





33 CART, NO-MLP, NO-CART-Bagging, NO-CART-Boosting, NO-MLP-Bagging, and NO-MLP-Boosting  
34 models. Four ensemble models outperformed their corresponding classifiers, while Boosting outperforms  
35 Bagging. Overall, the combination of ensemble learning and ML effectively improved the accuracy of LSM.  
36 The LR model can effectively constrain the selection range of non-landslide samples and enhance the quality  
37 of sample selection. Our results show promise to map susceptible landslides locations which will help to  
38 monitor for an early warning of the landslide.

39 **Keywords:** Reservoir landslide; susceptibility mapping; non-landslide sampling; ensemble learning;  
40 machine learning; Three Gorges Reservoir Area

#### 41 **1 Introduction**

42 Landslides are severe, sudden, and frequent geological disasters that occur throughout the globe,  
43 significantly affecting the loss of life, infrastructure, and economic conditions. The Ministry of Natural  
44 Resources of China reported that 4,810 landslide disasters occurred in 2020, resulting in 139 deaths and 730  
45 million US dollars in direct economic losses. The Three Gorges Reservoir area (TGRA) is a highly landslide-  
46 prone area, with more than 5,000 landslide occurrences recorded (Yin et al., 2022). During the first  
47 impoundment of the TGRA in July 2003, the Qianjiangping landslide caused a death toll of 24 and an  
48 economic loss of about 11.6 million US dollars (Tang et al., 2019). Landslide risk assessment has been widely  
49 used as a vital means of disaster prevention and mitigation (Xie et al., 2019). It is the foundation for  
50 quantitative risk assessment and the final land-use map and planning map. However, due to the nonlinear  
51 relationship between landslide occurrence and their influencing factors, accurate landslide susceptibility  
52 modeling (LSM) is challenging for geoscientists and engineers.

53 Over the past few decades, LSM methods have been developed for qualitative and quantitative  
54 evaluation of landslide-prone areas (Sabokbar et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2015). In the qualitative method, the  
55 weight of various controlling parameters is determined by experts based on past experience. This method  
56 requires landslide-vulnerable areas based on past landslide events, geology, and slope. The qualitative  
57 methods include expert scoring and analytic hierarchy methods based on numerous controlling landslide  
58 parameters (Kayastha et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2022; Meena et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2023). The quantitative  
59 method is divided based on data and physical driven parameters. With the development of earth observation  
60 techniques, data quality, such as landslide catalogues and topographic landforms, has been significantly  
61 improved, making the data-driven method popular in LSM. The machine learning (ML) technique has a  
62 strong nonlinear fitting ability and has been applied in various fields. The ML methods include support vector



63 machines (Huang and Zhao, 2018; Huang et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2017), decision trees (Yang et al., 2019),  
64 and neural networks (Zhou et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2017). Machine learning methods  
65 are reported to outperform traditional methods in LSM (Lin et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020;  
66 Bui et al., 2019).

67 For the unbalanced sample composed of a large proportion of non-landslides and small landslides, there  
68 are problems with having LSM. The single ML classifier cannot perform satisfactorily when dealing with  
69 unbalanced samples (Tanyu et al., 2021; Long et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2022). Ensemble learning is an effective  
70 method to solve the classification problem of sample imbalance. This technique strategically creates multiple  
71 models and combines them to produce improved performance. After introducing this method, the ensemble  
72 learning techniques (Pham et al. 2019) gained much attention from the research community for natural hazard  
73 modeling. Recently, ensemble learning has been applied in LSM, and some impressive results have been  
74 achieved (Zhou et al., 2020; Di Napoli et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2020; Fang et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2022).  
75 However, we have not agreed on the modeling framework applying ML and ensemble learning coupled  
76 techniques for LSM.

77 The selection of machine learning training samples is vital to the accuracy of LSM. Since the number  
78 of non-landslide samples is much larger than that of landslide samples, the accurate LSM is the selection of  
79 effective training samples under unbalanced dataset conditions (Fang et al., 2021). However, most existing  
80 studies subjectively and/or randomly select the non-landslide samples from whole landslide-free areas  
81 (Huang et al., 2020). Therefore, the geological condition of selected non-landslide samples using this method  
82 may be similar to the landslide development area, which would affect the accuracy of LSM. At present,  
83 establishing an effective non-landslide sample selection method to ensure that the selected non-landslide  
84 samples have low susceptibility is still an urgent problem to be solved in ML-based LSM.

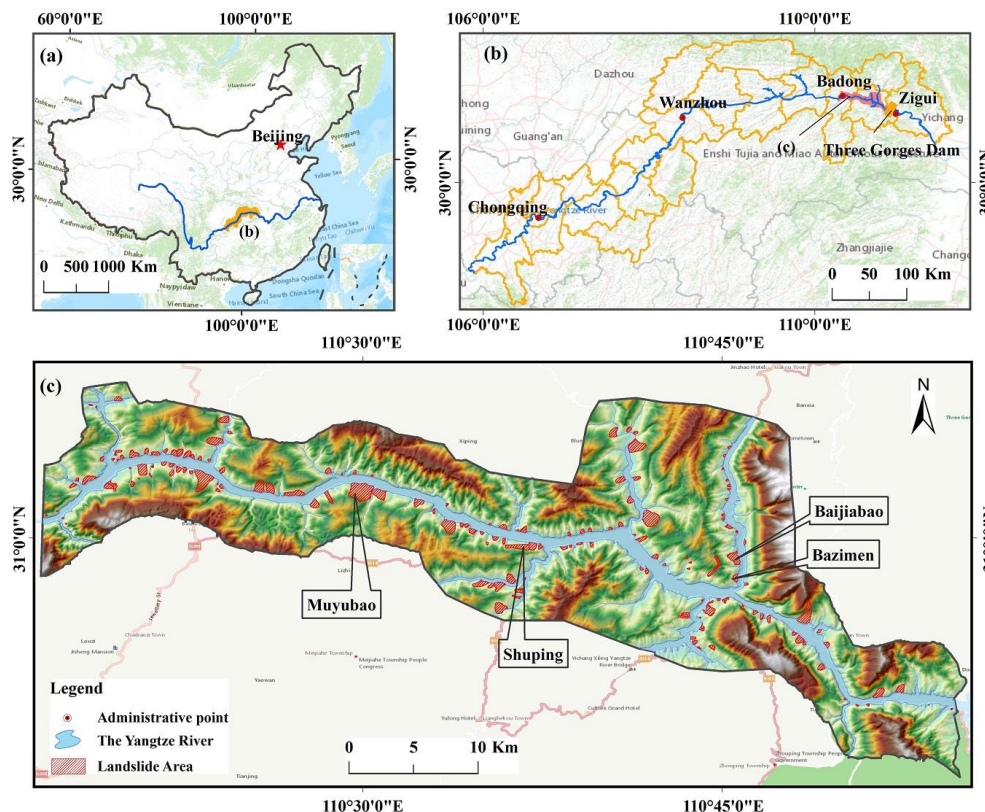
85 The Zigui-Badong geological section is located at the head area of the TGRA (Fig. 1). In the present  
86 study, we have considered this section for the detailed landslide susceptibility study. In the recent two decades,  
87 the precipitation and the periodic water level fluctuations in the reservoir have caused numerous landslides.  
88 Twelve controlling landslide factors are statistically analyzed and selected as inputs for modeling. An initial  
89 landslide susceptibility map is produced using Logical Regression (LR), and the non-landslide training  
90 samples are selected in the low susceptibility area. Two single models, namely Classification and Regression  
91 Tree (CART), Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP), and four coupling models (CART-Bagging, CART-Boosting,  
92 MLP-Bagging, and MLP-Boosting) were utilized for LSM. Finally, the modeling performance is compared



93 by Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve and statistical analysis method. Our results encourage  
94 establishing a high-accurate susceptibility model for reservoir landslides in the TGRA.

## 95 2 Study area

96 The study area is located in the first section of the Three Gorges Reservoir, spanning Zigui and Badong  
97 counties. The longitude and latitude ranges are 30°51'–31°4' N, 100°17'–100°52' E, and the total area is about  
98 656 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1). It is a high-prone area for landslide disasters with an altitude range of 80 - 2,020 m. The  
99 geological structure in the study area is complex, with developed faults and fragmented rock mass. Triassic  
100 and Jurassic dominate the stratum, and the lithology is mostly carbonate, sand shale, marlstone, and mudstone,  
101 which is sensitive to landslide development. Quaternary is widely exposed in the study area and accumulates  
102 on the terraces and slope surfaces. In addition, the study area has excessive rainfall, with an average annual  
103 rainfall of 1,250 mm, mainly during May–September.



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Fig. 1: (a) Map of China, (b) Map of the Three Gorges Reservoir area, and (c) Topography and landslide distribution in the study area. The background maps are collected from ArcGIS Online.

In 2003, the TGRA was first impounded up to 135 m. After September 2008, the reservoir water level

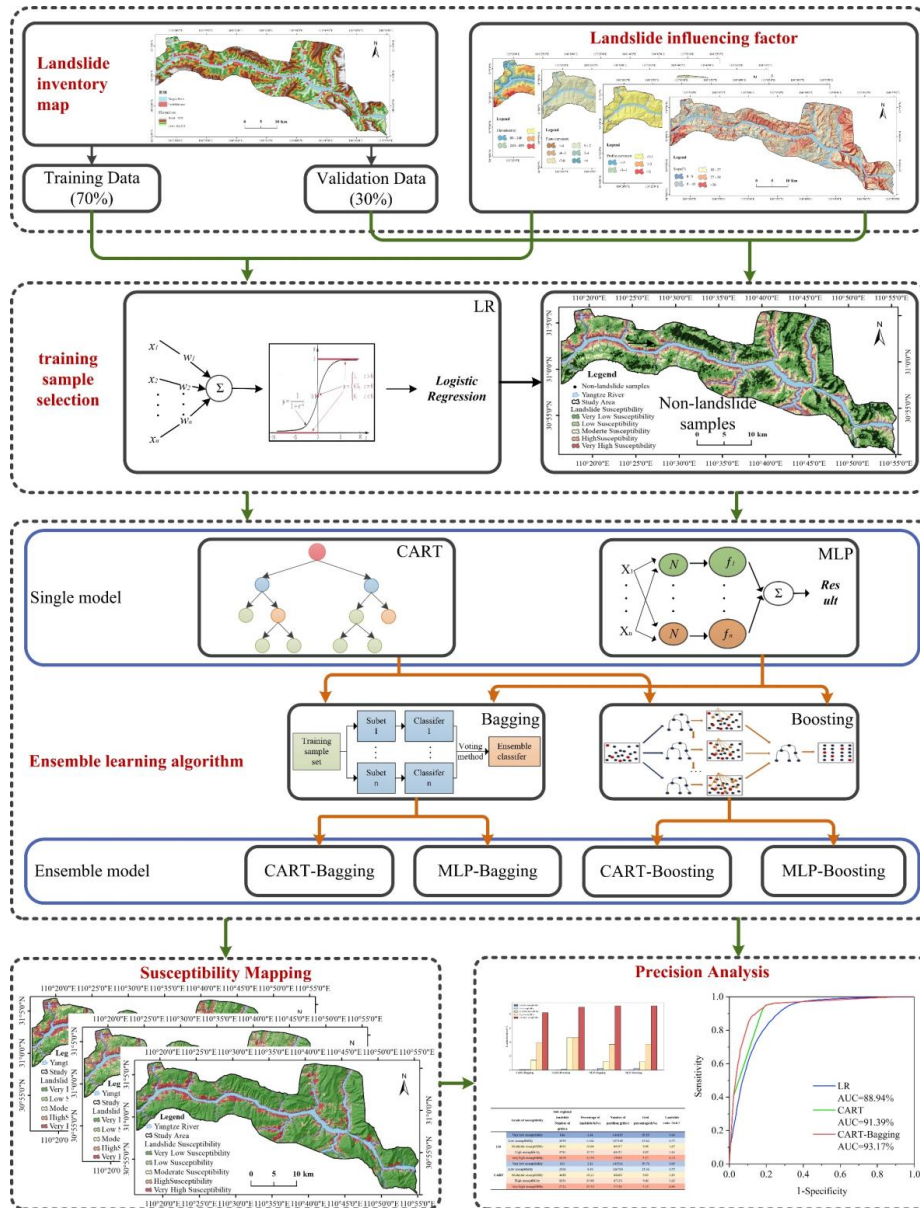


108 periodically fluctuates between 145 m - 175 m per year, significantly changing the bank slope's  
109 hydrogeological conditions (Zhou et al., 2016; Ye et al., 2021; Yin et al, 2021). The reservoir water level  
110 fluctuation significantly affected the bank slope's original balance. It induced the deformation or failure of a  
111 large number of reservoir landslides, such as the Qianjiangping landslide (Wang et al., 2008), the Muyubao  
112 landslide (Zhou et al., 2020), and the Shuping landslide (Zhou et al., 2018).

### 113 **3 Methodology**

#### 114 **3.1 Procedure for LSM**

115 The LSM procedure includes four parts: influencing factor selection and landslide pixel sampling, non-  
116 landslide pixel sampling, model construction, and accuracy evaluation (Fig. 2). a) We have considered the  
117 influencing factors for LSM; 70% of the landslide pixels were selected as the training data, while the  
118 remaining 30% was applied for validation; b) We produce a preliminary susceptibility map using LR and  
119 non-landslide pixels with an equal number of landslide pixels are randomly selected in the low susceptibility  
120 area; c) Two single models (CART and MLP) and four coupling models (CART-bagging, CART-boosting,  
121 MLP-bagging, and MLP-boosting,) are applied for LSM; d) We use statistical analysis method and ROC  
122 curves to evaluate the partitioning results and model performance.



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 124

Fig. 2 The flowchart of the landslide susceptibility mapping.

### 125 3.2 Information value method

126 Information value is a statistical method based on information theory, which can calculate the impact of  
 127 different factors on the occurrence of landslides. In LSM, the formula of information value can be given as  
 128 follows:

$$129 I_i = \sum_{i=1}^n Ln \frac{S_i/S}{A_i/A} \quad (1)$$

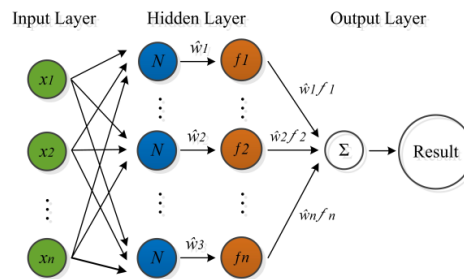


130 Where  $I_i$  is the information value of the  $i$ -th influencing factor;  $S_i$  is the number of landslide pixels within the  
131  $i$ -th influencing factor;  $S$  is the total number of landslide pixels;  $A_i$  is the number of pixels for the  $i$ -th  
132 influencing factor;  $A$  is the total number of pixels in the study area;  $n$  is the number of influencing factors  
133 (Zhou et al., 2018). When the information value is greater than 0, the factor promotes the occurrence of  
134 landslides. Conversely, when the value is less than 0, it indicates that the factor inhibits the occurrence of  
135 landslides. Moreover, the larger the absolute information value, the stronger the effect.

### 136 3.3 Classifier

#### 137 3.3.1 Multi-Layer Perceptron

138 Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) is a feed-forward artificial neural network widely used in many fields.  
139 It consists of three layers: input layer, hidden layer, and output layer (Fig. 3). MLP with a sufficient number  
140 of hidden layer neurons can realize any nonlinear mapping from  $n$ -dimensional to  $m$ -dimensional (Gardner  
141 and Dorling, 1998). During the calculation process, the input layer neurons receive sample data, and the  
142 hidden layer and the output layer neurons deal with the inputs according to the weight value. To build a better  
143 model, MPL modifies the weight value through backpropagation. The learning process of MPL models is  
144 constantly adjusting the parameters. The training of the MPL model is the process of constantly adjusting  
145 network parameters.



146  
147 **Fig. 3** MLP neural network structure.

#### 148 3.3.2 Classification and Regression Tree

149 Classification and Regression Tree (CART) is a simple but powerful approach to forecasting an event  
150 (Breiman, 1984). This method is easy to understand and implement for LSM. During modeling, CART does  
151 not need to presuppose a relationship between the predictor and target variables. The child nodes are obtained  
152 to form a binary tree by recursively dividing the data set. The child nodes are continuously expanded to  
153 generate a complete decision tree and perform the necessary pruning to prevent overfitting. The Gini index  
154 minimization criterion determines the optimal segmentation point, and the smaller the Gini index is, the better  
155 the effect of tree division. The Gini index represents the classification error rate for the binary classification



156 problem. For example, if the sample set  $D$  contains  $k$  categories, the Gini coefficient of the sample set can be  
157 expressed as:

$$158 \quad \quad \quad Gini(D) = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^k \left(\frac{C_i}{D}\right)^2 \quad (2)$$

159 where  $C_i$  is a subset of class  $i$  samples in  $D$ .

### 160 3.3.3 Logical Regression

161 The logical regression (LR) model is a statistical analysis model suitable for binomial categorical  
162 dependent variables. It is widely used in landslide prediction due to its simple operation and relatively  
163 accurate (Youssef et al., 2016). Training testing on known landslide events establishes the nonlinear  
164 relationship between the dependent variable and multiple independent variables. Therefore, the occurrence  
165 probability of future landslides can be predicted or evaluated using the established formula. The method takes  
166 the landslide influencing factor as the independent variable and the occurrence probability of landslides as  
167 the dependent variable (landslide is 1, the non-landslide is 0). The independent variable can be continuous or  
168 discrete. Assuming that the probability of landslide occurrence is  $P$ , the regression equation can be written  
169 as follows:

$$170 \quad \quad \quad P = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(b_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + \dots + b_nx_n)}} \quad (3)$$

171 where  $b_0$  is a constant,  $n$  is the number of independent variables,  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  is the landslide influencing  
172 factors, and  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  are the coefficients of LR.

## 173 3.4 Ensemble learning

### 174 3.4.1 Boosting

175 Boosting algorithm is a process of enhancing a simple weak classification algorithm to reduce variance  
176 and bias through iterative training and improve the ability to classify model data (Youssefa et al., 2016).  
177 Boosting algorithm generates a classifier combination through multiple iterations. Each iteration constructs  
178 a new training set from a sample returned to the total dataset. And each iteration will adjust the weight of the  
179 sample so that the error samples get higher weight values at the next iteration. After  $T$  iterations, the updated  
180 weak classifiers are weighted and superimposed to obtain the strong classifier (Fig. 4).



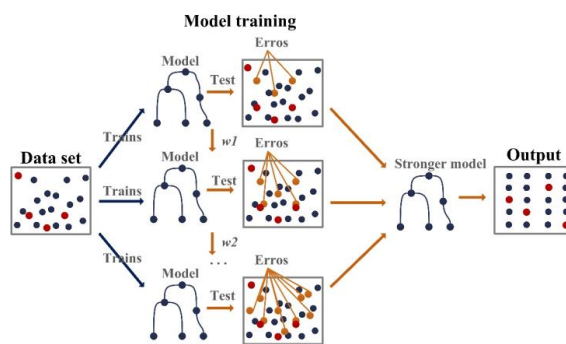


Fig. 4 Schematic diagram of Boosting ensemble algorithm.

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### 183 3.4.2 Bagging

184 The Bagging algorithm is an ensemble learning method proposed in 1996 (Breiman et al., 1996). Its  
 185 core idea is to repeat the input training sets by Bootstrap sampling to obtain  $n$  subsets and build a weak  
 186 classifier for each subset. The voting method integrates the weak ( $n$ ) classifiers to form a strong classifier.  
 187 The Bagging algorithm can observe small changes in the training data, effectively improving the accuracy  
 188 and stability of the model prediction results, especially for models susceptible to sample disturbances (Fig.5).

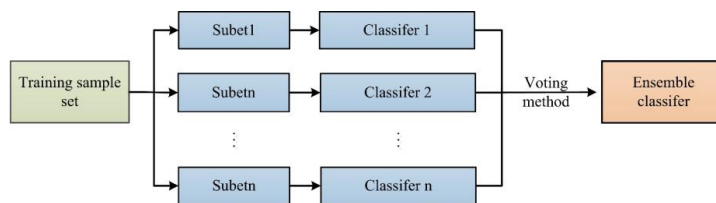


Fig. 5 Flowchart showing the Bagging ensemble algorithm.

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## 191 4 Modelling and results

### 192 4.1 Landslide inventory and data preparation

193 Accurate and reliable landslide inventory data is essential for LSM. This study prepared the landslide  
 194 inventory using field data, historical landslide inventory, and high-resolution remote sensing images. The  
 195 data source of this study includes: (a) a topographic map (1:10,000) for extraction of topography, landscape,  
 196 and rivers; (b) a geological map (1:50,000) for extraction of lithology, geologic structure, faults, and so on;  
 197 (c) field investigation data; and (d) the historical landslide inventory. A total of 179 landslides are identified  
 198 in the study area, distributed in spots or bands along the Yangtze River (Fig. 1). The total area of the identified  
 199 landslides is 22.14 km<sup>2</sup>. In contrast, the area of individual landslides ranges from 0.13 km<sup>2</sup> to 1.80 km<sup>2</sup>. There  
 200 are four typical reservoir landslides: Baijiabao landslide, Shuping landslide, Bazimen landslide, and  
 201 Muyubao landslide (Fig. 6).

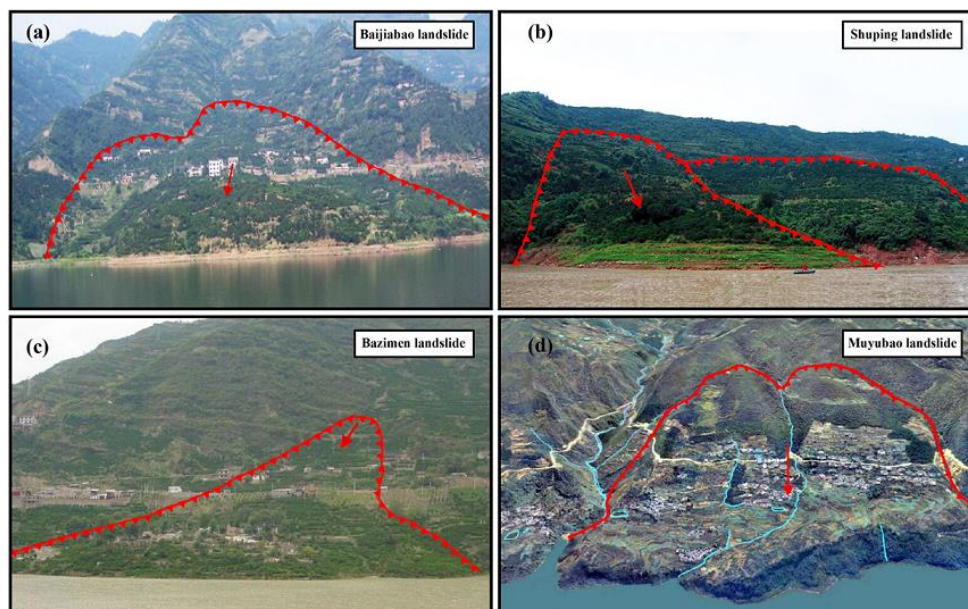


Fig. 6 Typical reservoir landslides in the Three Gorges Reservoir area. The locations are shown in Fig. 1.

#### 4.2 Landslide influencing factors

Different influencing factors cause landslide occurrence in various regions due to the diverse geological environments. With the consideration of the regional geological conditions, landslide inventory, and earlier studies (Yu et al., 2016; Li et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021), twelve influencing factors were prepared initially for LSM, namely altitude, slope, aspect, terrain roughness index (TRI), topographic relief, slope geometry, slope structure, lithology, topographic wetness index (TWI), land use, distance to rivers, and distance to faults. According to the Technical requirement for the geo-hazard survey (1:50,000) of China Geological Survey, the raster of 30 m × 30 m is adopted as the basic unit for LSM. All layers of twelve influencing factors are extracted in *ArcGIS 10.2*.

##### 4.2.1 Altitude

Many activities, roads, bridges, and infrastructures occur at low altitudes in the study area. With such activities, the stability of natural slopes is easily damaged; with the excessive rainfall in landslide-prone areas, slope failure often causes landslides. The altitude of this study area varies 145~2,020 m, which is divided into five classes: [145 ~ 240), [240 ~ 450), [450 ~ 650), [650 ~ 1200), [1200 ~ 2020) (Fig. 7a). As suggested in Table 1, landslides in this study area mainly occurred in the altitude range of 145~240 m, the information value of which is the highest of 1.49. No landslide occurred in the region with an altitude of more than 1200 m since the slope is not disturbed.



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**Table 1** Statistics between causal factors and landslides occurrence.

Causal factor	Category	IV	Causal factor	Category	IV	
Slope (°)	0~9	-0.90	Aspect	flat	-1.93	
	9~18	0.37		north	0.47	
	18~27	0.42		northeast	0.23	
	27~36	-0.28		east	-0.27	
	>36	-1.63		southeast	-0.31	
TRI	1~1.1	0.37	Distance to faults (m)	south	0.43	
	1.1~1.2	-0.04		southwest	-0.29	
	1.2~1.3	-0.88		west	-0.71	
	1.3~1.4	-1.9		northwest	-0.03	
	1.4~1.5	-2.48		0-500	-0.04	
Distance to rivers (m)	>1.5	-2.49	500-1,000	0.08		
	0~300	0.92	1,000-1,500	0.24		
	300~600	0.29	1,500-2,000	0.23		
	600~900	-0.57	> 2,000	-0.22		
	900~1,200	-1.7	Altitude (m)	<240	1.49	
1,200~1,500	-2.95	240-450		0.54		
Lithology	L1	-3.94		450-650	-1.36	
	L2	-0.3		650-1,200	-3.84	
	L3	0.17		>1,200	-∞	
	TWI	L4	-0.34	Slope geometry	X/X	0.16
		L5	0.42		X/V	-0.96
1.37~3		-2.49	X/GE		-1.45	
3~4.5		-0.37	V/X		0.04	
4.5~6		-0.20	V/V		-1.74	
Topographic relief (m)	6~7.5	0.47	V/GE	-1.19		
	7.5~9	0.72	GR/X	0.01		
	>9	0.02	GR/V	-1.02		
	Land use	0-14	-0.63	Slope structure	GR/GE	-1.46
		14-35	0.47		B1	-∞
35-42		0.08	B2		0.14	
42-49		-0.47	B4		0.13	
>49		-1.70	B5		0.08	
Land use	Mountain land	-0.59	B6	-0.17		
	Farmland	0.12	B7	-0.34		
	Waterbody	0.43	B8	-0.67		
	Construction land	0.85				

222

Note: IV refers to Information Value; The meaning of the lithology, slope structure, and slope type abbreviation of the formation is shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

223

#### 224 4.2.2 Slope

225

The slope affects the stress distribution, materials accumulation, and surface runoff. It can be divided into five classes: very gentle [0, 9°], gentle (9°, 18°], moderate (18°, 27°], steep (27°, 36°], and very steep (36°, 90] (Fig. 7b). Landslides generally occur in the gentle slope, whose information value is 0.42. When the slope is more than 36°, the occurrence of a landslide is significantly inhibited, and the information value is the lowest of -1.63.

229

#### 230 4.2.3 Aspect

231

Rainfall and sunlight exposure varies with aspect. It leads to the differences in physical and mechanical properties of sliding masses, which leads to differences in landslide stability. (Pham et al., 2021). The aspect

232



233 in this study was divided into nine categories. The landslides with north and northeast aspects are the easiest  
 234 to occur; their information value is 0.47 and 0.23, respectively (Fig. 7c).

#### 235 4.2.4 Topographic relief

236 The relief shows the relative height difference within the study area. The calculation formula of the  
 237 relief factor is shown as follows (Liu et al., 2009):

$$238 \quad D = Hmax - Hmin \quad (4)$$

239 Where,  $D$  is the relief factor;  $Hmax$  is the highest altitude value;  $Hmin$  is the lowest altitude value. The  
 240 topographic relief in this study is divided into five classes: [0 ~ 14 m), [14 ~ 35 m), [35 ~ 42 m),  $\geq$  49 m  
 241 (Fig. 7d). The information values are -0.63, 0.47, 0.08, -0.47 and -1.70, respectively.

#### 242 4.2.5 Slope geometry

243 Slope curvature is the microscopic performance of the earth's surface landforms, divided into plane  
 244 curvature and profile curvature. It reflects the concavity of the slope along the aspect, which controls the flow  
 245 speed of surface material and rainfall confluence (Abdo et al., 2022). We classify the plane and profile  
 246 curvatures into three categories respectively. The nine slope geometries are defined with the combination of  
 247 plane and profile curvatures (Table 2, Fig. 7e). In this study area, landslides mainly occur in the slope type  
 248 of X/X, with the highest value of 0.16.

249 **Table 2** Definition for slope geometry classification.

Plan curvature Profile curvature	Outward slope (X)	Inward slope (V)	Straight slope (GR)
Convex slope (X)	X/X	V/X	GE/X
Concave slope ( V )	X/V	V/V	GE/V
Straight slope ( GE )	X/GR	V/GR	GE/GR

#### 250 4.2.6 Terrain Roughness Index

251 The terrain roughness index (TRI) reflects the degree of surface fluctuation and erosion. The calculation  
 252 formula is shown as follows (Moore et al., 1991):

$$253 \quad TRI = \sqrt{Abs(max^2 - min^2)} \quad (5)$$

254 The TRI is divided into six classes: [1~1.1), [1.1~1.2), [1.2~1.3), [1.3~1.4), [1.4~1.5), and  $\geq$ 1.5 (Fig.  
 255 7f). The information values are 0.37, -0.04, -0.88, -1.90, -2.48, and -2.49, respectively (Table 1).

#### 256 4.2.6 Land use

257 Land use and landslide development are closely related to the triggering of landslides due to the changes  
 258 in the slope. In our study area, land use is divided into four categories, namely water bodies, construction  
 259 land, farmland, and mountain land (Fig. 7g). In the foothills and mountainous areas, land use and land cover  
 260 are changing, affecting the slope that causes the triggering of the landslides. Further, the construction land  
 261 is mainly concentrated in the gentle river terraces on both sides of the Yangtze River. A large number of



262 excavations, slope cutting, and other activities in the construction of houses and roads directly impact the  
 263 slope's stability, and the information value is the highest of 0.85.

#### 264 4.2.8 Slope structure

265 Slope structure indicates the intersection relationship between strata and slope, which determines the  
 266 direction of the sedimentary stack on the slope. The slope structure in this study is divided according to Table  
 267 3 (Fig. 7h). In this study area, landslides mainly occurred in the B2 region. 35.06% of the total pixels are  
 268 distributed in this category, whose information value is 0.42.

269 **Table 3** Classification of slope structure (Zhou et al., 2018).

Category	Definition (slope: $\theta$ , aspect: $\sigma$ , bed dip angle: $\alpha$ , bed dip direction: $\beta$ )
B1	$a < 10^\circ$
B2	$(( \alpha - \beta  \in (0, 30^\circ) \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in (330^\circ, 360^\circ))) \& \& (\alpha > 10^\circ) \& \& (\theta > \alpha))$
B3	$(( \alpha - \beta  \in (0, 30^\circ) \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in (330^\circ, 360^\circ))) \& \& (\alpha > 10^\circ) \& \& (\theta = \alpha))$
B4	$(( \alpha - \beta  \in (0, 30^\circ) \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in [330^\circ, 360^\circ])) \& \& (\alpha > 10^\circ) \& \& (\theta < \alpha))$
B5	$( \alpha - \beta  \in [30^\circ, 60^\circ] \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in (330^\circ, 360^\circ)))$
B6	$( \alpha - \beta  \in (60^\circ, 120^\circ) \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in [240^\circ, 300^\circ]))$
B7	$( \alpha - \beta  \in [90^\circ, 150^\circ] \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in (210^\circ, 240^\circ)))$
B8	$( \alpha - \beta  \in [120^\circ, 180^\circ] \vee ( \alpha - \beta  \in [180^\circ, 210^\circ]))$

#### 270 4.2.9 Lithology

271 We divide the lithology in the study area into five categories (Table 4 and Fig. 7i). In the stratiform  
 272 structure containing weak strata, especially in the stratified clastic rocks and the carbonate rocks developed  
 273 on the weak bedrock, the large and medium-sized landslides more formed, and its information value is 0.42.  
 274 On the other hand, few landslides developed in the hard rocks, such as granite and diorite, with the  
 275 information value being the lowest of -3.94.

276 **Table 4** Lithological classification in this study area.

Category	Geologic group	Main Lithology
L1	$\delta_{2-1}, Pt$	Granite and diorite
L2	$Z, \epsilon_1, \epsilon_{2+3}, O, T_{1j}, T_{2b3}$	Limestone, Shale, Malmstone
L3	$T_{1d}, T_{2b_{4+5}}, J_{1X}, J_{2S}, J_{3S}$	Marl mudstone
L4	$S, J_{2X}$	Shale, Mudstone and Shi Ying Sandstone, Muddy Siltstone, etc.
L5	$T_{3S}, J_{1-2n}, J_{3p}$	Malmstone (Feldspar sandstone, Shi Ying Sandstone, etc.) with coal seam

#### 277 4.2.10 Topographic Wetness Index

278 Topographic Wetness Index (TWI) reflects topography's influence on soil water saturation (Alnajjar et  
 279 al., 1991). It can be calculated using the following formula:

$$280 \quad TWI = \ln\left(\frac{A_s}{\tan\beta}\right) \quad (6)$$

281 Where,  $A_s$  is the upstream gathering area and  $\beta$  is the slope. The TWI is divided into six categories:



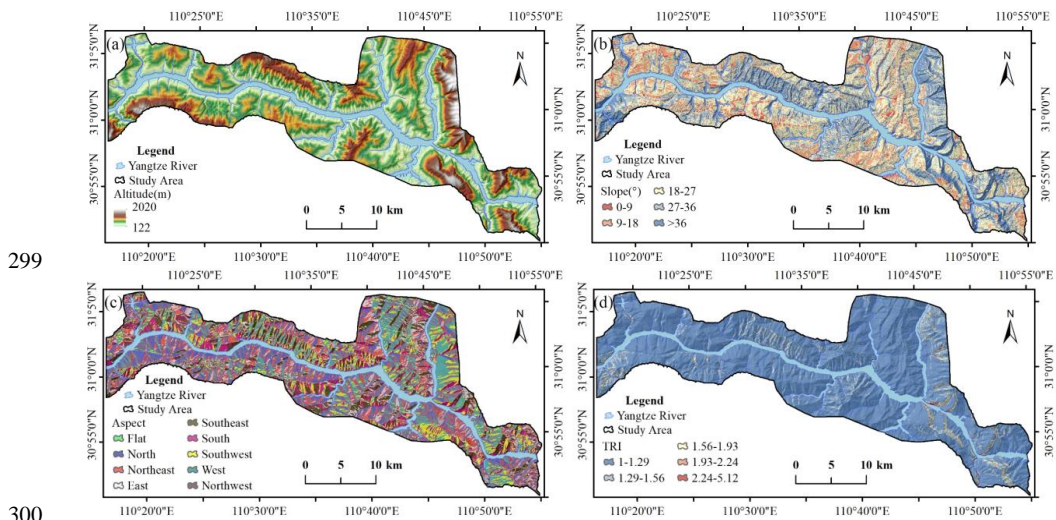
282 [1.37, 3), [3, 4.5), [4.5, 6), [6, 7.5), [7.5, 9), and (9, -∞] (Fig. 7j). When the TWI value is within the range of  
283 [7.5~9), it shows the most substantial positive influence on landslide occurrence, whose information value is  
284 the highest of 0.72.

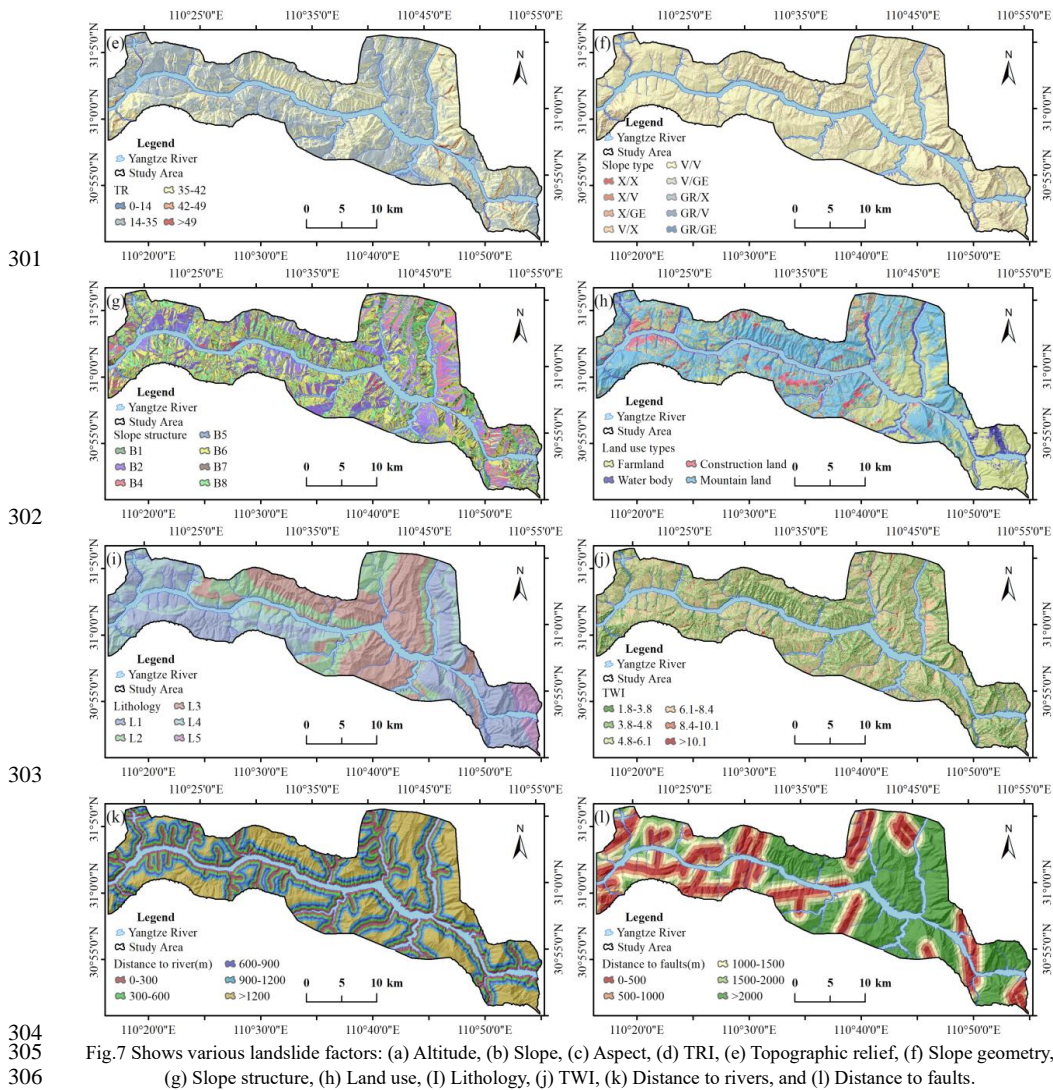
#### 285 4.2.11 Distance to rivers

286 This study area is obviously affected by the hydrogeological environment, whose main river system is  
287 the Yangtze River and its tributaries (Fig. 1). After the impoundment of the TGRA, the stability of the bank  
288 slopes is influenced by the periodical fluctuation of reservoir water level, river erosion, and softening effect.  
289 The factor of distance to rivers represents the intensity of its influence. We divide the distance to rivers into  
290 four classes, namely [0~300 m), [300 m~900 m), [900 m~1,200 m), and  $\geq 1,200$  m (Fig. 7k). The maximum  
291 information value is 0.92 within the distance range of 300 m. With the distance increasing, the influence of  
292 the river system on landslides gradually weakened, and the information value decreased.

#### 293 4.2.12 Distance to faults

294 Due to the severely broken rock mass, the area with intense tectonic movement is prone to landslide  
295 disasters. Minor faults are developed in the study area, and the distance to the faults represents the intensity  
296 of their influence. We divide the distance to faults into four categories, namely [0~500 m), [500~1,000 m),  
297 [1,000~1,500 m), [1,500~2,000 m), and  $\geq 2,000$  m (Fig. 7l). Their information values are -0.04, 0.08, 0.24,  
298 0.23, and -0.22, respectively.





307 **4.3 Landslide susceptibility modeling**

308 **4.3.1 Multi-collinearity analysis**

309 The collinearity of factors will affect the performance of the evaluation model. Therefore, it is necessary  
 310 to carry out a collinearity analysis before susceptibility modeling, to ensure that the factors are independent.  
 311 The multi-collinear analysis is performed using Tolerance (T) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (Zhou et  
 312 al., 2018). When T is greater than 0.2 or VIF is less than 5, it is considered that there is no multi-collinearity  
 313 between the factors. Both indices of T and VIF are calculated using *SPSS Statistics 26.0*, and the results are  
 314 shown in Table 5. It indicates that all the twelve factors are independent with no collinearity.



315

**Table 5** Multi-collinearity analysis of the causal factors.

Influencing factors	T	VIF
Elevation	0.43	2.30
Slope	0.26	3.80
Aspect	0.96	1.04
Terrain Roughness Index	0.31	3.18
Topographic relief	0.32	3.12
Slope shape	0.64	1.52
Landuse	0.81	1.22
Slope structure	0.26	3.80
Stratigraphic lithology	0.94	1.06
Topographic Wetness Index	0.75	1.34
Distance to rivers	0.45	2.25
Distance to faults	0.95	1.05

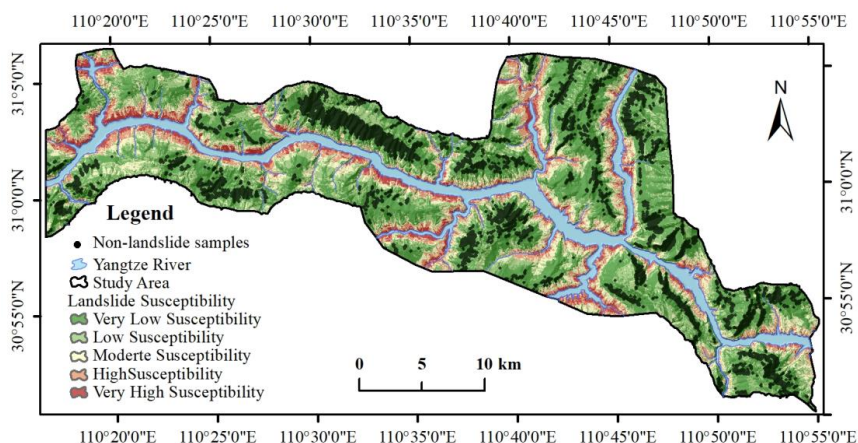
#### 316 4.3.2 Non-landslide sampling using LR

317 In this study, we randomly select 70% of landslide pixels for training and the remaining 30% for  
318 validation. Simultaneously, the same number of non-landslide samples are selected for model training. We  
319 propose a non-landslide sampling method to extract high-quality samples by the LR algorithm. At first, we  
320 produce a preliminary landslide susceptibility map by randomly selecting non-landslide as an example in  
321 landslide-free areas, using the following equations:

$$322 \text{Logit}(P) = -10.87 + 2.175 \cdot x_1 + 1.17 \cdot x_2 + 6.028 \cdot x_3 + 1.079 \cdot x_4 + 0.750 \cdot x_5 + 1.071 \cdot x_6 + \\ 0.987 \cdot x_7 + 0.600 \cdot x_8 - 1.263 \cdot x_9 + 0.672 \cdot x_{10} + 0.559 \cdot x_{11} + 0.814 \cdot x_{12} \quad (7)$$

323 Where:  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_{12}$  are independent variables, which indicate the factor values of the slope, aspect,  
324 altitude, slope shape, land use, topographic relief, TRI, TWI, slope structure, lithology, distance to rivers,  
325 distance to faults;  $P$  is the probability of landslide susceptibility. The landslide susceptibility index is divided  
326 into five levels: Very High (5%), High (10%), Medium (15%), Low (20%), and Very Low (50%). The non-  
327 landslide samples for training are randomly selected only in the Very Low area. The preliminary susceptibility  
328 map (Fig 8) shows different classes of susceptibility (very high, high, moderate, low, very low and non-  
329 landslide) zone along both sides of the Yangtze River. The non-landslide samples are distributed throughout  
330 the study area, concentrated in the areas with high altitudes, steep slopes and few human engineering  
331 activities. Due to topographical and lithological constraints, landslides rarely develop in these areas.  
332 Therefore, the engineering geological conditions of the selected samples are quite different from those of the  
333 landslide, and they are more representative of landslide-free areas.





334  
335

Fig.8 Preliminary susceptibility map and the distribution of non-landslide samples.

### 336 4.3.3 Parameter setting

#### 337 4.3.3.1 Single models of CART and MLP

338 Maximum tree depth is the crucial parameter for CART Modelling. In this paper, a trial-and-error  
339 method determines the maximum tree depth of the CART as 8. Regarding MLP, the number of hidden layers  
340 and neurons affects its modeling accuracy. After multiple sets of tests, we find that a model structure of MLP  
341 with two hidden layers is suitable. The neuron number of the first and second layers are set to 8 and 25,  
342 respectively.

#### 343 4.3.3.2 CART-Boosting

344 In the same way, we obtain the relationship between the parameters and model accuracy of CART-  
345 Boosting through multiple sets of trials (Fig. 9). Similarly with CART-Bagging, the accuracy of CART-  
346 Boosting first increases and then decreases with the sub-model number when the maximum tree depth is  
347 constant. In the case of fewer than 10 sub-models, the model accuracy increases with the maximum tree depth;  
348 While the sub-model number is larger than 10, the model accuracy showed a downward trend after the growth.  
349 Therefore, we set the maximum tree depth and the number of sub-models of CART-Boosting to 10 and 14,  
350 respectively.

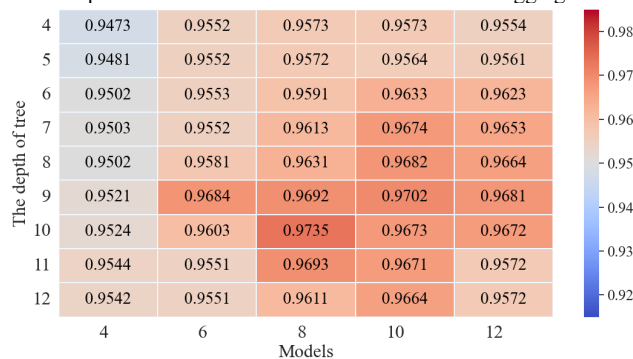


351  
 352

**Fig. 9** Accuracy statistics of CART-Boosting with various parameters.

353 **4.3.3.3 CART-Bagging**

354 The number of sub-models and the maximum tree depth are the significant parameters for the CART-  
 355 based ensemble learning models. To determine the optimal parameters, we obtain the relationship between  
 356 the two parameters and the model accuracy of CART-bagging through multiple trials. As shown in Fig. 10,  
 357 when the maximum tree depth is determined, the modeling accuracy increases with the number of the sub-  
 358 model within a specific range. Similarly, when the number of sub-models is constant, and the maximum tree  
 359 depth is less than 10, the modeling accuracy increases with the increase of maximum tree depth. Therefore,  
 360 we set the maximum tree depth and the number of sub-models of CART-bagging as 8 and 10, respectively.



361  
 362

**Fig. 10** Accuracy statistics of CART-Bagging with various parameters

363 **4.3.3.4 MLP-Bagging and MLP-boosting.**

364 The relationship between a sub-model number and the accuracy of MLP-based ensemble learning  
 365 models is shown in Table 6. For MLP-Bagging and MLP-boosting, the model accuracy first increases and  
 366 then decreases with the number of sub-models. For example, both models achieve the highest accuracy when



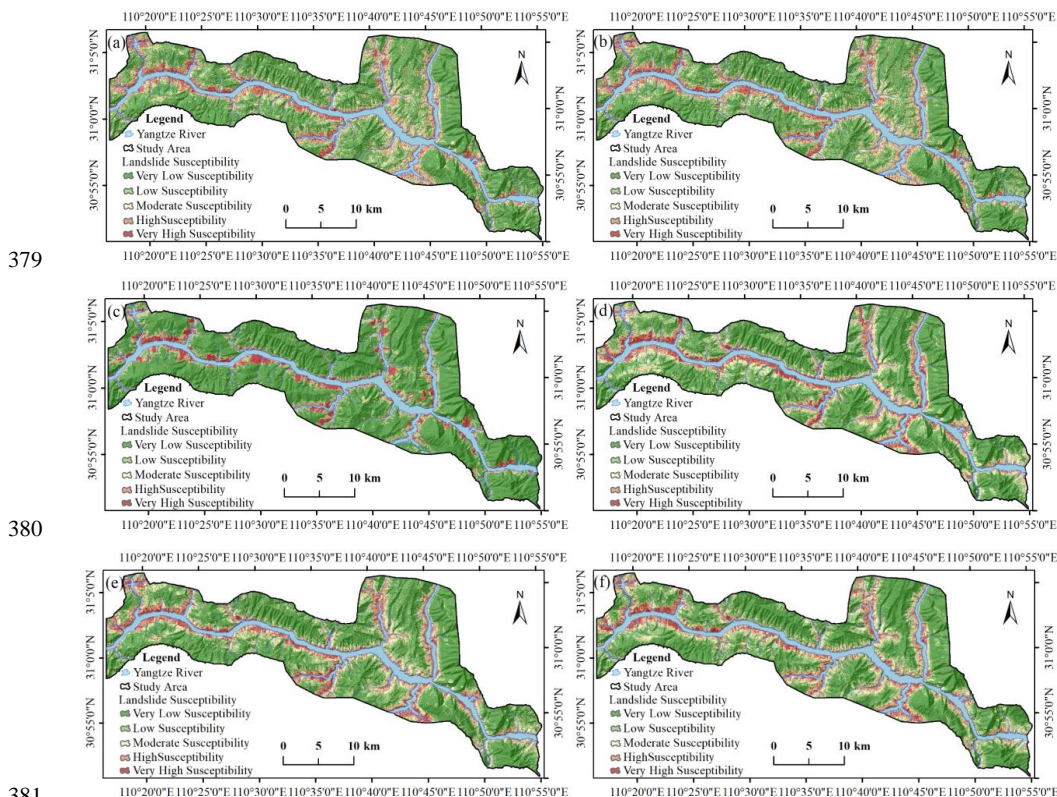
367 the sub-model number is 14. With this, we set the sub-model number of MLP-Bagging and MLP-Boosting  
 368 models to 14.

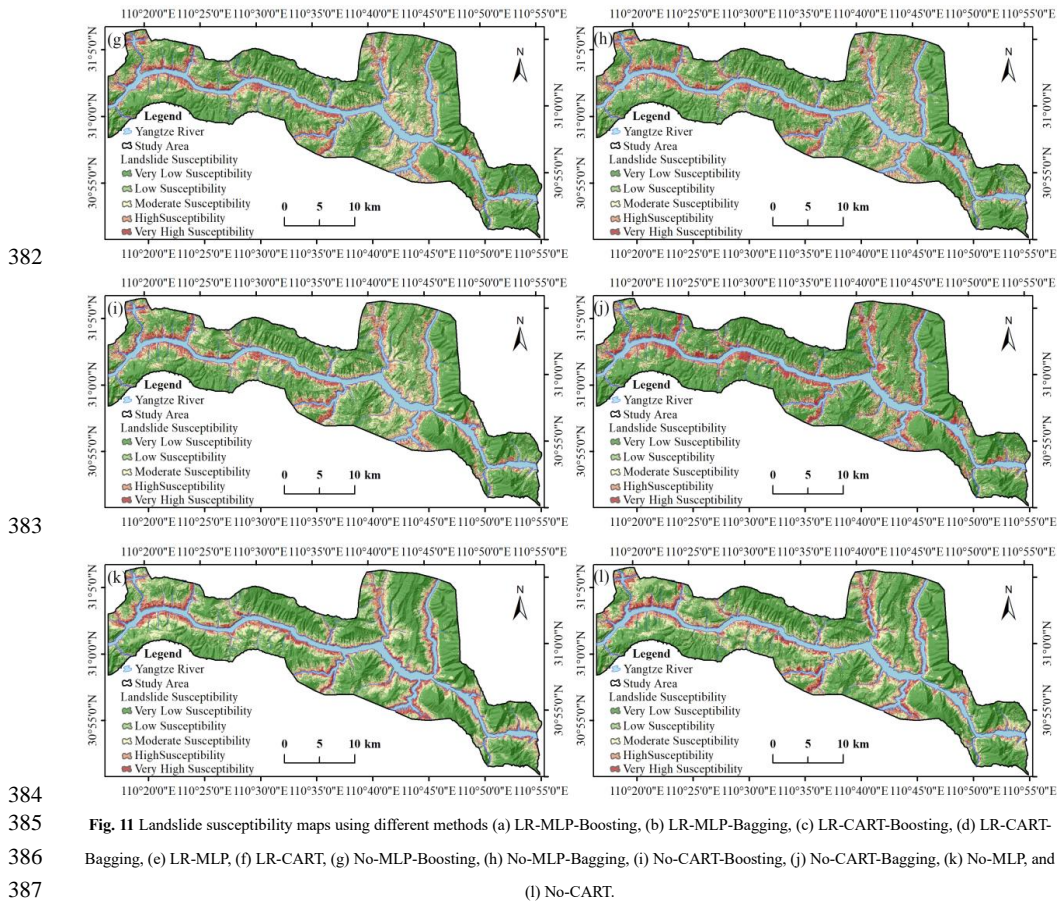
369 **Table 6** Statistics of the sub-model number and accuracy.

No. of sub-model	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
MLP-Bagging	0.9682	0.9740	0.9756	0.9764	0.9780	0.9767	0.9765	0.9761
MLP-Boosting	0.9823	0.9829	0.9848	0.9852	0.9857	0.9855	0.9853	0.9852

370 **4.4 Landslide susceptibility mapping**

371 The probability of landslide susceptibility is calculated by applying CART-Bagging, CART-Boosting,  
 372 MLP-Bagging, MLP-Boosting, single CART, and single MLP models, respectively. According to the ratio of  
 373 0.5: 1: 1.5 : 2: 5, the probability value of landslide susceptibility is divided into five levels, namely Very High,  
 374 High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low. The produced landslide susceptibility maps are presented in Fig. 11a-  
 375 f. In addition, to verify the quality of the non-landslide samples selected by the LR constraint method, we  
 376 choose a set of non-landslide samples under no constraint condition (the whole landslide-free area) for  
 377 comparison. Similarly, these six models are used for LSM as well. The produced landslide susceptibility  
 378 maps are shown in Fig. 11g-l, respectively.





388 **Fig. 11** Landslide susceptibility maps using different methods (a) LR-MLP-Boosting, (b) LR-MLP-Bagging, (c) LR-CART-Boosting, (d) LR-CART-  
389 Bagging, (e) LR-MLP, (f) LR-CART, (g) No-MLP-Boosting, (h) No-MLP-Bagging, (i) No-CART-Boosting, (j) No-CART-Bagging, (k) No-MLP, and  
390 (l) No-CART.

## 388 5 Discussion

### 389 5.1 The relationship between landslide development and the main factors

390 The statistics of information value (Table 1) and susceptibility maps (Fig. 11) indicate that the spatial  
391 development of landslides in this study area is mainly controlled by altitude, lithology, and distance to rivers.  
392 The widely distributed mudstone, marlstone, and weak strata, as well as the layered clastic rock strata  
393 containing weak interlayers, significantly reduced the sliding mass's strength, making the slope vulnerable to  
394 instability (Tang et al., 2019). In the study area, most landslides occur at a low altitude. An altitude of less  
395 than 240 m poses the most significant effect on landslide development, whose information value is the  
396 maximum of 1.49. This is because many human engineering activities occur in this area, where the thick  
397 loose deposits provide the material basis for landslide occurrence. The periodic fluctuation of reservoir water  
398 level significantly changes the hydrogeological conditions of bank slopes, and plenty of seepage-driven and  
399 buoyancy-driven landslides are triggered (Zhou et al., 2022). In the mountainous regions along the road,



400 excessive rainfall enhances flow in the drainage, weakening the rock mass and triggering landslides. The  
401 statistics suggest that the closer the slope to the river, the more it is affected. When the distance to rivers is  
402 less than 300 m, its information value is high at 0.92. Additionally, it is to be noted that the information value  
403 method is a typical statistical method whose reliability depends on sufficient samples. The information value  
404 may need to be more accurate in the case of insufficient data.

## 405 **5.2 performance comparison of the used algorithms**

### 406 **5.2.1 Machine learning algorithms**

407 To verify the performance of the machine learning algorithms, we count the pixel distribution of four  
408 landslide susceptibility maps produced by LR-CART, LR-MLP, No-CART, and No-MLP (Table 7). The  
409 statistics indicate that the maps produced by these four models are the same. The landslide development law  
410 is consistent with the mapping results, which indicates that the LSM is reliable. Regarding LR-MLP, the  
411 higher the landslide susceptibility level, the higher the landslide ratio. 34.77% of the landslide pixels are  
412 located in the Very High susceptibility area, with the highest landslide ratio of 7.00.

413 Conversely, only 2.67% of the landslide pixels distributes in the Very Low susceptibility area, and the  
414 landslide ratio is 0.05. In the results of LR-MLP, the landslide ratio in the Very High susceptibility area is the  
415 highest at 6.89, where 35.57% of landslide pixels distribute in this area. The same characteristics are  
416 presented in the results of the No-MLP and No-CART models. The statistics suggest that MLP is slightly  
417 performed better than CART.

418 The receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve is a commonly used performance evaluation method  
419 in landslide susceptibility assessment (Sun et al., 2021). The area under the ROC curve (AUC) is used to  
420 assess model performance, and the model with a larger AUC is considered better. As shown in Fig. 12, LR-  
421 MLP outperforms LR-CART, and their AUCs are 0.901 and 0.889, respectively. NO-MLP achieves better  
422 accuracy than NO-CART as well. The ROC curves suggest that both algorithms of MLP and CART perform  
423 excellently in LSM. We can infer MLP algorithm can more accurately establish the nonlinear relationship  
424 between landslide occurrence and its influencing factors than CART.

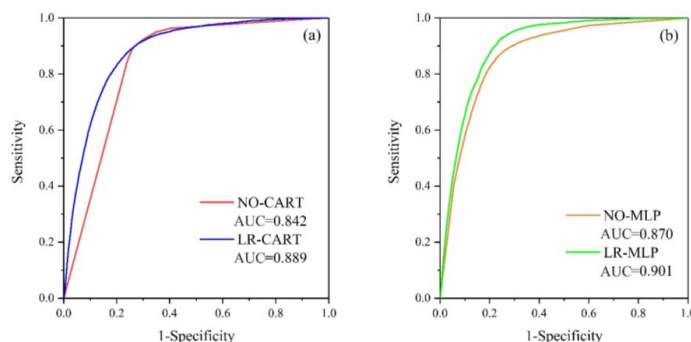


Fig. 12 ROC curves of single models: (a) LR- and NO-CART, and (b) LR- and NO-MLP.

Table 7 Statistical results of susceptibility zoning.

Levels	Landslide pixles		Domain pixles		Ratio (a/b)
	No.	% (a)	No.	% (b)	
<b>No-CART</b>					
Very Low	861	3.56	353,136	50.55	0.07
Low	1,506	6.22	138,069	19.76	0.31
Moderate	4,882	20.18	101,150	14.48	1.39
High	8,393	34.69	69,174	9.90	3.50
Very High	8,553	35.35	37,117	5.31	6.65
<b>No-MLP</b>					
Very Low	846	3.35	351,927	50.37	0.07
Low	1,666	6.89	134,798	19.29	0.36
Moderate	5,174	21.38	108,194	15.49	1.38
High	8,250	34.09	68,527	9.81	3.48
Very High	8,259	34.14	35,200	5.04	6.77
<b>LR-CART</b>					
Very Low	645	2.67	341,817	48.93	0.05
Low	1,543	6.38	145,048	20.76	0.30
Moderate	4,674	19.32	107,442	15.38	1.26
High	8,726	36.07	68,256	9.77	3.69
Very High	8,607	35.57	36,083	5.16	6.89
<b>LR-MLP</b>					
Very Low	652	2.69	352,147	50.4	0.05
Low	1,408	5.82	136,945	19.6	0.30
Moderate	4,869	20.12	107,515	15.39	1.31
High	8,854	36.59	67,333	9.64	3.80
Very High	8,412	34.77	34,706	4.97	7.00

428 **5.2.2 Ensemble learning algorithms**

429 The result statistics of the eight coupling models are shown in Table 8. In the landslide susceptibility  
 430 map produced by LR-MLP-Boosting, 43.75% of the landslide pixels are distributed in the Very High  
 431 susceptibility area. Its landslide ratio is the highest of 8.594, while the Very Low susceptibility area is the  
 432 lowest 0.028. LR-MLP-Boosting not only achieves the best prediction accuracy but also has the lowest false  
 433 negative error which may lead to catastrophic losses. Higher landslide ratios in Very High susceptibility areas  
 434 and lower landslide ratios in Very Low susceptibility areas suggest that the model has better performance.  
 435 The comparison results indicate that LR-MLP-Boosting performs better than LR-CART-Boosting, and LR-



436 MLP-Bagging outperforms LR-CART-Bagging. The same comparison results are presented in the results of  
 437 the No-MLP-Boosting, No-MLP-Bagging, No-CART-Boosting, and No-CART-Bagging models.

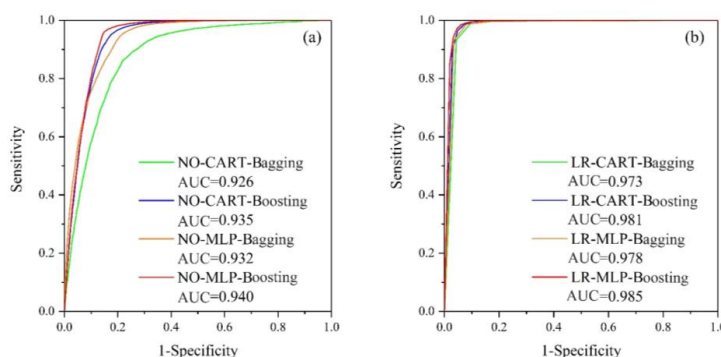
438

**Table 8** Statistical results of each landslide susceptibility zoning.

Levels	Landslide pixels		Domain pixels		Ratio (a/b)
	No	% (a)	No	% (b)	
<b>LR-MLP-Boosting</b>					
Very Low	346	1.43	352,156	50.41	0.028
Low	706	2.92	135,816	19.44	0.150
Moderate	3,222	13.32	105,327	15.08	0.883
High	9,336	38.59	69,792	9.99	3.863
Very High	10,585	43.75	35,555	5.09	8.597
<b>LR-MLP-Bagging</b>					
Very Low	423	1.75	359,283	51.43	0.034
Low	933	3.86	131,112	18.77	0.205
Moderate	4,185	17.30	105,520	15.10	1.145
High	8,998	37.19	68,320	9.78	3.803
Very High	9,656	39.91	34,411	4.93	8.103
<b>LR-CART-Boosting</b>					
Very Low	394	1.63	364,801	52.22	0.031
Low	770	3.18	122,823	17.58	0.181
Moderate	3,829	15.83	107,890	15.44	1.025
High	9,006	37.22	67,320	9.64	3.863
Very High	10,196	42.14	35,812	5.13	8.221
<b>LR-CART-Bagging</b>					
Very Low	413	1.71	342,258	48.99	0.035
Low	1,105	4.57	145,233	20.79	0.220
Moderate	3,786	15.65	107,928	15.45	1.013
High	8,883	36.71	67,105	9.61	3.820
Very High	10,008	41.36	36,122	5.17	8.000
<b>No-MLP-Boosting</b>					
Very Low	595	2.46	342,258	51.43	0.048
Low	929	3.84	145,233	18.77	0.205
Moderate	4,124	17.04	107,928	15.07	1.131
High	8,834	36.51	67,105	9.78	3.735
Very High	9,713	40.14	36,122	4.96	8.094
<b>No-MLP-Bagging</b>					
Very Low	601	2.48	353,804	50.64	0.049
Low	1,089	4.50	132,710	18.99	0.237
Moderate	4,034	16.67	108,589	15.54	1.073
High	8,707	35.99	67,991	9.73	3.698
Very High	9,764	40.36	35,552	5.09	7.930
<b>No-CART-Boosting</b>					
Very Low	623	2.57	352,231	50.16	0.051
Low	1,106	4.57	135,474	19.39	0.236
Moderate	4,121	17.03	107,995	15.46	1.102
High	8,786	36.31	67,976	9.73	3.732
Very High	9,559	39.51	34,970	5.01	7.893
<b>No-CART-Bagging</b>					
Very Low	622	2.57	342,258	48.99	0.050
Low	1,340	5.54	145,233	20.79	0.260
Moderate	3,750	15.50	107,928	15.45	1.000
High	8,688	35.91	67,105	9.61	3.740
Very High	9,795	40.48	36,122	5.17	7.830



439 We also utilize the ROC curves to quantify the performance of the coupling models. The same  
 440 conclusion about the performance ranking of the coupled models can be drawn from the ROC Curves (Fig.  
 441 13). LR-MLP-Boosting achieves the best prediction accuracy with the highest AUC of 0.985. Apparently, the  
 442 coupling models outperform the single machine learning models. Boosting and Bagging improve the  
 443 accuracy of LR-MLP by 0.085 and 0.077, respectively, while improving the accuracy of LR-CART by 0.092  
 444 and 0.084, respectively (Table 9). Accuracy improvement from Boosting is more significant than the  
 445 improvement from Bagging. In Boosting method, the prediction of all the sub-models was sequentially  
 446 integrated into the training process to achieve the final results (Fig. 3). However, it is parallel to the Bagging  
 447 method (Fig. 4). The boosting method is more effective at reducing the deviation and variance, which  
 448 enhances the prediction ability of the coupling model.



449

450 **Fig. 13** ROC curves of coupling models: (a) no constraint sampling and (b) LR constrained sampling

451

**Table 9** Statistics of modelling accuracy.

Single model	Original	Bagging		Boosting	
	AUC	AUC	Improvement	AUC	Improvement
<b>No sampling</b>					
CART	0.842	0.926	0.084	0.935	0.093
MLP	0.870	0.932	0.062	0.940	0.070
<b>LR sampling</b>					
CART	0.889	0.973	0.084	0.981	0.092
MLP	0.901	0.978	0.077	0.986	0.085

452 **5.3 The advantages of the proposed method for non-landslide sampling**

453 High-quality non-landslide samples are critical to the performance improvement of LSM. We use two  
 454 methods for non-landslide sampling, and two single models and four coupling models for susceptibility  
 455 mapping are established using selected samples. As shown in the ROC curves and statistics (Figs. 12 and 13,  
 456 Tables 8 and 9), all the LR- models achieve a better performance than the corresponding NO- models. It  
 457 indicates that the application of the LR model to constrain the selection range of non-landslide samples can





458 effectively improve sample quality.

459 Many machine learning methods can produce more accurate initial susceptibility maps to constrain the  
460 range of non-landslide sampling. However, as reported in earlier studies (Zhou et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2021;  
461 Sun et al., 2022), the performance of machine learning methods varies in regions, and high-quality data is  
462 required. As a result, a poor prediction may occur in some landslide-prone regions. Due to the simplicity of  
463 operation, high accuracy and stable performance, LR is widely used and consistently achieves acceptable  
464 results. In comparison, LR is a better choice to ensure the generalization of the non-landslide sampling  
465 method.

466 The non-landslide pixels obtained by random sampling under no constraint conditions may have  
467 engineering geological conditions prone to landslides. The mixing of these pixels will reduce the quality of  
468 non-landslide samples. In addition, the engineering geological conditions that inhibit the occurrence of  
469 landslides are diverse. Some non-landslide sampling range constraint methods, such as the low-slope method,  
470 cannot select non-landslide samples with different geological conditions. Therefore, it may limit the  
471 improvement of modelling accuracy. LR model produces an initial susceptibility map, and non-landslide  
472 samples are only selected from the Very Low susceptibility areas. This method can effectively avoid the mis-  
473 selection of samples in landslide-prone areas and keep the diversity of non-landslide sample characteristics.  
474 In general, our proposed non-landslide sampling method is conducive to improving LSM performance and  
475 can be applied worldwide.

## 476 **6 Conclusion**

477 Our detailed analysis is based on two single models (CART and MLP) and four coupling models  
478 (CART-Bagging, CART-Boosting, MLP-Bagging, and MLP-Boosting) to study the landslide susceptibility  
479 map using two kinds of non-landslide samples. We quantitatively analyze the relationship between landslide  
480 spatial development and each causal factor. We have considered twelve controlling parameters as inputs for  
481 LSM after multi-collinearity analysis. We found that the altitude (<240 m) and distance to rivers (<300 m)  
482 emerged as important factors for the cause of landslides in the study area. Their information values are the  
483 highest at 1.49 and 0.92, respectively. LR-MLP-Boosting achieves the highest prediction accuracy with an  
484 AUC of 0.985. The accuracy of the comparison indicates that MLP performs better than CART. The coupling  
485 models outperform the corresponding single models and Boosting algorithm performs better than the  
486 Bagging algorithm. High-quality non-landslide samples enhance the accuracy of LSM. They can be  
487 effectively obtained by using the LR model to constrain its selection range. The non-landslide samples  
488 selected from the low susceptibility area are of higher quality than those selected from the entire landslide-



489 free area. LR is a reliable method to generate a preliminary susceptibility map to determine the Very Low  
490 susceptibility area. The results will be of great help to the community and to the scientists to monitor the  
491 susceptible locations and to get an early information about the occurrence of landslide event to minimize loss  
492 of life and damages.

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