INTERACTION OF CLIMATIC VARIABLES WITH ROADSIDE NO² IN A NORTH-WESTERN CITY OF THE HIMALAYAS

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Abstract

This study examines the interactions between climatic variables and roadside Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) concentrations in a northwestern city located in the Himalayan region. The study collected ambient NO² concentrations using a standard procedure for NO² collection and divided the study region into three major areas: urban, suburban, and rural. Each area was further divided into five sampling locations, and each location was sampled five times on different days of the week during both the winter and summer seasons. The mean estimated values for $NO₂$ in urban, suburban, and rural areas during the winter season were 51, 38, and 40 μ g/m³, respectively, while in the summer season, the values were 44, 32, and 29 μ g/m³. Similarly, the mean predicted values of NO₂ for the study areas during the winter season were 52, 38, and 41 μ g/m³, and during the summer season, they were 45, 40, and 40 μ g/m³. The Tukey test was performed for all the concentration measurements at various locations, and there was almost a significant difference (0.05) among all the data sets. The correlations between temperature and NO₂ showed a positive value for both summer and winter seasons, while NO₂ showed negative correlations with wind speed and humidity (-0.8 to 0.6). Despite the variations in seasons and fleet flux in urban, suburban, and rural study sites, a significant level of agreement was found via correlations between $NO₂$ and the climatic variables. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the interactions among climatic variables and roadside $NO₂$ concentrations in a north-western Himalayan city and emphasizes the need for continued monitoring of air pollution levels in this region.

Keywords: Climatic variables Vehicular emissions NO² North-western Himalayas

INTRODUCTION

Climatic variables are measurable properties of the atmosphere that characterize the climate of a specific region (Mehta and Yadav, 2022; Touhami et al., 2022; Gul et al., 2022). Pakistan is among the top ten most vulnerable countries to climate variations (Hussain et al., 2020; Qazalbash et al., 2021). According to a report by the Government of Pakistan (GoP, 2016), there has been a recorded increase of 0.57 \degree C in temperature and variations in precipitation patterns. Pakistan is a significant agricultural country globally (Rehman et al., 2022), and its climate ranges from arid to semi-arid (Hayat et al., 2021). Unfortunately, due to excessive growth in industries, transportation, deforestation, and urbanization, the changes in climatic variables have surpassed acceptable limits (Khosla and Bhardwa, 2021; Williams et al., 2019). Consequently, these changes are impacting natural habitats, causing glacier melting, droughts, increased air pollution, and health issues (Honson et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020; Darmanto et al., 2019). The Task Force on Climate Change (TFFC) in Pakistan submitted a report on climate change in the country (Rahman et al., 2017). $NO₂$ is a highly reactive gas formed by the combustion of fossil fuels, particularly in vehicle emissions (Hickman et al., 2021; Goldberg 2019). NO₂ also reacts with other air pollutants, leading to the formation of secondary pollutants like ozone and particulate matter, which further worsen the impacts of vehicular emissions (Orellano et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020). High levels of NO² exposure can result in respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia (Cheng et al., 2019; Yee et al., 2021; Cheng et al., 2019). It can also cause eye irritation, headaches, and fatigue. Furthermore, NO₂, in conjunction with other air pollutants, contributes to the formation of secondary pollutants such as ozone and particulate matter, which intensify the health consequences of vehicular emissions (Rovira et al., 2020; Naghan et al., 2022).

Peshawar, a major city in the north-western Himalayas, has experienced a significant increase in air pollutants due to the rising number of vehicles and inadequate emission control measures, posing a severe threat to the environment (Bilal et al., 2022), and public health (The impact of NO₂ on air quality and human health in Peshawar underscores the urgent need for effective emission control measures to reduce vehicular emissions. Possible solutions include promoting public transportation, adopting cleaner fuels, and implementing stricter emission standards and regulations (Singh et al., 2022; Ribeiro et al., 2022). Taking action to reduce vehicular emissions can improve air quality in the study area and safeguard the health and well-being of residents (Gonzalez-Martin et al., 2021).

Moreover, the effects of NO₂ emissions extend beyond Peshawar city, as air pollution can travel over long distances and impact neighboring regions (Rana et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2023). Additionally, the impacts of vehicular emissions extend beyond human health and encompass environmental consequences such as climate change and ecosystem damage (Zoran et al., 2020; Tyagi et al., 2022; Pasupuleti et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the correlation and interactions between various climatic variables and roadside NO² in the study region of Peshawar.

Study area

District Peshawar (33.9437° N, 71.6199°E) is situated in a subtropical climate. The average temperature in summers rises to 40°C (May-Aug) whereas, in winters, it is 10 °C (Nov-Mar). Relative humidity averages about 46% (June-Aug) and 57% in (Nov-Mar). On the Western side of the Peshawar valley, there lies a Khyber Pass. In the North and Northeast, it is wrapped by mountains, which ultimately separate it from the Swat region. The Khyber mountain range is in the Northwest of Peshawar, District Peshawar is stretched towards Koh-e-sufaid (White Mountain) in the South. It is connected to the Northern region and other cities of Pakistan via motorway, Indus highway, and Karakorum highway. Sources of traveling are coaches, buses, wheelers, and for inside city moments, cars, rickshaws, motorcycles (two-stroke engines), etc., are used excessively. The industrial sector is developed which includes the industries of sanitary, food, beverages, wood, plastics, etc. Brick kilns and marble factories are situated in suburban and rural locations of the Peshawar district. It has a single tehsil, there are 92 union councils in which 56 are rural and 36 are urban (Bilal et al., 2022).

Figure 1: Map of the study area (Bilal et al., 2022)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

NO² Data collection

NO² concentrations were collected with the help of NOVA Model 600, Portable Multi-gas Ambient Air Analyzer–600 series. It is a portable electrochemical sensor, % RH by dielectric ceramic sensor-based device suitable for ambient outdoor air quality identification (Subhanullah et al., 2022). For the collection NO² data the portable device was fixed in the range of 2 meter height near the road side while going traffic to observe climatic $NO₂$ concentrations among the climatic variables. The samples were collected on the random days of week in both the summer and winter seasons.

Statistical analysis

The Statistical analysis included correlations; Tuckey test analysis and Multilinear Regression Model were conducted via SPSS (V23), before finding out the final conclusion (Achen, 2021).

Tukey test

It is the statistical tool which determines the analysis of variance and shows the significance difference among the different data sets or groups (Janani et al., 2021)

Multi Linear regression (MLR) model

Multi linear regression (MLR) model is a statistical tool that can be used in research projects for analysis. It can be used to identify the relationship among the dependent and independent variables and to calculate the predicted desired values. In multi linear regression, the independent variables are more than one (Temp, Humidity, and Wind speed) with the dependent variables (Concentration of $NO₂$). Generally, it can be,

Yj = βº+β1X1+β2X2+β3X3……βkXk+ r………………EQ 1.

Whereas, for the set of Yj observations, Yj is a predicted variable and is calculated by coefficient, βº and independent variables set (X) and a residual error (r). This model identifies the mathematical relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables (Lee et al., 2019; Zhang and Yao, 2021).

Table 1: The season-wise mean estimated values of NO²

Pearson Correlations (r)

The correlation analysis is the statistical analysis tool that identifies and predicts the relationship between two variables or among the various variables. Furthermore it marks the strength and relationship among variables (Jebli et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021).

Results

The estimated mean concentrations of NO² measurements from urban, suburban and rural study areas in winter seasons were 51, 38 and 40 μ g/m³. The location-wise mean value measurements were for Phase 3 chowk, Jumat speen , Deans chowk (Cantt), Shuba bazar junction and haji camp (Bus terminal) were 51, 49, 53, 48 and 54 $\mu q/m³$ similarly, for suburban locations the mean values for Achini chowk, Jameel chowk, Forest bazar, Northern bypass and Phase 6 (VII) were 37, 36, 40,39 and 38 µg/m³. Followed by the measurements for rural study area locations i.e., for Deep warsak , Pandu –surizai junction, Badaber, Badaber –matani junction and far rural site were 39, 44,38,41 and 40 μ g/m³ (Table 1). The mean estimated values for summer season were 44, 32 and 29 µg/m³ . Location wise estimated concentration values in summer season for urban locations i.e., Phase 3 chowk, Jumat speen , Deans chowk (Cantt), Shuba bazar junction and Haji camp (Bus terminal) were 44, 45, 43, 49 and 42 μ g/m³, whereas for suburban locations for Achini chowk, Jamil chowk, Forest bazar, Far (Deep warsak) and Phase 6 (VII) were 31, 33, 31, 34, 30 μ g/m³. Followed by the mean values for rural study area locations in summer season. Deep warsak, Pandu –surizai junction, Badaber, Badaber – matani junction and far rural site. i.e., 30, 32, 29, 27 and 28 μ g/m³ (Table 1) (Figure 2).

REGRESSION ANALYSIS RESULTS

The regression analysis analysed the inter-dependency of the NO₂ with climatic variables. In the winter season it has been evident that the unknown factors in the rural study locations counts more impact in the relationship among $NO₂$ and climatic variables as compare to the urban and suburban study areas. Similarly, in the summer season the urban and rural study locations determined more weightage of the unknown factors as compared to the suburban study area. Furthermore, the temperature involvement was either minimum or negative as compare to the other climatic variables. The following equations are the predicted models for the study area locations in both the winter and summer seasons.

Urban winter

NO2(Yº)=44.927+(9.061)Wind+(1.110)Temp+(0.132)Hum………………..EQ 2.

Sub-urban winter

NO2(Yº)=41.368+(1.265)Wind+(.186)Temp+(0.052)Hum…………………………..EQ 3.

Rural winter

 $NO₂(Y⁰) = 47.196+ (4.732)$ Wind+ (.156) Temp+ (0.123) Hum...............EQ 4.

Urban summer

NO2(Yº) =80.789+ (4.849) Wind+ (-1.185) Temp+ (0.088) Hum…EQ 5.

Sub urban summer

NO2(Yº) =33.664+ (2.571) Wind+ (0.78) Temp+ (0.066) Hum…………………………….EQ 6.

Rural summer

The regression model predicted the values by using the estimated values shown in EQ 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Figure 3, evidenced the less variability in between the estimated and predicted values for all the study areas in both the seasons whereas, the variation in between the estimated and predicted values for urban suburban in summer and winter season were less as compare to the variations values for rural study area Figure 3 and Figure 5.

Figure 2: The mean concentrations locations wise in both the summer and winter season

Xi'an ShiyouDaxueXuebao (ZiranKexue Ban)/ Journal of Xi'an Shiyou University, Natural Sciences Edition ISSN: 1673-064X E-Publication: Online Open Access Vol: 66 Issue 06 | 2023 **DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/MCETF**

RESULTS PEARSON CORRELATION (r)

The correlation (r) analysis showed that the climatic variables are correlated with the $NO₂$ in both positively and negatively. Temperature determined the positive correlation $NO₂$ in both the seasons. However, the correlation in summer was less strong (0.35) as compared to the winter season (0.48). Similarly, the correlation value among the NO² concentration and Wind speed was found negative in both the winter and summer season, it was also noted that the correlations in winter season were less negative (-0.25) as compare to the summer season (-0.80). The correlation analysis further explained that the correlation values among humidity and $NO₂$ concentrations were bit more (-0.65) in summer season as compare to the winter season (-0.60) Figure 4.

Figure 4: Pearson correlations among climatic variables and NO2

Tukey Test

Tukey test showed the data set of NO₂ for winter season concentrations in winter season were almost near to the significant level i.e., ranging from (0.44 to 0.56) while keeping the p value 0.05. Similarly for summer season the values ranged from 0.52 to 0.59. The result determined that all the data sets were almost significantly different from each other. (Appendix Table 1, Table 2).

DISCUSSIONS

Climatic variations in climatic variables such as temperature precipitation and humidity occur due to the anthropogenic activities. Climatic variables interact with gaseous air pollutant such as NO2. As an independent variables, climatic variables do have correlations interaction with the $NO₂$ in both the summer and winter seasons. The mean values of $NO₂$ in urban location in winter season was noted higher as compared to the suburban and rural locations, due to the traffic load density which resulted more emissions from the vehicles, whereas, $NO₂$ is the common pollutant emitted by vehicles. Similarly urban locations have high concentrations of industries and factories as well; alike is the scenario with the suburban and rural study areas. Urban locations have higher and denser building density causing the accumulation of air pollutants like NO₂ and force it to remain stagnant. As the study area is a valley especially the urban study area is more helpful to trap the air pollutants due to its flat topographic conditions. The urban locations experiences lower wind speed which ultimately results to the higher concentrations of NO₂ pollutants. In winter, lower temperatures and higher humidity levels can lead to an increase in NO₂ concentrations. This is because during the winter season, there is usually an increase in fossil fuel combustion for heating, which results in higher emissions of NO₂. Additionally, lower temperatures and higher humidity levels can cause a decrease in atmospheric mixing, trapping pollutants close to the ground and leading to higher concentrations. On the other hand, in summer, higher temperatures and higher wind speeds can lead to an increase in NO² concentrations. This is because higher temperatures can increase the rate of chemical reactions that produce NO₂, while higher wind speeds can transport pollutants from urban areas to suburban and rural areas. Additionally, summer weather conditions can lead to the formation of photochemical smog, which is characterized by high levels of NO2, particularly during periods of high sunshine. It's worth noting that the relationship between temperature, humidity, wind speed and NO² concentrations can be complex and influenced by a range of other factors, such as the emission sources, topography, and atmospheric chemistry. Therefore, it is important to conduct a detailed analysis of the specific location

and meteorological conditions to understand the relationship between these variables and NO₂ concentrations as well showed in Figure 5

Figure 5: Sample comparison among estimated and predicted values of NO² in both the summer and winter season

CONCLUSION

The research study found out the interactions among the climatic variables such as temperature, humidity, wind-speed and road side NO2. The measured concentration values of NO² in winter season in urban study area were higher from suburban and rural study area locations. Whereas, the values for summer season were higher in urban study area. The suburban and rural study area values were almost in a similar range. The predicted mean values via regression model for winter season were higher in urban locations than the rural and suburban locations. The values were also higher from the estimated values. The predicted values in summer season for urban locations were higher than the suburban and rural locations however the predicted values were much higher than the estimated values. The Tukey test was performed for all the data sets of concentrations measurements at various locations. It almost showed near to the significance (0.05) difference among all the data sets of measurements. The $NO₂$ and temperature correlations showed positive correlations both for summer and winter seasons. Whereas, the wind speed, humidity showed negative correlations with the NO2.

Correlations among the climatic variables and $NO₂$ showed worth interactions among them, however, regression model also predicted the other unknown factors that bears impacts on these correlations and interactions.

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AppendixTable 1: Tukey test winter season

Table 2; Tukey Test summer season

c. Alpha = $.05$.