

# Does the Cultural Resource Curse Exist? Evidence from China

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**Abstract.** Utilizing cultural resources development is a popular topic. Economic development in China is expected to achieve this transformation. Based on panel data from 31 provinces in China between 2015 and 2019, this study empirically tests the impact of cultural resources on economic growth. We use a two-way fixed effects model, a moderating effect model, and a mediation effect model. The results indicate that abundant cultural resources can significantly promote overall economic growth, and this relationship still holds after robustness tests. Fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industries and education levels can weaken the positive impact of cultural resources on economic growth. Cultural resources can promote economic growth by increasing the number of tourists; however, some cultural resources still hinder economic growth. Regional heterogeneity exists in the impact of cultural resources on economic growth, showing an imbalance with the highest effect in the west, the second in the central area, and the lowest in the east. This study aims to promote awareness of the cultural resource curse in China.

**Keywords:** Resource curse; Cultural resource curse; Cultural and tourism industries; Cultural economics; China.

## 1. Introduction

In 1905, Weber published *The Protestant Ethic and 'The Spirit of Capitalism'*, which argued that Puritan ethics and ideas influenced the development of capitalism. Since then, the relationship between culture and economy has been considered by scholars from different perspectives. The diversity of cultural phenomena leads to a diversity of cultural concepts, especially in China, where the concepts of culture and cultural resources are confused. Some sociologists, inspired by Weber, continue to study the relationship between religious culture and economic development (Barro et al., 2003; Tabellini, 2005; Panagiotis et al., 2013; Alhendi et al., 2021) and believe that religious preferences (Abrams et al., 1995) are determinants of economic development. Zhang (2012) empirically investigates how habit influences saving propensity and economic growth, and Jiang and Sun (2016) examine the relationship between faith and economic growth. On the other hand, some economists have defined culture as a new economy engine (He, 2018) and examined the role of creative capital (Florida, 2005) and cultural industries (Nagimova et al., 2015; Boccella et al., 2016; He, 2018). Another category of studies explored the relationship between cultural resources and economic growth. This is also the topic of this study.

What is the relationship between cultural resources and economic growth? First, cultural resources can attract industrial investment (Sacco et al., 2009) in regional economic development and form long-term endogenous economic mechanisms (Bucci et al., 2011). Second, cultural resources are essential in attracting and maintaining human capital (Alhendi et al., 2021). Third, cultural resources can attract tourists, develop tourism (Efentaki et al., 2015) and increase employment. Furthermore, some studies have found that a diversified culture brings diverse cultural resources; for example, diverse ethnic and cultural resources bring fame and benefits to the local economy.

However, some scholars have found that cultural resources have a negative effect on economic growth. Primarily, heavy dependence on cultural heritage tourism appears to have led to a recession in the overall economy (Deng et al., 2014). Moreover, although diverse cultures form abundant cultural resources, negative impacts, such as cultural conflicts, hinder development and create a paradox between cultural resources and economic growth. For example, multilingual, cross-cultural

communication greatly increases economic costs and social conflicts (Alesina et al., 2021). Over-rich cultural resources lead to the prevalence of low-end cultural products, followed by a low awareness of optimization and competition, which hinders innovation. In other words, experts found that cultural resources with high abundance, such as natural resources, promote economic development but hinder economic growth, and even do more harm than good.

Many scholars call this phenomenon the ‘Cultural Resource Curse’. Tang (2014) believes that it refers to an economic phenomenon in which rich cultural resources restrict the development of the cultural industry. Consider the Xinjiang Province of China as an example. This region has a huge gap between the backward reality and ideal expectations of cultural industries. In contrast, McDonald’s, which is less than 100 years old, has become the benchmark for cultural industries worldwide. Tang (2015) believed that the ‘curse of cultural resources’ describes a phenomenon in which rich cultural resources fail to develop the cultural industries. Whether cultural resources bring a ‘gospel’ or ‘curse’ to the cultural industry depends on the level of its development ability. Li (2016) believed that the ‘curse of cultural resources’ hypothesis might not be tenable but is an indisputable fact. Shen (2019) found that Wuchuan presented a paradox between cultural resources and the development of cultural industries, forming a cultural ‘resource curse’. Lin (2019) showed that the ‘curse of cultural resources’ does not generally exist. However, different types of cultural resources have different impacts on cultural industries, and the impact of the cultural resource endowments of different cities in different regions on the development level of the cultural industry will also differ. In Jishui, Jiangxi Province, the construction of the Chinese Scholars Cultural Park accounted for 68% of local finances in 2017, and livelihood expenditures were largely squeezed, resulting in corruption.

Therefore, this study aims to empirically test the existence of the cultural resource curse observed by Chinese scholars and raise awareness among scholars about the negative impact of cultural resources on economic growth. Section 2 constructs the theoretical model and proposes the research hypotheses. Section 3 presents the research design. Section 4 presents the empirical testing, followed by mechanism testing in Section 5. Section 6 studies regional heterogeneity, and the conclusion is presented in Section 7.

## 2. Theoretical construction and research hypothesis

### 2.1 Model construction

The Cobb–Douglas production function is used as a reference in the model’s design. The Cobb–Douglas production function is one of the most classical and widely used models for analyzing economic growth. Using manufacturing data from 1899 to 1922, Cobb and Douglas discovered an economic output production function. They found that the key factors affecting economic growth are fixed asset investment, labour force, and technological progress. Their findings are based on Equation (1). In Equation (1),  $Y$  represents economic output,  $A(t)$  represents the level of technological progress,  $L$  represents labour input,  $K$  represents capital input, and  $\mu$  represents random disturbance.  $\alpha$  is the labour elasticity coefficient, and  $\beta$  is the capital elasticity coefficient. In this study, cultural resources are included in the production function as factors affecting economic growth—the new Cobb–Douglas production function. In Equation (2), CR represents the input of cultural resources,  $\gamma$  is the elastic coefficient of cultural resources, and the rest remain unchanged. We take the natural logarithms of both sides of Equation (2) for more convenient processing. In Equation (3), technological progress is constant. At the same time, if  $\gamma > 0$ , it means that cultural resources positively impact economic growth. In contrast, this indicates that cultural resources cause an economic recession.

$$Y = A(t)L^{\alpha}K^{\beta}\mu \quad (1)$$

$$Y = A(t)L^{\alpha}K^{\beta}CR^{\gamma}\mu \quad (2)$$

$$\ln Y = C + \alpha \ln L + \beta \ln K + \gamma \ln CR + \mu \quad (3)$$

## 2.2 Proposal of research hypothesis

Cultural resources may affect economic growth through the resource curse and resource-blessing effects. The resource curse refers to the fact that abundant cultural resources cannot promote economic growth because the diversity of cultural resources does not meet the requirements of the direction of economic growth. The development concept that hinders economic growth is the high abundance of cultural resources. The resource-blessing effect implies that cultural resources increase employment, stimulate consumption, promote economic transformation, and significantly positively affect economic growth through a series of operations. In summary, the net effect of cultural resources on economic growth depends on the relative size of the resource curse and blessing effects. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1-1: If the resource-blessing effect dominates, cultural resources positively impact economic growth.

H1-2: If the resource curse dominates, cultural resources have a negative impact on economic growth.

‘Fixed asset investment’ is one of the important indicators of a country’s or region’s economic development. In this study, the development and utilization of abundant cultural resources will attract a large amount of fixed-asset investment in the cultural tourism industry, increasing employment and productivity. Cultural resources are an important starting point for regional economic growth. However, excessive expectations of effectiveness can lead to crowding out basic fiscal expenditures, such as education and healthcare, through fixed asset investment, as has been the case in China. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2-1: Fixed asset investments enhance the resource-blessing effect of cultural resources.

H2-2: Fixed asset investments enhance the resource curse of cultural resources.

Education level is an important indicator of the quality of the population and workforce in a country or region, and cultural resources play a crucial role. On the one hand, cultural resources help people broaden their horizons and return to their hometowns; on the other hand, improving education levels can also stimulate the development and utilization of cultural resources and enhance the humanistic atmosphere of the entire region. Unfortunately, education is just a part of the culture, and education level reflects the overall situation in the local area, making it difficult for it to play a revolutionary moderating role. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3-1: Education level enhances the resource-blessing effect of cultural resources.

H3-2: Education level enhances the resource curse effect of cultural resources.

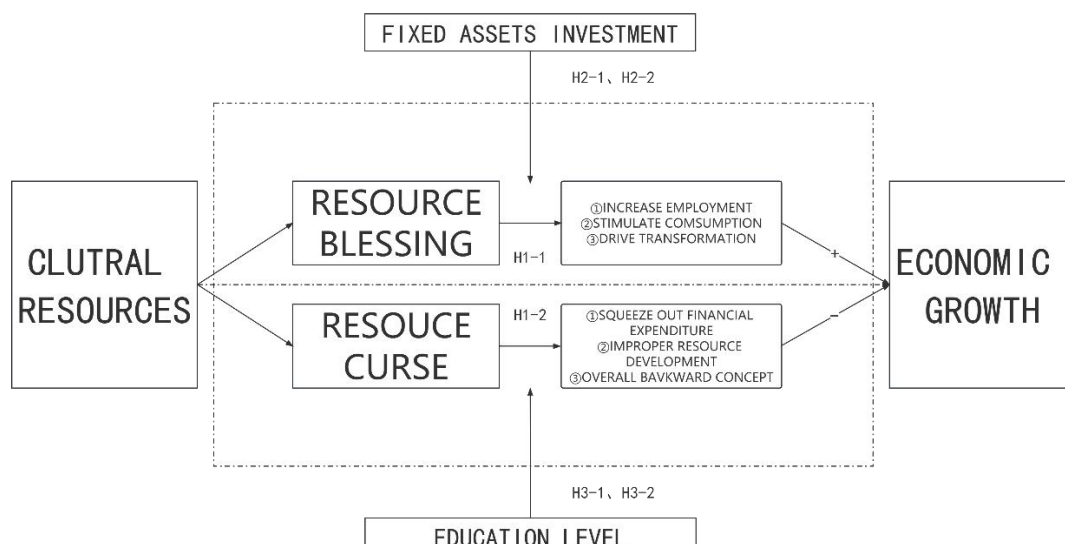


Fig. 1 Research design

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1 Sample selection and data source

This study selected 31 provinces in China from 2015 to 2019 as research samples according to the following principles: ① Due to the difficulty of data acquisition, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan in China were not included in our research scope; ② We excluded cultural resource indicators with weak correlation with economic growth. Finally, 155 provincial-year observations were obtained. The cultural resource indicators in the study are from the National Cultural Relics Bureau, ‘ZHONGGUO WENHUA WENWU HE LÜYOU TONGJI NIANJIAN’ and ‘China Statistical Yearbook on Cultural and Related Industries’, while the fixed asset investment indicators are from the ‘Statistical Yearbook of the China Investment Field’; the education level indicators are from the ‘China Statistical Yearbook’. To overcome the influence of extreme values, all continuous variables in the model were winsorized using 1% and 99% quantiles.

Table 1. Cultural resource indicator system

Number	Indicator	Unit	Weight
1	National Historic City		5.485%
2	National Historic Block		15.500%
3	Cultural and tourism expenses	10000 yuan	5.625%
4	Per capita cultural tourism expenses	yuan	6.789%
5	Number of mass art museums		3.870%
6	Number of cultural centers		4.149%
7	Number of artistic performance organizations		10.221%
8	Total collection of public libraries	10000 volumes	16.649%
9	Performances at art performance venues	10000	5.594%
10	Performance income of art performance venues	10000 yuan	26.059%

#### 3.2 Definition of main variables

(1) Cultural resource indicators (crew). In this study, ten indicators were selected to represent the abundance of cultural resources, and the entropy weighting method was used to form cultural resource indicators. The specific indicator systems and weights are listed in Table 1.

(2) Economic growth indicator (zlngdp): This article refers to the experience of some articles in using the Cobb-Douglas production function and standardizing the regional GDP after taking the natural logarithm as the explanatory variable and indicator of economic growth.

(3) Fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industries (zlninvest): This study obtained the fixed asset investment data divided by industry from the ‘Statistical Yearbook of the China Investment Field’. We then added the fixed production investment of the cultural and tourism industries, and took the natural logarithm to standardize the data.

(4) Education level (Zlnedu): This study used the average years of education per capita to represent the educational level of a region. This article takes the population data divided by education level in the ‘China Statistical Yearbook’ with weighting factors of 0 (no schooling), 6 (primary schools), 9 (junior secondary schools), 12 (regular senior secondary schools), 15 (college students), 16 (undergraduates), and 19 (postgraduates) to calculate a weighted average, followed by taking the natural logarithm and standardizing the results.

### 3.3 Measurement model setting

To verify H1-1 and H1-2, we construct Model (4) to examine the impact of cultural resources on economic growth. If H1-1 is true, the regression coefficient of cultural resources (crewmen) is expected to be significantly greater than zero. If H1-2 is true, the regression coefficient of cultural resources (crewmen) is expected to be significantly less than zero. Model (4) also includes control variables related to economic and social development: capital stock (zlnk) and labour force (zlnl). Additionally, province represents the province-fixed effects to control for provincial-level differences, year represents the time-fixed effects to control for the effects of unobservable time factors on the economy, and  $\varepsilon$  represents a random error term.

$$z \ln gdp = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 crewmen + \alpha_2 z \ln k + \alpha_3 z \ln l + \sum \alpha_i province + \sum \alpha_j year + \varepsilon \quad (4)$$

To examine the moderating effect of fixed asset investment on the relationship between cultural resources and economic growth, we construct Model (5), focusing on the interaction term between cultural resources and fixed asset investment (crinvest). If H2-1 is supported, we expect  $\beta_2 > 0$ , indicating that fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industries promotes the blessing effect of cultural resources. If H2-2 is supported, we expect  $\beta_2 < 0$ , indicating that fixed-asset investments in culture and related industries hinder the blessing effect of cultural resources, thereby promoting the curse effect.

$$z \ln gdp = \beta_0 + \beta_1 cr + \beta_2 crinvest + \beta_3 z \ln invest + \beta_4 z \ln k + \beta_5 z \ln l + \sum \beta_i province + \sum \beta_j year + \varepsilon \quad (5)$$

To test H3-1 and H3-2, we constructed testing model (6) focusing on the interaction term credu between cultural resources and educational levels. If H3-1 is true, we expect  $\gamma_2 > 0$  to indicate that the educational level promotes the resource-blessing effect of cultural resources. If H3-2 is true, we expect  $\gamma_2 < 0$ , indicating that the educational level promotes the resource curse effect of cultural resources.

$$z \ln gdp = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 cr + \gamma_2 credu + \gamma_3 z \ln edu + \beta_4 z \ln k + \beta_5 z \ln l + \sum \beta_i province + \sum \beta_j year + \varepsilon \quad (6)$$

be listed at the end of the contribution under a heading References, see our example below.

## 4. Empirical results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	p50	Max
Economic growth (zlngdp)	155	0.000	0.997	-2.815	0.126	1.725
Cultural resources (crewmen)	155	0.168	0.096	0.032	0.142	0.431
Capital (zlnk)	155	0.001	0.995	-2.580	0.168	1.544
Labor (zlnl)	155	0.000	0.999	-2.833	0.168	1.482
Fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industry (zlninvest)	155	-0.001	0.994	-2.503	0.037	1.982
Interaction between cultural resources and investment (crinvest)	155	0.042	0.189	-0.482	0.006	0.600
Education level (zlnedu)	155	0.002	0.988	-4.060	0.053	2.583
Interaction between cultural resources and education (credu)	155	0.025	0.158	-0.389	0.009	0.661

## 4.2 Multiple regression analysis

Table 3 reports the results of testing the basic hypotheses in this study, with Column (1) showing the results of the univariate regression and Column (2) including the control variables in the model. In the univariate regression, the coefficient of cultural resources (crewm) was 7.519, significant at the 1% level. In economic terms (Column (2)), for each increase in one standard deviation of cultural resources (crewm), economic growth (zlngdp) increased by approximately 0.296 ( $3.083 \times 0.096$ ). These results support H1-1 but reject H1-2, indicating that the resource-blessing effect of cultural resources is greater than the resource-curse effect. This means that areas with a higher abundance of cultural resources have better economic performance. The development and utilization of cultural resources in a region benefit its economic development by bringing in a population flow, creating social employment, driving local employment, and increasing resident income. This provides a new direction for future economic development in the region. However, the relative size does not indicate the absence of the resource curse effect.

Table 3. Cultural resources and economic growth

	(1)	(2)
	zlngdp	zlngdp
crewm	7.519***	3.083***
	(11.622)	(11.670)
CVs	No	Yes
cons	-1.266***	-0.626***
	(-9.744)	(-10.653)
Province	No	No
year	No	Yes
r2_a	0.5171	0.9185
F	135.0778***	380.1525***
N	155	155

t statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

We tested Model (5) to examine the moderating effect of fixed asset investment in cultural tourism on the relationship between cultural resources and economic growth. Table 4 reports the regression results (Columns (1) and (2)), where the regression coefficients for cultural resources (crewm) remain significant at the 1% level. This study focuses on the interaction between fixed asset investment in cultural tourism (ceinvest) and cultural resources. It shows that the regression coefficient for fixed asset investment in cultural tourism (crinvest) is -0.487, which is significant at the 5% level. These results indicate that fixed asset investment in cultural tourism moderates the positive effect of cultural resources on economic growth, thus supporting H2-2. Investors' speculative psychology and eagerness for quick success in developing and utilizing cultural resources may lead to unrealistic expectations regarding their economic benefits, resulting in unintended consequences.

China's vast territory and significant differences in educational levels provides a suitable background for studying the heterogeneous regional impact of cultural resources on economic growth. Columns (3) and (4) of Table 4 report the test results, where the regression coefficient for educational level (zlnedu) is significantly positive at the 1% level, indicating that an increase in educational level is conducive to regional economic development. The regression coefficient for cultural resources (crew members) remains significant at the 1% level. This study focuses on the interaction between educational level and cultural resources (credits). The regression coefficients for Credu are -4.016 and -0.909, significant at the 1% and 5% levels, respectively, indicating that an increase in educational level weakens the positive impact of cultural resources on economic growth, consistent with hypothesis H3-2. An increase in educational level can significantly promote economic and social development but may not be conducive to preserving and protecting cultural resources. There may even be a dual deficiency of low educational level and a low abundance of

cultural resources in some areas, weakening the positive impact of cultural resources on economic growth.

Table 4. Moderation effect model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	zlngdp	zlngdp	zlngdp	zlngdp
crewm	5.392***	3.046***	7.632***	1.959***
	(13.368)	(12.050)	(12.918)	(2.930)
crinvest	-1.494***	-0.487**		
	(-4.367)	(-2.440)		
zlninvest	0.763***	-0.039		
	(9.591)	(-0.589)		
credu			-4.016***	-0.909**
			(-8.518)	(-2.394)
zlnedu			0.864***	0.474***
			(10.087)	(8.026)
CVs	No	Yes	No	Yes
cons	-0.845***	-0.627***	-1.187***	-0.842***
	(-10.829)	(-11.543)	(-11.262)	(-3.139)
province	No	No	No	Yes
year	No	Yes	No	No
r2 a	0.7606	0.9214	0.6943	0.9900
F	147.1328***	328.4206***	97.1403***	1509.8329***
N	155	155	155	155

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

#### 4.3 Robustness test

(1) Nonlinear relationship. Considering this nonlinear relationship, this study includes the quadratic term (crrc) of cultural resources (cerwm) in Model (1). The results show that the regression coefficient of economic growth (zlngdp) is still significantly positive, whereas that of the quadratic term (crrc) is positive but not significant. This indicates insufficient evidence of a nonlinear relationship between cultural resources and economic growth. However, cultural resources still impact regional economic growth, and the conclusions of previous analyses remain unchanged.

(2) Subsample regression. (1) Do the regression results of the subsamples differ from those of the total sample? This study uses subsamples whose names begin with ‘s’ for testing. (2) Considering the impact of culture and tourism integration, observations from 2018 and 2019 were removed for testing purposes. The test results did not alter the basic conclusions of this study.

### 5. Mechanism testing

In the earlier part of this study, we found that cultural resources promote regional economic growth, but the intermediate mechanisms remain at the theoretical level. This study attempts to provide further empirical evidence that opens the ‘black box’ of regional economic growth and social development.

#### 5.1 Testing the existence of the resource-blessing effect

This study used the mediating effect to test whether cultural resources affect economic development by attracting tourists. The following model tests the path of ‘cultural resources - tourist reception - economic growth’. The specific testing model is as follows:

$$z \ln gdp = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 crewm + \sum \alpha_i CVs + \varepsilon \quad (7)$$

$$z \ln tourist = \beta_0 + \beta_1 crewm + \sum \beta_i CVs + \varepsilon \quad (8)$$

$$z \ln gdp = \varphi_0 + \varphi_1 crewm + \varphi_2 z \ln tourist + \sum \varphi_i CVs + \varepsilon \quad (9)$$

Table 5 reports the test results of ‘cultural resources - tourist reception - economic growth’. Column (1) results show that the regression coefficient of cultural resources (crew<sub>m</sub>) is significantly positive at the 1% level. Column (2) presents the test results on the mediating effect of cultural resources, where the regression coefficient of cultural resources (crew<sub>m</sub>) is also significant at the 1% level, indicating that regional cultural resources increase the reception of Level A tourist attractions, which is consistent with the resource-blessing effect theory. This study focuses on the results in column (3), where the regression coefficient of tourist numbers (zln<sub>tourist</sub>) is significantly positive at the 1% level, indicating that the more tourists, the better the economic development.

Moreover, cultural resources (crew<sub>m</sub>) were significantly positive at the 1% level (and  $|\alpha_1| < |\varphi_1|$ ), indicating that the number of tourists partially mediated the relationship between cultural resources and economic growth, with a mediating effect of 1.260. This study also conducted a Sobel test for robustness, and the Z-statistics passed the 1% level statistical test, confirming the significant mediating effect.

Table 5. Mediation effect model

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	zlngdp	zln <sub>tourist</sub>	zlngdp
crew <sub>m</sub>	3.083***	5.164***	2.620***
	(11.670)	(8.154)	(9.867)
zln <sub>tourist</sub>			0.244***
			(5.146)
CVs	Yes	Yes	Yes
cons	-0.626***	-0.697***	-0.577***
	(-10.653)	(-5.111)	(-10.134)
province	No	No	No
year	Yes	Yes	Yes
r <sup>2</sup> a	0.9185	0.4998	0.9345
F	380.1525***	24.5573***	338.1593***
N	155	155	155

t statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 5.2 Testing for the existence of the resource curse

Based on the empirical results in the previous section, it has been preliminarily proven that cultural resources positively impact economic growth. However, the cultural resource indicator (crew<sub>m</sub>) used in this study was a weighted entropy value formed by the cultural resource indicator system. The specific impact of individual cultural resources on economic growth could not be determined. Therefore, studying the specific impacts of cultural resources on economic growth is necessary. The regression results are shown in Table 6. According to the results, the regression coefficients of four of the ten specific cultural resources were significantly negative, accounting for 40% of all cultural resources. This indicates that although cultural resources benefit overall economic growth, they are relatively independent and cannot be completely synchronized with economic growth. Therefore, a resource curse exists but is a matter of relative size. The issues of developing and utilizing cultural resources and promoting economic growth while protecting cultural values and increasing social benefits still need to be explored.



Table 6. Different cultural resources and economic growth

	(1)	(2)
	zlngdp	zlngdp
National Historic City	-0.071***	-0.027
	(-2.717)	(-1.023)
National Historic Block	0.041*	0.048**
	(1.909)	(2.337)
Cultural and tourism expenses	0.034	-0.018
	(0.965)	(-0.536)
Per capita cultural tourism expenses	0.145***	0.159***
	(4.068)	(4.654)
Number of mass art museums	-0.178**	-0.142***
	(-5.651)	(-4.150)
Number of cultural centers	-0.020	-0.100**
	(-0.452)	(-2.059)
Number of artistic performance organizations	0.043***	0.026*
	(2.973)	(1.898)
Total collection of public libraries	0.227***	0.190***
	(3.991)	(3.629)
Performances at art performance venues	0.032***	0.028**
	(2.774)	(2.570)
Performance income of art performance venues	-0.048**	-0.025
	(-2.128)	(-1.220)
CVs	Yes	Yes
cons	0.000	-0.103***
	(0.006)	(-3.656)
province	No	No
year	No	Yes
r2 a	0.9699	0.9746
F	588.2192***	692.4880***
N	155	155

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 6. Supplementary test to consider regional differences

Regional differences are important in academic research. Does the impact of cultural resources on economic growth differ between the eastern, central, and western regions of China? On the one hand, most western regions are economically underdeveloped and lag behind in economic development compared to the central and eastern regions. Although the level of modernization in the western region is not as high as that in the central and eastern regions, this has led to the formation of unique regional cultural resources; however, it is difficult to judge their role in promoting economic growth. Therefore, the resource-blessing effect of cultural resources may be greater in the western regions. Conversely, the consumption by tourists from the eastern region can stimulate the development and utilization of cultural resources in the western region, promote economic growth in the western region, and promote common prosperity. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that promoting economic growth through cultural resources is greater in the western region than in the central or eastern regions. The sample was divided into eastern, central, and western groups according to regional location. The results of the analysis show that the promotion of economic growth by cultural resources is greater in the western region, confirming this hypothesis.

Table 7. Regional differences

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	zlngdp	zlngdp	zlngdp
crewm	1.253**	5.730***	10.317***
	(2.649)	(5.018)	(6.985)
zlnk	0.200**	-0.083	0.106
	(2.092)	(-0.981)	(1.162)
zlnl	-1.744*	-0.443	0.317
	(-2.015)	(-0.418)	(0.269)
cons	-0.330	-1.117***	-2.520
	(-0.901)	(-3.686)	(-0.776)
province	Yes	Yes	Yes
year	No	No	No
r2_a	0.9821	0.9605	0.9918
F	229.3075***	100.1841***	493.2131***
N	55	50	50

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Research Conclusions

Cultural resources have been highly regarded as one of the engines of economic growth. Based on panel data from 31 provinces and cities in China, this study investigated the impact of cultural resources on economic growth. It examined the moderating effects of fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industries and the education level of their relationship. This study also tested the mechanisms by which cultural resources affect economic growth. The research findings showed that cultural resources can promote economic growth and that the resource-blessing effect is effective. However, fixed asset investment in the cultural and tourism industries and education levels could weaken the promotional effect of cultural resources on economic growth, resulting in a resource-curse effect. Further research on the mechanism of the impact of cultural resources showed that some types of cultural resources did not produce a resource-blessing effect but rather a curse effect on economic growth. However, cultural resources can also positively impact the number of tourists, promoting economic growth through direct and indirect means, and supporting the dominant view of the resource-blessing effect. Finally, this study found that cultural resources make a greater contribution to economic growth in the western region.

### 7.2 Inspiration

In 1993, Auty discovered and confirmed the ‘resource curse’, which has become an important concept in development economics. In recent years, some Chinese scholars have proposed the hypothesis of the ‘cultural resource curse’ based on their experiences in China, expanding the research scope of the resource curse from natural resources to cultural resources. This article uses Chinese evidence to empirically verify the existence of the cultural resource curse and introduces this phenomenon to the world. At the same time, this article also hopes to raise awareness among scholars of the negative effects of cultural resources on economic growth to encourage a clearer understanding of cultural resources and a more rigorous exploration of the relationship between culture and the economy.

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