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# **ARTICLE**

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# Twin deficit hypothesis and reverse causality: a case study of China

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**ABSTRACT** This paper analyses the causal relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit for the Chinese economy using time series data over the period of 1985–2016. We initially analyzed the theoretical framework obtained from the *Keynesian* spending equation and empirically test the hypothesis using autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) bounds testing and the Zivot and Andrew (ZA) structural break for testing the twin deficits hypothesis. The results of ARDL bound testing approach gives evidence in support of longrun relationship among the variables, validating the Keynesian hypothesis for the Chinese economy. The result of Granger causality test accepts the twin deficit hypothesis. Our results suggest that the negative shock to the budget deficit reduces current account balance and positive shock to the budget deficit increases current account balance. However, higher effect growth shocks and extensive fluctuation in interest rate and exchange rate lead to divergence of the deficits. The interest rate and inflation stability should, therefore, be the target variable for policy makers.

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### Introduction

iscal and monetary strategies, when executed lucidly, assume a conclusive part in general macroeconomic stability. The macroeconomic theory which assumes an ideal connection between budget (or fiscal) deficit and trade balance is known as twin deficit hypothesis. The growing literature on twin deficit hypothesis (TDH) has been theoretically and empirically researched by researchers like Kim and Roubini (2008), Darrat (1998), Miller and Russek (1989), Lau and Tang (2009), Abbas et al. (2011), Bernheim and Bagwell (1988), Lee et al. (2008), Corestti and Muller (2006), Altintas and Taban (2011), and Banday and Aneja (2016).

A study by Tang and Lau (2011) found that a 1% increase in budget deficit causes 0.43% increase in current account deficit in the US from 1973 to 2008. After the currency crises and Asian financial crises, various countries simultaneously experienced budget deficit and current account deficit. Lau and Tang (2009) confirmed the twin deficits hypothesis for Cambodia based on cointegration and Granger causality testing. Banday and Aneja (2016) and Basu and Datta (2005) confirmed the twin deficits hypothesis for India by applying cointegration and Granger causality testing. Kulkarni and Erickson (2011) found that, in India and Pakistan trade deficit was driven by the budget deficit. Thomas Laubach (2003) found that for every one percentage increase in the deficit to GDP ratio, long-term interest rates increase by roughly 25 basis points. The recent study by Engen and Hubbard (2004) found that when debt increased by 1% of GDP, interest rate would go up by two basis points. China needs to take care of lower interest rate rather than higher interest rate especially on home loans which is very low in real estate market and has created a serious trouble in the economy.

The literature identifies that the FDI "crowding in effect" as an important source of China's current account surpluses. In fact, the World Developmental Report (1985) demonstrated that a country can promote growth using FDI and technology transfers. China employed such strategies to a remarkable effect on foreign exchange reserves which increased from US\$ 155 billion in 1999 to US\$ 3.8 trillion by the end of 2013. Since then, there has been a sharp decline in the capital account surplus. The data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) showed that in 2015, China recorded a deficit of US\$142.4 billion on the capital and financial account. However, it posted a current account surplus of US\$ 330.6 billion.

However, majority of the countries are facing both budget deficit and current account deficit. The increasing budget deficit alongside with current account deficit has been an imperative issue for policy makers in China. Besides, given the importance on free trade, decentralization and development there is a need to understand the association between budget deficit and trade imbalance in Chinese economy. Few researchers like Burney et al. (1992), Banday and Aneja (2015), Lau and Tang (2009), Corsetti and Müller (2006) and Ghatak and Ghatak (1996) have emphasized the issue emerged because of growing budget deficit and its relationship with macroeconomic factors likes interest rate, exchange rate, inflation, and consumption.

In the economic literature there are two distinct theories that show the linkage between budget deficit and current account deficit. The first theory is based on the traditional Keynesian approach, which postulates that current account deficit has a positive relationship with budget deficit. This means that an increase in budget deficit will lead to a current account deficit and a budget surplus will have a positive impact on the current account deficit. The increase in budget deficit will lead to domestic absorption and, thus, increase domestic income, which will lead to an increase in imports and widen the current account deficit. The twin deficits hypothesis is based on the Mundell-

Fleming model (Fleming, 1962; Mundell, 1963), which asserts that an increase in budget deficit will cause an upward shift in interest rate and exchange rate. The increase in interest rates makes it attractive for foreign investors to invest in the domestic market. This increases the domestic demand and leads to an appreciation of the currency, which in turn causes imports to be cheaper and exports costlier. However, the appreciation of domestic currency will increase imports and lead to a current account deficit (Leachman and Francis, 2002; Salvatore, 2006). Conversely, the Ricardian Equivalence Hypothesis (REH) disagrees with the Keynesian approach. It states that, in a setting of an open economy, there is no correlation between the budget and current account deficits and hence the former would not cause the latter. In other words, a change in governmental tax structure will not have any impact on real interest rate, investments or consumption (Barro, 1989; and Neaime, 2008). The assumption here is that consumption patterns of consumers will be based on the life cycle model, formulated by Modigliani and Ando in 1957, which suggests that current consumption depends on the expected lifetime income, rather than on the current income as proposed by the Keynesian model. Furthermore, the permanent income hypothesis developed by Milton Friedman in 1957, states that private consumption will increase only with a permanent increase in income. This means that a temporary rise in income fueled by tax cuts or deficit-financed public spending will increase private savings rather than spending (Barro, 1989, p. 39; Hashemzadeh and Wilson, 2006). As private savings rise, the need for a foreign capital inflow declines. In this situation a current account deficit will not occur (Khalid and Guan, 1999,

This paper attempts to find out how strong is the relationship between budget and current account deficits in China? Addressing this question is relevant for both policy and academic perspectives. Policymakers would like to know to what extent fiscal adjustment contributes to addressing external disequilibria, especially in the case of increasing external and fiscal imbalances. Secondly, we examined the effects of budget deficit on the current account in the multivariate framework, and also have derived the general relationship among those variables. The study is based on ARDL model to investigate twin deficit hypothesis for china both in short-run and long-run. Further, we analyze the direction of causality if such a relationship exists. We utilize econometric methods for example, ARDL bound testing approach and Granger causality test to achieve these goals. In section "Theoretical Background and Literature Review" we explore the theoretical foundation of the twin deficits hypothesis. Section "Macroeconomics Aspects of the Chinese Economy" will give Macroeconomics Aspects of the Chinese Economy. Section "Data and Empirical results" describes data and empirical results. Section "Results and Discussion" provides empirical results and section "Conclusions", provides conclusion to the study.

# Theoretical background and literature review

The theoretical relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit can be represented by the national income accounting identity:

$$\left(S_{p} - I\right) + \left(IM - EX\right) = \left(G + TR - T\right) \tag{1}$$

where IM stand for imports, EX for exports,  $S_p$  for private savings, I for real investments, G for government expenditure, T for taxes, and TR for transfer payments. When IM is greater than EX, the country has current account deficit. From the right-hand side of the equation, when (G+TR-T) is greater than 0, the country is running a budget deficit. The difference between

budget deficit and current account deficit must equal the private savings and investments which are shown below.

$$(S_p - I) = (G + TR - T) - (IM - EX)$$
 (2)

In the literature, various studies attempt to find the relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit for different countries or groups of countries using various methods depending upon the sample size and pre-testing of the data. The researchers have generally focused on the U.S economy because of its simultaneous budget and current account deficit since 1980s (Miller and Russek, 1989; Darrat, 1998; Tallman and Rosensweig, 1991; Bahmani-Oskooee, 1992). However, researchers from different countries have studied twin deficit hypothesis and obtained different results for different countries (Like India, U.S and Brazil) ((Bernheim, 1988; Holmes, 2011; Salvatore, 2006; Mukhtar et al. 2007; Kulkarni and Erickson, 2011; Banday and Aneja, 2016; Ganchev, 2010; Lau and Tang, 2009; Rosensweig and Tallman, 1993; Fidrmuc, 2002; Khalid and Guan, 1999)). These studies do not support the REH but rather accept the Keynesian traditional theory, finding that budget deficit does have an impact on current account deficit in the long run. There are studies that support the Ricardian equivalence theorem which denies any correlation between budget deficit and current account deficit (Feldstein, 1992; Abell, 1990; Kaufmann et al. 2002; Enders and Lee, 1990; Kim, 1995; Boucher, 1991; Nazier and Essam, 2012; Khalid, 1996; Modigliani and Sterling, 1986; Ratha, 2012; Kim and Roubini, 2008; Algieri, 2013; Rafiq, 2010). These contradictory results may be due to differences in the sample period and the methods of measuring variables, which use different econometric techniques.

Khalid (1996) researched 21 developing countries from the period of 1960-1988, taking three variables into consideration: real private consumption, real per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as a proxy of real disposable income and real per capita government consumption expenditure as a proxy of real public consumption. This was done using Johansen cointegration (1988) and full information maximum likelihood (FIML) for parameter estimates. The model gives us restricted and unrestricted parameter estimations when restricted parameters are used, meaning that parameter estimation is non-linear when testing the REH for the sample countries. The results did not reject the REH for twelve of the countries, but the remaining five countries do diverge from the REH. The rejection of Ricardian equivalence in the latter group of countries demonstrates lack of substitutability between government spending and private consumption. Ghatak and Ghatak (1996) studied variables such as private consumption, government expenditure, income, taxes, private wealth, government bonds, government deficits, investments, government spending and interest on bonds to test the Ricardian Equivalence hypothesis for India for the period from 1950 to 1986. The study employed multi-cointegration analysis and rational expectation estimation, and both the tests rejected the REH, finding evidence that tax cuts induce consumption. Thus, the results invalidate the REH for India.

Ganchev (2010) rejected the Ricardian equivalence theorem for the Bulgarian economy using monthly time series data for the period 2000–2010. The long-run results of the vector error correlation model (VECM) showed evidence of the structural gap theory, which states that fiscal deficit influences current account deficit. However, vector autoregression (VAR) results did not show any evidence of a short-run relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit. The study, therefore, found that fiscal policy should not be used, in the Bulgarian economy, as a substitute for monetary policies in maintaining the internal equilibrium.

Nazier and Essam (2012) studied the Egyptian economic data from 1992 to 2010. The data included five variables: GDP, government budget deficit (as primary deficit), current account deficit, real lending interest rate (RIR) and real exchange rate (RER). The study used structural vector autoregression (SVAR) analysis, which also gave an impulse response function (IRF) to capture the impact of budget deficit on current account deficit and real exchange rate. The findings support the twin divergence hypothesis. This contradicts the theoretical framework, which finds that a shock given to a budget deficit leads to an improvement in the current account deficit and exchange rate. Sobrino (2013) investigated the causality between budget deficit and current account deficit for the small open economy of Peru for the period 1980-2012 using the Granger causality and Wald tests, generalized variance decomposition and the generalized impulse-response function. The study found no evidence of a causal relationship between budget deficit and current account in the short run.

Goyal and Kumar (2018) investigates the connection between the current account and budget deficit, and the exchange rate, in a structural vector autoregression for India over the period 1996Q2 to 2015 Q4. The impact of oil stuns and the differential effect of consumption and venture propose compositional impacts and supply stuns rule the conduct of India's CAD, directing the total request channel. Ricardian hypothesis is not supported.

Afonso et al. (2018) studied 193 countries over the period of 1980–2016 using fixed effect model and system GMM model. The results find the existence of fiscal policy reduces the effect of budget deficit on current account deficit. When there is an absence of fiscal policy rule twin deficit hypothesis exists.

Bhat and Sharma (2018) examines the association between current account deficit and budget deficit for India over the period of 1970-1971 to 2015-2016 using ARDL model. The results accepts Keynesian proposition and rejects Ricardian equivalence theorem. The results find long-run relationship between current account deficit and budget deficit. Rajasekar and Deo (2016) find the long-run relationship and bidirectional causality between the two deficits in India. Garg and Prabheesh (2017) investigate the twin deficit for India by using ARDL model and confirm the twin deficit hypothesis. Badinger et al. (2017) investigated the role of fiscal rules in the relationship between fiscal and external balances for 73 countries over the period of 1985-2012. Their results confirm the twin deficits hypothesis. Litsios and Pilbeam (2017) investigates Greece, Portugal and Spain using ARDL model. The empirical results suggest negative relationship between saving and current account deficit in all three countries.

It is clear that the research so far has not yielded any concrete evidence regarding the causal relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit. As such there is a disagreement on the causality between the two deficits. In this paper we test the theory with the support of autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) bounds testing approach using data for the emerging country China.

# Macroeconomics aspects of the Chinese economy

The Chinese economy has experienced an unparalleled growth rate over the past few decades, with increases in exports, investments and free market reforms from 1979 and an annual GDP growth rate of 10%. The Chinese economy has emerged as the world's largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, manufacturing and foreign exchange reserves.

In 2008, the global economic crisis badly affected the Chinese economy, resulting in a decline in exports, imports and foreign direct investments (FDI) inflow and millions of workers losing

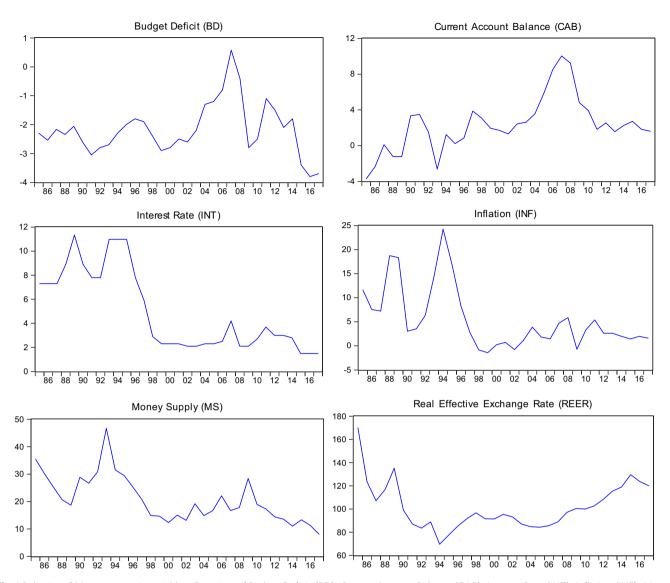


Fig. 1 Behavior of Macroeconomic variables. Overview of Budget Deficit (BD), Current Account Balance (CAB), Interest Rate (INT), Inflation (INF), Money Supply (MS) and Real effective Exchange Rate (REER) from 1985 to 2017. Source: Compiled based on data taken from the World Bank. BD and CAB are expressed as percentage of GDP

their jobs. It is visible from the Fig. 1 that China's current account surplus has dropped significantly from its boom during 2007–2008 financial crises. After the financial crisis, China's exports fell by 25.7% in February 2009. Further, the exclusive demand for Chinese goods in the international market pushed up current account surplus to 11% of the GDP in 2007, in a global economy (Schmidt and Heilmann, 2010). It is said that China responded to the 2008 crisis with a greater fiscal stimulus in terms of tax reduction, infrastructure and subsidies when compared to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Herd et al., 2011; Morrison, 2011).

However, we draw an important inference from the Fig. 1, when the budget deficit was lowest (-0.41% of GDP in 2008), the current account surplus increased to 9.23% of the GDP. The negative shock to the budget deficit reduces current account surplus and positive shock to the budget deficit increases current account surplus.

The deprecation of the exchange rate is directly related to the elasticity of demand which improves the exports of the country and finally enhances current account surplus. However, the negative shift in the current account is due to structural and cyclical forces. The cyclic forces can be seen from the trade prospective: the increasing prices of Chinese imports like oil and semiconductors, pulls the current account balance downwards. However, the structural shift can be seen from the financial side, which affects Chinese saving and investments. The investments got reduced to 40% and household savings has reduced from 50% to 40% of GDP.

# Data and empirical results

For undertaking the empirical analysis, we use the World Bank data for the following variables. The study covers the period from 1985–2016 and is based secondary data.

- a. Current account deficit (CAD) indicates the value of goods, services and investments imported in comparison with exports on the basis of percentage of the GDP
- b. Budget deficit (BD) indicates the financial health in which expenditure exceeds revenue as a percentage of the GDP

- Deposit interest rate (DIR) as a proxy of interest rate (INT) the amount charged by lender to a borrower on the basis of percentage of principals
- Inflation (INF) is measured on the basis of consumer price index which reflects annual percentage change in the cost of goods and services
- Broad money (MS) a measure of the money supply that indicates the amount of liquidity in the economy. It includes currency, coins, institutional money market funds and other liquid assets based on annual growth rate and real effective exchange rate (REER)

Model. The basic model to find out the relationship among BD, CAD, INF, INT, REER, and MS is as follows:

$$CAD = f(BD, REER, INF, INT, MS)$$
 (3)

where INF is inflation and DIR is direct interest rate.

Based on Fig. 2 we will estimate the two models in which CAD and BD is dependent variables and others are independent variables which is as below:

To estimate the above models we have employed various econometric techniques to achieve the objective of the study are

- Unit root test to check stationarity of the variables.
- ARDL bound testing for long-run and short-run relationship among the variables.
- Granger causality to check the causal relationship among the variables.

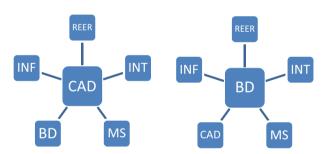


Fig. 2 Relationship of the dependent variables (CAD and BD) with other macroeconomic variables

# **Empirical results**

Unit root test. As we are using time series data, it is important to check the properties of the data; otherwise, the results of nonstationary variables may be spurious (Granger and Newbold, 1974). To assess the integration and unit root among the variables, numerous unit root tests were performed. Apart from applying the unit root test with one structural break (Zivot and Andrews, 1992), we also employed a traditional Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test (1981) and Phillips-Perron test (PP 1988).

To ascertain the order of integration, we first applied the ADF and PP unit root tests. The results of the unit root test suggest that the RER and INF series is integrated of order zero I(0), and other variables are integrated of order I(1). The Zivot and Andrews (ZA) unit root test begins with three models based on Perron (1989). The ZA model is as follows:

$$Y_t = \mu^{\mathbf{A}} + \theta^{\mathbf{A}} \mathbf{D} \mathbf{U}_t(\lambda) + \beta_t^{\mathbf{A}} + a^{\mathbf{A}} Y_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^k c_j^{\mathbf{A}} \Delta Y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_t$$
 (4)

$$Y_{t} = \mu^{B} + \beta_{t}^{B} + \gamma^{B} DT_{t}(\lambda) + a^{A} Y_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{k} c_{j}^{B} \Delta Y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_{t}$$
 (5)

$$Y_{t} = \mu^{C} + \theta_{t}^{CDU}(\lambda) + \beta_{t}^{C} + \gamma_{t}^{CDT}(\lambda) + a^{C}Y_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{k} c_{j}^{C} \Delta Y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_{t}$$
(6)

From the above equations,  $DU_t(\lambda) = 1$ , if  $t > T\lambda$ , 0 otherwise:  $DT_t(\lambda) = t - T\lambda$  if  $t > T\lambda$ , 0 otherwise. The null hypothesis for Eqs. 4-6 is  $\alpha = 0$ , which implies that (Yt) contains a unit root with drift and excludes any structural breakpoints. When  $\alpha$  < 0 it simply means that the series having trend-stationary process with a structural break that happens at an unknown point of time.  $DT_t$ is a dummy variable which implies that shift appears at time TB, where  $DT_t = 1$  and  $DT_t = t - TB$  if t > TB; 0 otherwise. The ZA test (1992) suggests that small sample size distribution can deviate, eventually forming asymptotic distribution. The results of the unit root tests are given below.

The first step in ascertaining the order of integration is to perform ADF and PP unit root tests. Table 1, above, provides the results of the ADF and PP tests, which suggest that four out of six variables are non-stationary at level and two variable is stationary at level. However, it is important to check the structural breaks and their implications, and the ADF and PP tests are unable to find the structural break in the data series. To avoid this obstacle, we applied a ZA (1992) test with one break, the results of which are given in Table 2. The structural break test reveals four breaks

	ADF		PP		
	Intercept	Intercept-trend	Intercept	Intercept-trend	
CAD(I <sub>0</sub> )	-2.48615 (0.1214)	-2.45463 (0.3466)	-2.52978 (0.1184)	-2.5654 (0.2973)	
$CAD(I_1)$	-5.1057 (0.0003) <sup>a</sup>	-5.07512 (0.0015) <sup>a</sup>	-5.165446 (0.0002) <sup>a</sup>	-5.3379 (0.0008)a	
$BD(I_0)$	-1.98887 (0.2895)	-2.0139 (0.5669)	-2.51257 (0.1223)	-2.56240 (0.2986)	
$BD(I_1)$	-3.70742 ((0.0098) <sup>a</sup>	-3.61588 (0.0472)	-7.02441 (0.0000) <sup>a</sup>	-7.6921 (0.0000)a	
REER(I <sub>O</sub> )	-4.06142 (0.0037) <sup>a</sup>	-4.07804 (0.0162)	-3.95265 (0.0049) <sup>a</sup>	-4.38008 (0.0080) <sup>3</sup>	
REER(I <sub>1</sub> )	-6.09864 (0.0000) <sup>a</sup>	-6.142736 (0.0001) <sup>a</sup>	-6.54687 (0.0000) <sup>a</sup>	-14.7227 (0.0000) <sup>a</sup>	
$MS(I_0)$	-2.400962 (0.1497)	-2.963096 (0.1581)	-2.491013 (0.127)	-3.12720 (0.1179)	
$MS(I_1)$	-6.748769 (0.000) <sup>a</sup>	-6.621696 (0.000)a	-6.826333 (0.000)a	-6.690086 (0.000) <sup>4</sup>	
INF(I <sub>0</sub> )	-3.039361 (0.0426) <sup>a</sup>	-4.143720 (0.0142) <sup>a</sup>	-2.25412 (0.1925)	-2.37494 (0.3845)	
INF(I <sub>1</sub> )	-4.936068 (0.0005) <sup>a</sup>	-4.92759 (0.0026) <sup>a</sup>	-7.70762 (0.000) <sup>a</sup>	-7.358584 (0.000) <sup>a</sup>	
INT(I <sup>0</sup> )	-0.96954 (0.751)	-1.99693 (0.580)	-1.03964 (0.726)	-2.16663 (0.4905)	
INT(I <sup>1</sup> )	-4.43685 (0.001)a	-4.36859 (0.008) <sup>a</sup>	-4.54219 (0.001) <sup>a</sup>	-4.31192 (0.009)a	

*lote*: Critical value at the 1% significance level denoted by superscript 'a', with intercept and intercept-trenc

Table 2 Zivot and Andrews (ZA) test for unit roots with one structural break

Variable	CAD	BD	REER	MS	INT	INF
Test- statistic (α)	-3.178	-2.548	-3.159	-3.076	-3.221	-4.923
Time of Breakdown	2008	2008	1992	1994	2003	2003
Lags (k)	0	2	2	0	0	0

Note: Structural breaks are based on breaks in trend; critical values are obtained from ZA (1992) with one structural break and an optimal lag structure by AIC

Table 3 ARDL model (2,0,2,3,0,1) dependent variable (BD)				
Variables	Coefficient	t-value	Prob	
BD(-1)	.52504	4.3020	.001	
BD(-2)	47852	4.4321	.000	
CAD	.13298	4.6230	.000	
DIR	.22922	3.0986	.007	
INT(-1)	14730	1.5119	.150	
INT(`2)	38099	4.6848	.000	
INF	.009286	.4124	.685	
INF(-1)	.041560	1.6862	.111	
INF(-2)	.057117	2.5665	.021	
INF(-3)	.084059	3.5271	.003	
MS	010333	.78506	.444	
REER	.0013332	.18609	.855	
REER(-1)	017791	2.1974	.043	
Note: Lag selection is based on Schwarz Bayesian Criteria (SBC)				

in Model A. The first, in 1992, may be due to inflation caused by privatization; the second, in 1994 may be due to higher inflation which caused the consumer price index to shot up by 27.5% and imposition of a 17% value-added tax on goods; the third, in 2003, may be due to a 48% decline in state owned enterprises at the same time as a reduction on trade barriers, tariffs and regulations was put in place and the banking system was reformed; the fourth, in 2008, is probably due to the global financial crisis

The ZA test with one structural break gives different results, as all six variables are non-stationary at a 1% level.

ARDL bounds testing approach. We applied the ARDL bounds testing approach to check the cointegration long-run relationship by comparing *F*-statistics against the critical values for the sample size from 1985 to 2016. The bounds testing framework has an advantage over the cointegration test developed by Pesaran et al. (2001), in that the bounds testing approach can be applied to variables when that have different orders of integration. Thus, it is inappropriate to apply a Johansen test of cointegration, and we applied ARDL bounds testing to determine the long-run and short-run relationships. The *F*-statistics are compared with the top and bottom critical values, and if the *F*-statistics are greater than the top critical values, it means there is a cointegrating relationship among the variables Table 3.

All values are calculated by using Microfit which defines bounds test critical values as "k" which denotes the number of non-deterministic regressors in the long-run relationship, while critical values are taken from Pesaran et al. (2001). The critical value changes as 'k' changes. The null hypothesis of the ARDL bound test is Ho: no relationship. We accept the null hypothesis when F is less than the critical value for I(0) regressors and we reject null hypothesis when F is greater than critical value for I(1) regressors. For t-statistics we accept the null hypothesis when t is

Table 4 Cointegration test results				
Calculated F-statistic	90% LB	90% UB	95% LB	95% UB
F = 9.439	2.05	3.33	2.51	3.99
Note: When the F-value is greater than the lower and upper bounds value, we can say the variables are co-integrated				

greater than the critical value and reject the null hypothesis when t is less than the critical value.

As seen in Table 4, the calculated *F*-statistic F = 9.439 is higher than the upper bound critical value 3.99 at the 5% level. The results over the period of 1985 to 2016 suggest that there is a long run relationship among the variables and the null-hypothesis of no cointegration is rejected meaning acceptance of traditional Keynesian approach for China. The bounds test results conclude that there is strong cointegration relationship among budget deficit, current account deficit, interest rate, exchange rate, inflation and money supply. Since the F-statistic was greater than the upper bound critical value, we performed a diagnostic testing based on auto-correlation, normality and heteroskedasticity, the results of which were insignificant based on the respective P-values. The Fig. 3 gives the results of CUSUM and CUSUMSQ tests which check the stability of the coefficient of the regression model. The CUSUM test is based on the sum of recursive residuals, and the CUSUMSQ test is based on the sum of the squared recursive residual. Both the graphs are stable, and the sum does not touch the red lines. Hence there were no issue of serial corelation, Heteroscedasticity and normaility in this model see Table 5.

**Long-run and short-run relationship**. After discovering the cointegrating relationship among the variables, it is important to determine the long-run and short-run relationships using the ARDL model.

$$BD_{i} = \theta_{0} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{1i} CAD_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{2i} BD_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{3i} INF_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{4i} REER_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{5i} MS_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{6i} INT_{t-i} + u_{t}$$
(7)

$$\begin{split} \Delta \mathrm{BD}_{i} &= \theta_{0} + \theta_{1} \Delta \mathrm{ECM}_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{2i} \Delta \mathrm{CAD}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{3i} \Delta \mathrm{BD}_{t-i} \\ &+ \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{4i} \Delta \mathrm{INF}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{5i} \Delta \mathrm{REER}_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{6i} \Delta \mathrm{MS}_{t-i} \\ &+ \sum_{i=1}^{q} \theta_{7i} \Delta \mathrm{INT}_{t-i} + u_{\mathrm{st}} \end{split} \tag{8}$$

The above Eqs. 7, 8 of the ARDL model capture the short and long-run relationship among the variables. The model is based on Schwarz Bayesian Criteria (SBC) optimized over 20,000 replications. The lagged error correction term (ECM) is estimated from the ARDL model. The coefficient  $ECM_{t-1}$  should be negative and significant to yield the evidence of a long run relationship and speed of equilibrium (Banerjee et al. 1993). The results of Eqs. 7, 8 are provided in Table 6. The results find a strong long-run relationship among the variables for the period from 1985 to 2016.

At 5% level of significance the long-term estimates of the ARDL model find evidence of the twin deficits hypothesis for China, as all the variables are found to be significant at this level. Thus, our study upholds the empirical validity of the Keynesian proposition for China, while rejecting the Ricardian equivalence hypothesis.

The short-run results are significant; the coefficients of BD, CAD, INF, and INT are significant at a 5% level. This shows that a small change in the budget deficit has a significant impact on

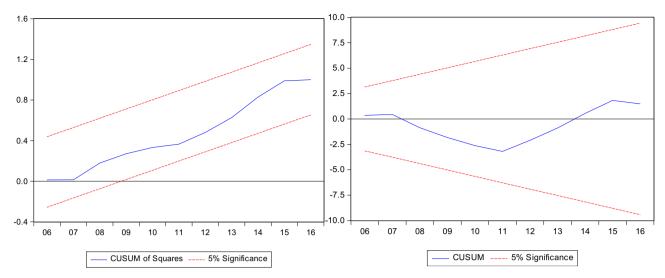


Fig. 3 CUSUM and CUSUMSQ stability tests. Plot of cumulative sum of recursive residuals and plot of cumulative sum of squares of recursive residuals

Table 5 Diagnostic test			
Test statistic	LM version	F version	
(A) Serial correlation	.01999 (.964)	0.1034 (.975)	
(B) Normality	.94082 (.625)		
(C) Heteroscedasticity	.58695 (.444)	.55776 (.462)	
A: Based on Lagrange multiplier test of residual serial correlation     B: Based on a test of skewness and kurtosis of residual     C: Based on the regression of squared residuals on squared fitted values			

Table 6 Long-run coefficient using ARDL model based on	
(2,0,2,3,0,1) dependent variable ( $\triangle$ BD)	

		Coefficient	t-statistic	Prob
ADJ(ECM)	BD(-1)	-0.95348	9.4018	0.000
Long Run	CAD	0.13946	4.905	0.000
	INT	-0.31366	2.924	0.010
	INF	0.20139	3.6196	0.002
	MS	-0.010837	.77795	0.448
	REER	-0.017262	9.9136	0.000
Short Run	$\Delta$ BD ( $-1$ )	0.47852	4.432	0.000
Short Run	$\Delta CAD$	0.13298	4.6230	0.000
Short Run	$\Delta INT$	0.22922	3.0986	0.006
	$\Delta$ INT( $-1$ )	0.38099	4.6848	0.000
Short Run	$\Delta INF$	0.00928	-0.4125	0.685
	$\Delta INF(-1)$	-0.14118	4.2123	0.000
	$\Delta INF(-2)$	-0.084059	3.5271	0.002
Short Run	$\Delta MS$	-0.010333	0.7850	0.442
Short Run	$\Delta REER$	0.001332	0.1860	0.854

R-squared = 0 .8326 F-Stat = 16.815 (.000) DW Stat = 1.9049

Note: The table reports the FCM value to be -0.95348 negative and statistically significant. The results ensure there is convergence among the BD, CAD, INT, INF, MS, and REER, meaningthere is significant long-run relationship

the current account deficit; similarly most of the macroeconomic variableshave a significant impact on the current account deficit. As we found evidence of a long-run relationship, we calculated the lagged ECM from the long-run equations. The negative (-0.95348) ECM coefficient and the high speed of adjustment brought equilibrium to the economy, with the exogenous shocks and endogenous shocks restoring it after a long period.

The Chinese economy is one of the most integrated economies in the world and has emerged as a powerful actor in the global economy. The pace of growth in china's economy has accelerated since the decades in which there was a higher export promotion due to market liquidity and flexible governmental policies. In the early 1990s, it was reported in the Chinese print media that although the Chinese economy was expanding rapidly, the deficits still existed. These were called 'hard deficits' primarily because they were financed by expanding money supply and hence exerted inflationary pressure on the economy (People's Daily, March 28, 1993). Deficit financing may also increase interest rates because once the monetary accommodation of the deficit is ruled out, the government has to incentivize consumers and firms to buy more government bonds. If the purchase of government bonds does not increase in direct proportion to the rise in deficit, government must borrow more money. This, in turn, crowds out private investment. Such a reduction in the private sector's demand for capital has been summarized by Douglas Holtz-Eakin, the director of the U.S Congressional Budget Office, as a "modestly negative" effect of the tax cut or budget deficits on long-term economic growth.

This study finds that a higher interest rate significantly affects the budget deficit and current account deficit in both the shortrun and long-run. Chinese banks are increasing interest rates on home loans that had previously been very low; however, because of its economic bubble, especially in the real estate market, this is creating serious trouble in the economy. This is similar to the American bubble, in which most people were unable to repay loans, creating a financial crisis. Still, China must work within the existing bubble, even though it creates a lack of investments and can cause trouble for economies worldwide. The debt bubble is due to the elimination of loan quotas for banks in an attempt to increase small business. These companies are still struggling to repay that debt, which is almost half the amount of GDP of both private and public debt (The Economist, 2015).

While empirical research shows a statistically significant relationship between higher budget deficits and long-term interest rates, there are differences on the magnitude of the impact. Chinese needs to take care of lower interest rate rather than higher interest rate especially on home loans which was very low; in real estate market which has created a serious trouble in the economy.

It is also important to note that the concept of the deficit includes both hard and soft deficits. The "hard" part of the deficit, being financed by printing money, is inflationary. The "soft" part, being financed by the government's domestic and foreign debts, is

non-inflationary. However, they are not reported by the Chinese government.

Moreover, hard deficits and consequent inflation increases capital inflows (to prevent interest rates from rising) and causes current account deficit. In China, deficits occurred as a result of overestimating revenues or underestimating expenditures (Shen and Chen, 1981) and contributed to the development of bottlenecks in sectors such as energy, transportation, and communications sectors that are of vital importance for the long-term growth of China. However, given the reluctance of the non-government investors to venture into such low pay-back sectors, the Chinese government's policy to balance budgets by cutting its capital expenditure can severely restrict the development of these sectors (Luo, 1990, and Colm and Young, 1968).

However, the natural explanation for the external surplus is that the economy follows an export-driven growth model by increasing FDI inflows. In the rising tide of economies, China's demographic boom has created an economic miracle, allowing them to invest in education and skilled workers that will accordingly benefit the economy.

During the global financial crisis of 2008, the Chinese government combined active fiscal policy and loose monetary policy and introduced a stimulus package of \$580 billion (around 20% of China's GDP) for 2009 and 2010. The package partially offset the drop-in exports and its effect on the economy, so that the economic growth of China remained well above international averages. During this period (2008–2009) the current account surplus, as a percentage of GDP was at its highest and the budget deficit was at its lowest point of the entire decade. Our findings suggest that a strong long-run and short-run relationship exists among the variables. The empirical findings support the Keynesian proposition for Chinese economy.

# **Granger causality**

In this section we attempt to estimate the causality from  $X_t$  to  $Y_t$  and vice versa. We apply Granger causality to check the robustness of our results and to detect the nature of the causal relationship among the variables based on Eqs. 9, 10.

$$\begin{split} \Delta \text{BD}_t &= \alpha_1 + \sum \! \beta_1 \Delta \text{CAD}_{t-i} + \sum \! \theta_1 \Delta \text{INF}_{t-i} + \sum \! \gamma_1 \Delta \text{REER}_{t-i} \\ &+ \sum \! \delta_1 \Delta \text{INT}_{t-i} + \sum \! \lambda_1 \Delta \text{MS}_{t-i} + \varepsilon_t \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} \Delta \text{CAD}_t &= \alpha_2 + \sum \!\! \beta_2 \Delta \text{BD}_{t-i} + \sum \!\! \theta_2 \Delta \text{INF}_{t-i} + \sum \!\! \gamma_2 \Delta \text{REER}_{t-i} \\ &+ \sum \!\! \delta_2 \Delta INT_{t-i} + \sum \!\! \lambda_2 \Delta \text{MS}_{t-i} + \varepsilon_t \end{split}$$

Table 7 describes the results of Granger causality test. The reverse causality holds in light of the fact that budget deficit cause Granger to the current account deficit. For all the variables, the

Prob
0.001
0.012
0.001
0.000
0.007
0.003
0.108
0.001
0.024
0.000

reverse causality from budget deficit to macro variables and current account deficit to macro variables holds at 5% level of significance. Thus, the results of Granger causality gives us more evidences in support of the Keynesian proposition for China in the light of above data. The reverse causality was not apparent because Chinese economy is one of the most integrated economies with higher capital outflows, export-led growth and export promotion due to market liquidity and flexible governmental policies. While the capital inflow determines a tight fiscal policy to avoid overheating of economy (see author Castillo and Barco (2008) and Rossini et al. (2008).

# **Results and discussion**

The ambiguous verdict on the twin deficits hypothesis based on two competing theories: the Keynesian preposition and the Ricardian Equivalence theorem. In this paper we investigated the link between budget deficit and current account deficit with an emphasis on the impact of macro-variables shock on current account balance and budget deficit in the Chinese economy over the period 1985–2016.

The conclusion of this study is based on ARDL bound testing approach. The model is based on Schwarz Bayesian Criteria (SBC) optimized over 20,000 replications. With this data and analysis, we conclude that there is a long-run and short-run relationship among the variables. We accept the Keynesian hypothesis, which means we did not find evidence in support of the Ricardian Equivalence theorem in the Chinese economy. This was surprising because higher governmental expenditure and flexible governmental policies could have pushed up the current account deficit. We further applied Granger causality test the results concluded that there is a strong inverse causal relationship between budget deficit and current account deficit meaning that Keynesian preposition is more plausible than Ricardian Equivalence theorem in the light of above data. Our results are consistent with Banday and Aneja, (2019); Banday and Aneja, (2016); Ganchev, 2010; Bhat and Sharma (2018); Badinger et al. (2017), and Afonso et al. (2018).

The findings of the Granger causality test revealed that there exists bidirectional causality running from budget deficit to current account balance and vice versa in China. A similar movement of the budget deficit and the current account balance is the thing that one would expect when there are cyclic shocks to output. Detailed empirical findings highlight that the interest rate bubble and higher inflated housing prices are becoming a challenge for the Chinese economy, as they are now nearing the prices of the US bubble before the financial crisis popped it. If the US increases interest rates, the money will flow out of the Chinese market, which could cause a similar crisis in China. It will be a challenge for the monetary authority to bring stability in China where inflation, interest rate bubble and exchange rate volatility are of primary concern. Expenditure reduction for low payback sectors, such as energy and communication, could also be a worry in the future. Rising inflation can significantly increase the inflow of capital due to an increase in domestic demand; this can lead to a current account deficit, as it is now more than half of the GDP. The indebtedness in the economy is at its peak, and this can crush the financial cycle and cause financial crisis.

# Conclusions

The cointegration investigation confirms the presence of a longrun relationship between the variables. The results propose that there is a positive connection between the current account deficit and fiscal deficit. Our outcomes show that increase in money supply and the devaluation of the exchange rate increases current account balance. The effects of the current account deficit and the exchange rate have been taken as exogenous. A long-run stationary association between the fiscal deficit, current account deficit, interest rate, inflation, money supply, and the exchange rate has been found for China. Granger causality tests reveal bidirectional causality running from budget deficit to current account balance and macroeconomic variables to budget deficit and current account balance.

A genuine answer for the issue of budget deficit and current account deficit lies with a coherent package comprising of both fiscal and monetary approaches. It must concentrate on stable interest rate, inflation target and monetary position will supplement the budget-cut policies. The findings of the paper will be helpful for future empirical models, which attempt to further highlight the transmission mechanism.

### Data availability

For undertaking the empirical analysis, we use the World Bank data for the following variables. The study covers the period from 1985 to 2016 and is based on secondary data which are available at: https://data.worldbank.org/country/china.

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# **Author contributions**

UJB did the write-up and then analyzed the results. RA read the paper and made necessary corrections prior to submission. Both authors read and approved the final paper.

### Additional information

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

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