method. This approach quantitatively assesses the existing literature to identify key trends, patterns, and entities within the discipline. By using frameworks such as PRISMA, this approach ensures a comprehensive and replicable literature review, thereby providing a clear and transparent picture of the topic under investigation (Haddaway et al., 2022; Page et al., 2021). The inclusion criteria for this study include subject area (35), document type (75),

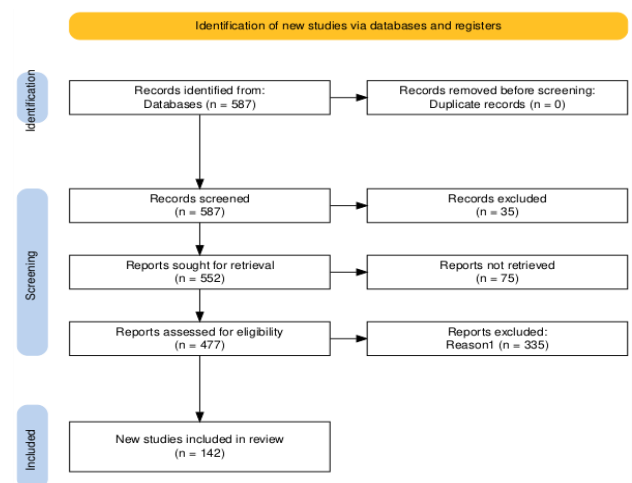
publication stage (32), keywords (98), source type (2), language (4), and open access (199), yielding 142 relevant articles. The screening identified 142 articles, which were then further analyzed in this study. Bibliometric analysis will be carried out using VOSviewer. This software tool visualizes bibliographic data to analyze citation networks, author collaborations, and co-occurring keywords, thereby revealing the intellectual structure and dynamics of this field of research. This combination of bibliometric analysis and systematic review assists researchers in synthesizing empirical findings and mapping the landscape of research activities, including identifying key contributors and emerging trends (Donthu et al., 2021). Overall, integrating these two approaches provides a holistic, in-depth understanding of research developments in tax avoidance and corporate governance.

The initial search yielded 587 documents, which were systematically filtered using inclusion criteria for subject area (Business, Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance & Social Sciences), document type (peer-reviewed articles), publication stage, exact keyword relevance, source type, English language, and open-access availability. This rigorous screening process resulted in a final selection of 142 high-quality articles that met all inclusion criteria for analysis, as detailed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for article selection**

Filter	Setting (inclusion criteria)	Number of documents after filter	Number of documents excluded
Initial search	tax avoidance OR corporate tax avoidance AND corporate governance OR tax avoidance OR corporate tax avoidance OR corporate governance	587	0
Subject area	Business, Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, and Social Sciences	552	35
Document type	Article	477	75
Publication stage	Final	445	32
Keyword	Limited to "Tax Avoidance Corporate" OR "Tax Avoidance" AND "Corporate Governance"	347	98
Source type	Journal	345	2
Language	English	341	4
Open access	All open access	142	199
Final documents included		142	

The data collection process for this study involved a systematic search strategy using specific keywords and search strings to identify relevant literature in the Scopus database. The search string employed was: ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( tax avoidance OR corporate tax avoidance ) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ( corporate governance ) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ( tax avoidance OR corporate tax avoidance OR corporate governance ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "BUSI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ECON" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "final" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Tax Avoidance" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Corporate Governance" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Corporate Tax Avoidance" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SRCTYPE , "j" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( OA , "all" ) ) AND PUBYEAR > 2008 AND PUBYEAR < 2025. This search strategy was designed to capture a comprehensive range of articles that specifically address the intersection of tax avoidance and corporate governance, while ensuring that only high-quality, peer-reviewed English-language journal articles were included. Following the initial search, the data screening process adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, 2020) guidelines, which provide criteria and a structured framework for conducting systematic reviews (Haddaway et al., 2022; Page et al., 2021), as detailed in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1 Diagram PRISMA**

### 3. Results and Discussion

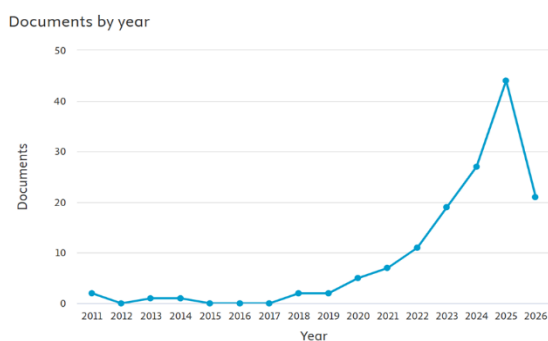
The results of this study are based on the findings of 142 articles indexed in the Scopus database related to the topic of Tax avoidance and corporate governance. The data are obtained by counting publications, recording the distribution of articles by year, and identifying the journal source. In addition, this study identifies the most influential elements in the study of Tax avoidance and corporate governance, including

authors, institutional affiliations, and countries of origin.

**RQ1: How has research on corporate governance and tax avoidance evolved in terms of publication trends, influential contributors, and scientific collaboration networks?**

Data from Scopus shows that over the past decade, only 142 articles have discussed tax avoidance and corporate governance. This indicates that research on this theme is still relatively limited. As seen in Figure 1. The development of studies on Tax avoidance and corporate governance has begun to show a more progressive increase, especially since 2021. Initial studies in this field were conducted by Kim et al. (2011) with the title "Corporate tax avoidance and stock price crash risk: Firm-level analysis" and Tomasic (2011) with the title "The financial crisis and the haphazard pursuit of financial crime".

Furthermore, the distribution of publications from 2012 to 2020 is less than 5 articles/papers every year. Publications experienced a significant increase in 2021 (7 papers), 2022 (11 papers), 2023 (19 papers), 2024 (27 papers), and 2025 (44 papers). Meanwhile, in 2026, the number of publications will be 21 papers; see details in Figure 2.

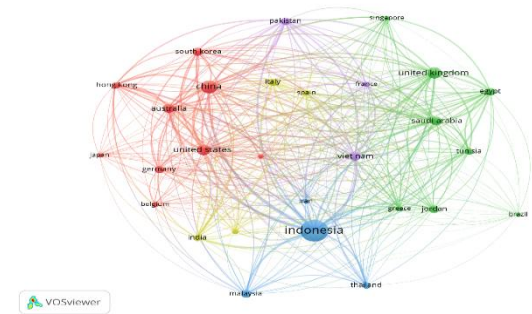


**Figure 2.** Number of tax avoidance and corporate governance publications

**RQ2: How is the distribution of research related to Tax avoidance and corporate governance?**

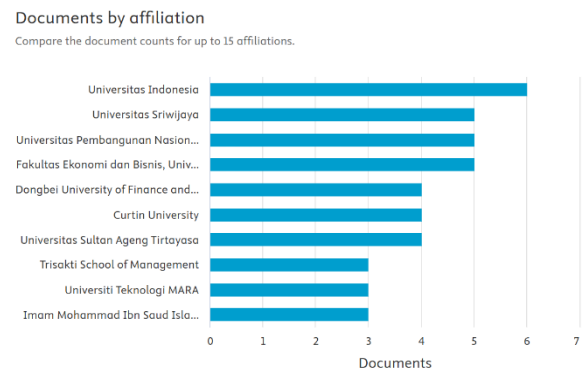
The analysis of the distribution of research on Tax avoidance and corporate governance across 142 articles was carried out by grouping publications into several categories: countries, regions, institutional affiliations, publication sources, and authors. Understanding the distribution of research is important for academics and practitioners, as it can provide a clearer picture of the research agenda that could be developed in the future, especially to strengthen the Tax avoidance and corporate governance paradigm sustainably. The distribution/distribution by country or geographical region is dominated by Indonesia as many as 42 Articles/Papers, followed by China as many as 15 papers, the United Kingdom as many as 11 papers, the

United States as many as 11 papers, Australia as many as 8 papers, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam as many as 7 papers, Malaysia and South Korea as many as 6 detailed papers are presented in Figure 3.



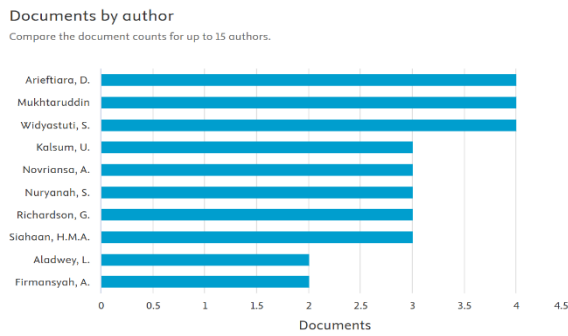
**Figure 3** Network Country visualization (top 10 countries)

Next, the distribution/distribution based on the top ten affiliates of the author's home campus is presented in Figure 4 with the following details: The University of Indonesia has the highest number of papers, with 11 papers, then Sriwijaya University and Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta University with 5 papers, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, Curtin University & Sultan Agung Tirtayasa University with 4 papers each. Subsequently, Trisakti School of Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, and Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University each produced 3 papers, as shown in detail in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Number of articles by Affiliation Authors

The distribution of the top 10 authors' spreads is presented in Figure 4. The following is the distribution based on the top 10 authors: Arieftiara, Mukhataruddin, and Widyastuti, each with 4 papers; Kalsum, Novriansa, Nuryanah, Richardson, and Siahaan, each with 3 papers; and 2 papers each for Aladwey and Firmansyah. Arieftiara, Dianwicakasih, and Widyastuti, Shinta are lecturers from Jakarta University's Veterans National Development, while Mukhtaruddin is a lecturer from Sriwijaya University; see details in Figure 5.



**Figure 5** Count of publications by author (top 10 authors)

Based on data collected from the Scopus database, 142 articles, it is evident that scientific publications addressing tax avoidance and corporate governance are distributed across various international journals. The Journal of Risk and Financial Management and Sustainability (Switzerland) are the two most productive sources, each contributing nine documents. Cogent Business and Management follows these with eight documents, while China Journal of Accounting Research and Investment Management and Financial Innovations have each contributed five documents. Additionally, the journal Accounting and Finance has contributed three documents. This distribution indicates that academic interest in the relationship between tax avoidance and corporate governance is not limited to pure accounting journals but also extends to journals focusing on risk management, sustainability, and financial innovation, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of this topic. See details in **Figure 6**.

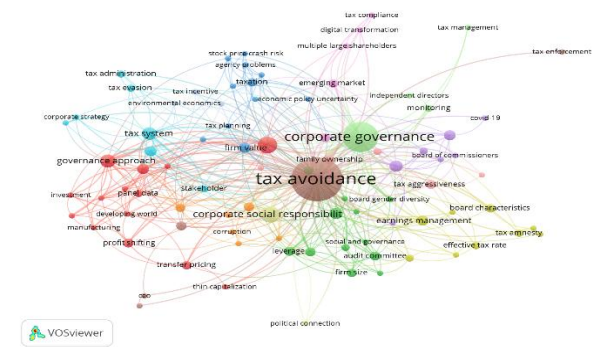


**Figure 6** Number of articles by sources (top 10 sources)

**RQ3: What were the dominant thematic, theoretical, and practical implications that can be identified as future research directions related to Tax avoidance and corporate governance?**

To address RQ3 regarding the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of future research, VOSviewer software was used to illustrate that the analysis results can provide theoretical and practical implications for future research on Tax avoidance and corporate governance. The results of the metadata

analysis using VOSviewer will help researchers and practitioners better understand the assumptions and findings related to Tax avoidance and corporate governance. Furthermore, this bibliometric analysis can identify which variables have been extensively researched and which remain underexplored, thereby providing a foundation for future studies. From a practitioner's perspective, the results of the literature analysis using VOSviewer will assist them in implementing Tax avoidance and corporate governance in the future and in promoting them for various organizational purposes; see details in **Figure 7**.



**Figure 7** Keyword network map (VOSviewer) in global research

Based on the bibliometric analysis conducted in **Figure 7**, 20 selected keywords related to tax avoidance and corporate governance research were obtained. The most dominant keyword was tax avoidance, with 113 occurrences and 315 total link strengths, followed by corporate governance, with 54 occurrences and 145 total link strengths. Corporate social responsibility appeared 17 times with a total link strength of 57, while the governance approach was recorded 10 times with a link strength of 57. The tax system has 9 appearances and 48 link strengths, while sustainable development and sustainability appear 6 times, with link strengths of 39 and 37, respectively. Corporate tax avoidance appeared 16 times, with a link strength of 33, followed by ESG and gender diversity, each with 8 appearances and a link strength of 27. Leverage and profitability recorded 5 occurrences with 24 link strengths each, while earnings management appeared 6 times with 23 link strengths. The audit committee had 5 appearances and 22 link strengths, and ESG performance recorded 4 appearances with 22 link strengths. Furthermore, agency theory, family ownership, and firm size each have 5 occurrences, with a link strength of 19. The data set appeared 3 times with a link strength of 19, while the firm value was recorded 6 times with a link strength of 19, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2:** Occurrences & Total link strength keywords

Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
tax avoidance	113	315

corporate governance	54	145
corporate social responsibility	17	57
governance approach	10	57
tax system	9	48
sustainable development	6	39
sustainability	6	37
corporate tax avoidance	16	33
ESG	8	27
gender diversity	8	27
leverage	5	24
profitability	5	24
earnings management	6	23
audit committee	5	22
esg performance	4	22
agency theory	5	19
family ownership	5	19
firm size	4	19
firm value	6	19

### Theme 1. Corporate Governance Mechanisms and Tax Avoidance

The bibliometric mapping reveals that corporate governance is the most influential thematic cluster directly linked to tax avoidance, indicating that governance mechanisms remain the dominant explanatory framework for understanding corporate tax behavior. The proximity between keywords such as *board characteristics, independent directors, audit committee, board gender diversity, family ownership, monitoring, and tax aggressiveness* suggests that scholars increasingly view tax avoidance as a governance issue rather than merely a taxation issue. This finding is consistent with agency theory, which argues that governance structures are designed to mitigate managerial opportunism and align managerial decisions with shareholder interests (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

The literature demonstrates that governance mechanisms influence tax avoidance by enabling monitoring, oversight, accountability, and risk management. However, the effectiveness of these

mechanisms varies considerably across institutional contexts, ownership structures, legal systems, and regulatory environments. While some governance attributes constrain aggressive tax planning, others may facilitate tax avoidance by enhancing firms' ability to exploit tax-saving opportunities. Therefore, the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance remains complex, multidimensional, and highly context-dependent.

The evidence summarized in **Table 3** demonstrates that corporate governance mechanisms constitute the primary line of defense against opportunistic tax behavior. Nevertheless, the literature reveals substantial heterogeneity regarding the effectiveness of specific governance attributes.

A recurring finding concerns the role of **board independence**. Independent directors are expected to strengthen monitoring quality and reduce information asymmetry between managers and shareholders. Several studies report a negative association between board independence and tax avoidance because independent directors tend to prioritize transparency and regulatory compliance. However, this relationship is not universally supported. In some institutional settings, independent directors may lack sufficient expertise in taxation or may be constrained by dominant shareholders, reducing their ability to influence tax decisions effectively (Ali et al., 2024; Koay & Sapiei, 2025).

Similarly, the **audit committee** is among the most influential governance mechanisms in the literature. Research consistently shows that audit committees characterized by financial expertise, independence, and active oversight are associated with lower levels of tax aggressiveness. Deslandes et al. (2020) demonstrated that audit committees with stronger monitoring capabilities significantly constrain aggressive tax strategies. These findings support the argument that audit committees serve as a critical governance mechanism linking financial reporting quality with tax compliance.

**Table 3.** Tema 1: Representative Studies on Corporate Governance Mechanisms and Tax Avoidance

Authors	Title and Year	Country	Aim	Methodology	Main Findings	Journal
Bayar, Huseynov, & Sardarli	Corporate Governance, Tax Avoidance, and Financial Constraints (2018)	USA	Examine governance influence on tax avoidance under financial constraints	Panel regression	Strong governance reduces aggressive tax avoidance and alleviates agency problems.	Financial Management
Jiménez-Angueira	The Effect of the Interplay Between Corporate Governance and External Monitoring Regimes on Firms' Tax Avoidance (2018)	USA	Investigate governance and external monitoring effects	Archival study	Governance effectiveness increases when combined with strong external monitoring.	Advances in Accounting

Kovermann & Velte	The Impact of Corporate Governance on Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Literature Review (2019)	International	Synthesize governance and tax avoidance studies	Literature Review	Governance mechanisms generally reduce tax avoidance, but findings remain inconsistent.	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation
Deslandes, Fortin, & Landry	Audit Committee Characteristics and Tax Aggressiveness (2020)	Canada	Examine audit committee effectiveness	Panel analysis	Independent and financially expert audit committees reduce tax aggressiveness.	Managerial Auditing Journal
Ali et al.	Board Attributes and Tax Avoidance: The Moderating Role of Institutional Ownership (2024)	Pakistan	Analyses board characteristics and institutional ownership	Panel regression	Institutional ownership strengthens monitoring effectiveness and reduces tax avoidance.	Managerial and Decision Economics
Salehi et al.	Impact of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance (2024)	Iran	Investigate governance determinants of tax avoidance	Quantitative analysis	Board effectiveness and governance quality significantly reduce tax avoidance.	Journal of Public Affairs
Koay & Sapiei	The Role of Corporate Governance on Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Developing Country Perspective (2025)	Malaysia	Review governance mechanisms in developing economies	Structured literature review	Governance effects differ across ownership structures and institutional settings.	Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies
Yahaya, Oon, & Jusoh	Board Structure, Executive Attributes and Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Systematic Literature Review (2026)	International	Review board and executive characteristics	Systematic Literature Review	Board structure and executive attributes exhibit mixed effects depending on institutional context.	Asian Review of Accounting

Another prominent stream of research concerns **ownership structure**. Institutional ownership generally enhances monitoring effectiveness because institutional investors possess greater resources, expertise, and incentives to oversee managerial behavior. Conversely, concentrated ownership and family ownership produce more nuanced outcomes. While concentrated ownership may reduce agency conflicts between managers and owners, it can simultaneously increase incentives for controlling shareholders to engage in tax avoidance strategies that maximize private benefits. Consequently, the ownership structure functions both as a monitoring mechanism and as a potential source of governance conflict.

The literature also highlights the importance of **board diversity**, particularly gender diversity. Increasingly, studies suggest that gender-diverse boards are associated with more ethical decision-making processes, stronger stakeholder orientation, and greater risk aversion. These characteristics often translate into more conservative tax strategies and lower levels of tax aggressiveness. However, empirical evidence remains limited and sometimes inconsistent across jurisdictions, indicating a need for further investigation.

Perhaps the most significant observation emerging from the literature is that governance mechanisms do not operate independently of one another. Rather, governance effectiveness is shaped by interactions among internal governance structures, external

monitoring systems, legal frameworks, and institutional environments. Jiménez-Angueira (2018) demonstrated that strong governance mechanisms become substantially more effective when supported by robust external monitoring regimes. Likewise, country-level governance quality, legal enforcement, and investor protection significantly moderate the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance. This finding suggests that governance mechanisms should be examined within broader institutional ecosystems rather than as isolated organizational attributes.

Emerging Patterns and Research Gaps within this thematic area: Firstly, **the Contextual Gap**. Most studies focus on either developed economies or individual countries. Comparative cross-country evidence remains relatively limited despite increasing recognition that governance effectiveness depends heavily on institutional environments. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how governance mechanisms operate across different legal traditions, governance systems, and regulatory frameworks—this is the second **Theoretical Gap**. Agency theory dominates the literature and serves as the primary explanatory framework for most empirical studies. Although agency theory effectively explains monitoring functions and managerial incentives, it provides only a partial understanding of contemporary tax behavior. Stakeholder theory, legitimacy theory, institutional theory, and resource dependence theory remain substantially underutilized despite their

potential to explain sustainability-oriented tax behavior and governance practices. Thirdly, **the Governance Integration Gap**. Most studies examine governance mechanisms independently rather than as interconnected governance systems. Board characteristics, audit committees, ownership structures, and executive attributes are typically analyzed separately, limiting understanding of how governance mechanisms interact to influence tax avoidance outcomes—finally, **the Contemporary Governance Gap**. Literature remains heavily focused on traditional governance mechanisms. Emerging governance dimensions, such as ESG governance, digital governance, artificial intelligence-based monitoring systems, blockchain-enabled transparency mechanisms, and tax risk governance, remain largely underexplored despite their growing importance in corporate practice.

The present study advances literature in several important ways: **First**, unlike previous reviews that focus on isolated governance mechanisms, this study provides an integrated synthesis of corporate governance and tax avoidance by examining the interplay among board structures, ownership arrangements, audit committees, executive characteristics, and institutional environments. **Second**, this study combines systematic literature review procedures with bibliometric analysis, enabling a comprehensive examination of both the intellectual structure and substantive findings of the field. This approach provides insights not only into what has been studied but also into how scholarly knowledge has evolved. **Third**, the study extends the existing governance literature by incorporating emerging dimensions, including ESG governance, sustainability-oriented governance, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and tax risk management. These themes are increasingly visible in recent publications but remain largely absent from prior reviews. **Finally**, this study proposes a future research framework that integrates traditional governance mechanisms with contemporary sustainability and digital governance perspectives. By doing so, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how corporate governance influences tax avoidance in increasingly complex organizational and institutional environments.

## **Theme 2. Agency Theory, Ownership Structure, and Monitoring Effectiveness**

Agency Theory remains the dominant theoretical lens for explaining the relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance, see details in **Table 4**. The theory posits that **conflicts of interest** arise from the separation of ownership and control, whereby managers may pursue personal objectives that are not always aligned with shareholders' interests (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). In the context of taxation, tax avoidance is a strategic decision that can generate economic benefits by reducing tax liabilities and increasing cash flows. However, aggressive tax

strategies may also create opportunities for managerial opportunism by increasing information asymmetry and reducing transparency. Consequently, tax avoidance presents a dual effect. While it has the potential to enhance firm value, it may simultaneously increase agency costs if managers exploit complex tax arrangements for private benefits. This perspective has been widely adopted in the tax avoidance literature and continues to provide the primary theoretical foundation for understanding how governance mechanisms influence corporate tax behavior (Kovermann & Velte, 2019; Suprapti et al., 2016).

A central theme in this stream of research concerns the role of ownership structure as a monitoring mechanism that mitigates **agency conflicts and constrains aggressive tax behavior**. The literature consistently suggests that **institutional ownership** enhances monitoring effectiveness because institutional investors possess the expertise, resources, and incentives to oversee managerial decisions. For example, Ali et al. (2024) found that institutional ownership strengthens the ability of board attributes to reduce tax avoidance, highlighting the complementary relationship between internal governance mechanisms and external monitoring. Similarly, Bayar et al. (2018) demonstrated that strong governance structures reduce agency conflicts and discourage aggressive tax practices, particularly in financially constrained firms. Nevertheless, the effects of ownership concentration and family ownership remain inconclusive. While concentrated ownership can reduce managerial opportunism through closer oversight, it may also increase the risk of expropriation of minority shareholders when controlling owners use tax avoidance strategies to maximize private benefits. These mixed findings suggest that ownership structure should not be viewed solely as a governance mechanism but rather as a complex institutional arrangement whose effectiveness depends on the surrounding legal and governance environment (Koay & Sapiei, 2025).

Another important finding emerging from the literature is that the value implications of tax avoidance are highly contingent upon the level of **agency costs and the institutional context** in which firms operate. (Yoon et al., 2024) reported that tax avoidance can enhance firm value when agency costs are low because tax savings are more likely to be used for value-creating activities. However, when agency costs increase, the positive effects of tax avoidance tend to diminish as investors perceive aggressive tax practices as sources of uncertainty, reputational risk, and potential regulatory scrutiny. Furthermore, evidence indicates that the effectiveness of ownership structures and monitoring mechanisms varies considerably across countries due to differences in investor protection, legal enforcement, and governance quality (Koay & Sapiei, 2025; Kovermann & Velte, 2019). These findings

suggest that Agency Theory alone may be insufficient to explain the increasingly complex relationship between corporate governance and tax avoidance. Future research should therefore integrate complementary perspectives, including **Stakeholder Theory, Institutional Theory, and Legitimacy**

**Theory**, while also incorporating emerging issues such as ESG governance, digital governance, and tax risk management to develop a more comprehensive understanding of corporate tax behavior in contemporary business environments.

**Table 4. Theme 2: Key Studies on Agency Theory, Ownership Structure, and Monitoring Effectiveness**

Authors	Title and Year	Country	Aim	Methodology	Main Findings	Journal
Jensen & Meckling	<i>Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure</i> (1976)	United States	To develop Agency Theory	Conceptual study	Conflicts between managers and shareholders generate agency costs that require monitoring mechanisms.	Journal of Financial Economics
Suprpti et al.	<i>Tax Avoidance in the Perspective of Agency Theory: A Review of the Literature</i> (2016)	Indonesia	To review tax avoidance from an agency theory perspective	Literature review	Agency Theory serves as the primary framework for explaining tax avoidance behavior.	International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research
Bayar et al.	<i>Corporate Governance, Tax Avoidance, and Financial Constraints</i> (2018)	United States	To examine the relationship between governance, tax avoidance, and financial constraints	Panel regression	Strong governance reduces agency conflicts and constrains aggressive tax avoidance.	Financial Management
Kovermann & Velte	<i>The Impact of Corporate Governance on Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Literature Review</i> (2019)	International	To synthesize research on governance and tax avoidance	Literature review	Ownership structures and monitoring mechanisms are key determinants of tax avoidance.	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation
Rashid Khan et al.	<i>Corporate Governance Quality, Ownership Structure, Agency Costs, and Firm Performance</i> (2020)	Pakistan	To investigate the relationship among governance quality, ownership structure, and agency costs	Panel data analysis	Institutional ownership improves monitoring effectiveness and reduces agency costs.	Journal of Risk and Financial Management
Yoon et al.	<i>Effects of Agency Costs on the Relationship Between Tax Avoidance and Firm Value</i> (2024)	China	To examine the role of agency costs in the relationship between tax avoidance and firm value	Regression analysis	The positive effect of tax avoidance on firm value diminishes when agency costs increase.	Journal of Social Economics Research
Ali et al.	<i>Board Attributes and Tax Avoidance: The Moderating Role of Institutional Ownership</i> (2024)	Pakistan	To investigate the moderating role of institutional ownership	Panel regression	Institutional ownership strengthens the effectiveness of governance mechanisms in reducing tax avoidance.	Managerial and Decision Economics
Koay & Sapiei	<i>The Role of Corporate Governance on Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Developing Country Perspective</i> (2025)	Developing countries	To review governance mechanisms in developing economies	Structured literature review	The effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms depends on institutional contexts.	Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies

### Theme 3. Corporate Social Responsibility, ESG, and Responsible Tax Behavior

The integration of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** perspectives has emerged as one of the most

significant developments in the corporate governance and tax avoidance literature, see detailed **Table 5**. While earlier studies primarily viewed tax avoidance as a legitimate strategy for maximizing shareholder wealth through tax savings, recent research increasingly recognizes taxation as an important

component of corporate responsibility and sustainable business practices. From this perspective, aggressive tax avoidance may undermine corporate legitimacy and conflict with stakeholder expectations regarding fairness, transparency, and social contribution. Consequently, firms with stronger CSR commitments and higher ESG performance are generally expected to adopt more responsible tax strategies and exhibit lower levels of tax avoidance (Salhi et al., 2020; Velte, 2026).

The literature further suggests that ESG practices extend traditional governance mechanisms, promoting accountability, ethical decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. Empirical evidence indicates that board characteristics influence tax behavior not only directly but also indirectly through sustainability-oriented initiatives. For example, firms with stronger ESG performance tend to exhibit more transparent tax practices and lower tax aggressiveness, as sustainability objectives encourage greater consideration of long-term stakeholder interests (Khlifi et al., 2025). Similarly, Nerantzidis et al. (2024) found that higher CSR performance is generally associated with lower levels of tax avoidance, although the magnitude of this relationship varies across institutional environments. These findings indicate that ESG and CSR can complement traditional governance mechanisms in shaping responsible tax behavior.

Despite the generally negative association between CSR, ESG, and tax avoidance, the literature also highlights a notable paradox. Some firms may use CSR

initiatives strategically to enhance legitimacy and improve stakeholder perceptions while simultaneously engaging in aggressive tax planning. Salhi et al. (2020) demonstrated that the effectiveness of CSR in reducing tax avoidance depends heavily on legal systems and governance environments. In countries with weaker governance structures, CSR may substitute for formal governance mechanisms, whereas in stronger institutional settings, CSR and governance mechanisms tend to operate as complementary forces. This evidence suggests that CSR should not automatically be interpreted as an indicator of responsible tax behavior, as the authenticity of sustainability initiatives varies considerably across organizations and contexts.

Overall, the findings indicate that the relationship between CSR, ESG, and tax avoidance is highly context-dependent and influenced by governance quality, institutional environments, and stakeholder pressures. Although sustainability-oriented governance has become an increasingly important research stream, significant gaps remain in integrating CSR and ESG perspectives with traditional governance theories, as well as in addressing emerging issues such as digital governance, tax transparency, and responsible taxation. These gaps highlight the need for a more comprehensive framework that connects corporate governance, sustainability, and taxation to better understand corporate tax behavior in an increasingly complex, stakeholder-oriented business environment (Salhi et al., 2020; Velte, 2026).

**Table 5. Theme 3 Key Studies on CSR, ESG, and Responsible Tax Behavior**

Authors	Title and Year	Country	Aim	Methodology	Main Findings	Journal
Salhi, Riguen, Kachouri, & Jarboui	The Mediating Role of Corporate Social Responsibility on the Relationship Between Governance and Tax Avoidance: UK Common Law Versus French Civil Law (2020)	UK and France	Examine the mediating role of CSR in governance and tax avoidance	Comparative empirical analysis	CSR acts as both a complement and a substitute for governance, depending on the legal systems	Social Responsibility Journal
Nerantzidis, Persakis, & Tzeremes	Tax Avoidance, CSR Performance and CEO Characteristics: Evidence from Developed and Developing Countries (2024)	International	Investigate the relationship between CSR performance and executive characteristics in tax avoidance decisions.	Cross-country analysis	Higher CSR performance is associated with lower tax avoidance, though the effect varies across countries.	Development and Sustainability in Economics and Finance
Khlifi, Chouaibi, & Chouaibi	Do ESG Practices Mediate the Relationship Between Board Characteristics and Tax Avoidance in G20 Countries? (2025)	G20 Countries	Examine ESG as a mediating mechanism	Panel data analysis	ESG practices partially mediate the relationship between board characteristics and tax avoidance	Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society
Velte	Corporate Social Responsibility and Tax Avoidance: A Literature Review on Contextual Factors (2026)	International	Review CSR and tax avoidance literature	Structured literature review	CSR generally reduces tax avoidance, but contextual factors significantly influence outcomes	Sustainable Development
Hien, Thanh,	Bibliometric Analysis	International	Map the	Bibliometric	Research has	Discover

Phi, & Le	of Corporate Social Responsibility and Tax Avoidance (2026)		intellectual development of CSR and tax avoidance research	analysis		shifted from traditional tax planning toward sustainability and responsible taxation.	Sustainability
Mlaiki, Ben Ali, & Regaieg	Responsible Governance and Tax Avoidance: Do CSR, Business Ethics, and Green Innovation Matter? (2026)	International	Examine ethical governance and sustainability factors	ESG data analysis		CSR, ethical governance, and green innovation contribute to lower levels of tax avoidance	International Journal of Ethics and Systems

#### Theme 4. Digital Transformation, Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Governance

Digital transformation has emerged as one of the most important developments in the corporate governance and tax avoidance literature (see **Table 6** for details). The increasing adoption of **artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain technology, big data analytics, and digital governance** platforms has fundamentally changed how organizations manage governance, compliance, transparency, and taxation. Unlike traditional governance mechanisms that rely primarily on board oversight and monitoring structures, digital governance enables real-time monitoring, enhanced transparency, and more effective risk management. Recent studies suggest that digital technologies improve information quality, reduce information asymmetry, and strengthen accountability, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of corporate governance systems (AlShamsi et al., 2021; Salamzadeh et al., 2024).

The literature highlights a dual relationship between digital transformation and tax avoidance. On the one hand, digital technologies can improve tax compliance by enabling automated monitoring, risk detection, and transparent reporting. Artificial intelligence, for example, enables organizations and tax authorities to analyze large volumes of data, identify irregular tax positions, and strengthen compliance systems. Blockchain technology further enhances transparency by creating immutable records of transactions, thereby improving auditability and reducing opportunities for manipulation (AlShamsi et al., 2021). On the other hand, digital transformation may also provide firms with more sophisticated tools to optimize tax planning and manage complex cross-border transactions. Evidence from recent studies suggests that

digitalization can simultaneously increase operational efficiency and create new opportunities for aggressive tax strategies, depending on governance quality and regulatory oversight (Weichen & Mayburov, 2025).

Artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies have become particularly important in shaping contemporary governance and taxation practices. AI-based systems support predictive analytics, automated compliance monitoring, and real-time tax risk assessment, allowing organizations to identify potential issues before they become significant regulatory concerns. Similarly, blockchain technology strengthens governance quality by improving transaction transparency, traceability, and stakeholder access to reliable information. These technological advancements indicate that governance is increasingly shifting from traditional monitoring mechanisms toward data-driven, technology-enabled systems that integrate compliance, risk management, and strategic decision-making (Rajarajeswari et al., 2024).

Despite the growing importance of digital governance, literature remains fragmented and largely conceptual. Empirical evidence on the direct impact of digital transformation on tax avoidance remains limited, particularly in emerging economies. Furthermore, existing studies rarely integrate digital governance with established theoretical perspectives such as Agency Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Institutional Theory. This gap suggests that future research should explore the intersection of digital governance, ESG practices, tax risk management, and corporate tax behavior to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how technological innovation reshapes governance effectiveness and tax decision-making in increasingly digitalized business environments (AlShamsi et al., 2021; Salamzadeh et al., 2024).

**Table 6. Theme 4: Key Studies on Digital Transformation, Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Governance**

Authors	Title and Year	Country	Aim	Methodology	Main Findings	Journal/Source
AlShamsi et al.	Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain for Transparency in Governance (2021)	UAE	Examine the role of AI and blockchain in governance transparency	Conceptual and technological review	AI and blockchain improve transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of governance.	Studies in Computational Intelligence
Salamzadeh et al.	The Role of Digital Platforms in Transforming Corporate Governance: A Path	International	Investigate digital governance and sustainability	Literature-based analysis	Digital platforms enhance governance quality, ESG implementation, and stakeholder	Modern Corporate Governance Strategies for Sustainable Value Creation

	to Sustainability Through ESG (2024)						engagement.	
Ansarullah et al.	Artificial Intelligence in Tax Compliance: Transforming Taxpayer Behavior and System Efficiency (2025)	International	Explore applications in tax compliance	AI	Conceptual review		AI improves tax compliance, monitoring efficiency, and the prediction of taxpayer behavior.	Modeling and Profiling Taxpayer Behavior and Compliance
Mary Aruja & Thomas	Technological Transformation in Governance Mechanisms: A Constructive Bibliometric Review (2025)	International	Examine technological transformation in governance research		Bibliometric analysis		Digital governance has emerged as a major research stream in governance studies.	EDPACS
Weichen & Mayburov	The Role of Corporate Digital Transformation in Tax Evasion Practices: The Case of China's Non-Financial Listed Companies (2026)	China	Examine the effect of digital transformation on tax behavior		Panel data analysis		Digital transformation can both reduce compliance costs and facilitate sophisticated tax avoidance.	Journal of Tax Reform
Rajarajeswari et al.	Convergence of Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain in Finance and Governance (2024)	International	Explore blockchain integration in governance systems	AI-	Conceptual analysis		AI and blockchain strengthen transparency and quality of governance monitoring.	Applications of Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence in Finance and Governance

### Theme 5. Tax Risk as an Emerging Research Frontier

Tax risk has emerged as an important and rapidly growing research stream within the corporate governance and tax avoidance literature, see detailed **Table 7**. While earlier studies primarily focused on the benefits of tax avoidance in reducing tax burdens and increasing after-tax cash flows, recent research emphasizes the uncertainties and potential adverse consequences associated with aggressive tax strategies. **Tax risk** encompasses exposure to regulatory scrutiny, tax audits, financial penalties, litigation, reputational damage, and stakeholder concerns regarding corporate tax practices. As a result, taxation is increasingly viewed not only as a financial management issue but also as a critical component of corporate governance and enterprise risk management (Hanlon & Heitzman, 2010; Saragih & Ali, 2023).

The literature consistently highlights the role of corporate governance in mitigating tax-related risks. Governance mechanisms such as board independence, audit committee effectiveness, executive oversight, and ownership monitoring help improve transparency and ensure that tax planning activities remain aligned with corporate objectives and regulatory requirements. (Armstrong et al., 2015) found that governance quality significantly influences managerial tax decisions, while Salehi et al. (2024) demonstrated that effective governance reduces aggressive tax behavior and associated risk exposure. These findings suggest that governance mechanisms serve not only as monitoring tools but also as strategic risk-management instruments

that help firms balance tax efficiency with long-term sustainability.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between tax risk, investor perceptions, and firm value. Although tax avoidance can generate short-term financial benefits, investors increasingly recognize that aggressive tax strategies may create uncertainty regarding future cash flows, regulatory outcomes, and corporate reputation. (Drake et al., 2019) reported that higher tax risk is associated with lower investor valuation and greater information uncertainty. This evidence indicates that the economic benefits of tax avoidance may be offset by higher risk premiums and reduced market confidence when governance mechanisms fail to manage tax-related risks adequately. Consequently, tax risk serves as an important intermediary factor linking corporate governance, tax behavior, and firm performance.

Recent studies also position tax risk within broader sustainability and ESG discussions, reflecting growing stakeholder expectations regarding transparency and responsible taxation. Firms are increasingly expected to demonstrate accountability not only in financial reporting but also in their tax practices. Despite this growing attention, the literature remains fragmented, particularly regarding the integration of tax risk with ESG governance, digital transformation, and emerging governance technologies. This gap suggests that future research should adopt a more comprehensive perspective that integrates corporate governance, tax risk management, sustainability, and digital governance to better explain corporate tax behavior in

an increasingly transparent, stakeholder-oriented business environment (Kovermann & Velte, 2019; Saragih & Ali, 2023).

**Table 7. Theme 5 Key Studies on Tax Risk, Corporate Governance, and Tax Avoidance**

Authors	Title and Year	Country	Aim	Methodology	Main Findings	Journal
Hanlon & Heitzman	A Review of Tax Research (2010)	United States	Review major tax research streams	Literature review	Tax risk is identified as an important but underdeveloped area in taxation research.	Journal of Accounting and Economics
Armstrong, Blouin, Jagolinzer & Larcker	Corporate Governance, Incentives, and Tax Avoidance (2015)	United States	Examine governance mechanisms and tax outcomes	Archival study	Governance quality influences tax planning and risk exposure	Journal of Accounting and Economics
Drake, Lusch, & Stekelberg	Does Tax Risk Affect Investor Valuation? (2019)	United States	Investigate the impact of tax risk on firm valuation	Empirical analysis	Higher tax risk is associated with lower investor valuation and greater uncertainty.	Contemporary Accounting Research
Kovermann & Velte	The Impact of Corporate Governance on Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Literature Review (2019)	International	Review governance and tax avoidance literature	Literature review	Governance mechanisms influence both tax avoidance and tax-related risks	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation
Saragih & Ali	Corporate Tax Risk: A Literature Review and Future Research Directions (2023)	International	Synthesize tax risk literature	Systematic literature review	Tax risk remains fragmented and lacks theoretical integration	Management Review Quarterly
Salehi et al.	Impact of Corporate Governance on Tax Avoidance (2024)	Iran	Examine governance determinants of tax avoidance	Quantitative analysis	Effective governance reduces aggressive tax practices and associated risks	Journal of Public Affairs
Yahaya, Oon, & Jusoh	Board Structure, Executive Attributes and Corporate Tax Avoidance: A Systematic Literature Review (2026)	International	Review board and executive influences on tax behavior	Systematic literature review	Board effectiveness influences both tax avoidance decisions and tax risk exposure.	Asian Review of Accounting

#### 4. Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive assessment of the intellectual development of research on corporate governance and tax avoidance by integrating a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and a bibliometric assessment. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, 142 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus and accessed on May 30, 2026, were systematically identified, screened, and analyzed. The findings reveal that research in this field has evolved substantially over time, moving beyond a traditional focus on governance mechanisms toward a broader, more interdisciplinary perspective that incorporates sustainability, digital transformation, and risk management. The review confirms that corporate governance mechanisms, including board characteristics, audit committee effectiveness, ownership structures, institutional ownership, and executive attributes, remain the most influential determinants of corporate tax behavior. However, their effectiveness varies considerably across institutional environments, legal systems, regulatory frameworks, and governance contexts, indicating that tax avoidance is a complex phenomenon shaped by both organizational and external factors.

The review further demonstrates that Agency Theory remains the dominant theoretical perspective underpinning the literature. Nevertheless, the increasing prominence of **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, responsible taxation, digital governance, and tax risk management suggests that traditional agency-based explanations are no longer sufficient to capture the multidimensional nature of contemporary corporate tax behavior. The findings indicate that sustainability-oriented governance mechanisms and **digital technologies, including artificial intelligence and blockchain applications**, are becoming increasingly important in promoting transparency, accountability, and tax compliance. At the same time, these technological developments may create new opportunities for sophisticated tax planning, underscoring the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between governance and taxation.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to the literature by synthesizing fragmented evidence from governance, taxation, sustainability, and risk management research into an integrated framework.

The combination of systematic review procedures and bibliometric techniques provides both substantive and intellectual insights into the field's evolution. In addition, the study identifies five major thematic areas: **corporate governance mechanisms; agency theory and ownership structure; CSR and ESG; digital governance; and tax risk.** Among these themes, digital governance and tax risk emerge as the most promising research frontiers, given their growing relevance and limited empirical development. These findings not only reinforce prior evidence on the importance of governance mechanisms in constraining aggressive tax behavior but also challenge the assumption that governance effectiveness can be generalized across institutional settings.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis is limited to articles indexed in Scopus, potentially excluding relevant studies published in other databases. Second, bibliometric findings are influenced by publication and citation patterns and may not fully capture the substantive quality of individual studies. Third, emerging themes such as artificial intelligence, blockchain governance, digital taxation, and tax risk remain relatively underdeveloped in empirical literature. Therefore, future research should expand the scope of analysis by incorporating multiple databases, conducting cross-country comparative studies, and developing integrated theoretical frameworks that combine Agency Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Institutional Theory, and sustainability-oriented perspectives. Further investigation into the interaction between ESG performance, digital governance, tax risk management, and corporate tax avoidance is also needed to advance understanding of corporate tax behavior in an increasingly digitalized, transparent, and sustainability-oriented global business environment.

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