




<https://doi.org/10.47430/ujmr.2381.020>



Received: 17 June 2023

Accepted: 27 June 2023

A Comparative Seasonal Study on the Physicochemical Properties of Open Well Waters in Kura District, Kano State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Water is one of the most important compounds on earth and is vital to the survival of any organism. The aim of the study was to assess the seasonal variation of the physico-chemical properties of open well water in Kura District, Kano State, Nigeria. A total of ten (10) water samples were collected randomly from five locations in Kura district, namely Dan Hassan, Karfi, Dalili, Gundutse, and Kosawa. The samples were analysed for pH, turbidity, conductivity, nitrate, calcium, chloride, and total dissolved solids, following the standard of American Public Health Association. Average values of physicochemical properties during the dry season were as follows: pH was 5.5 to 9, electrical conductivity was 340 to 456 S/cm, turbidity was 4.6 to 7 NTU, total dissolved solids was 400 to 420 mg/l, nitrate was 0.6 to 2.15 mg/l, chloride was 259 to 590 mg/l, and calcium was 8 to 25 mg/l. The average values for various physicochemical properties in the dry season were recorded as follows: pH ranged from 5.8 to 6.4, electrical conductivity ranged from 89 to 420 S/cm, turbidity ranged from 3.4 to 6.4 NTU, total dissolved solids ranged from 380 to 720 mg/l, nitrate ranged from 0.5 to 1.8 mg/l, chloride ranged from 8 to 14 mg/l, and calcium ranged from 160 to 450 mg/l. The results of the paired sample t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in concentration between the wet and dry seasons for pH, conductivity, turbidity, and nitrate ($p < 0.05$). However, concentrations of calcium, chloride, and TDS varied significantly between wet and dry seasons. Given that the dry season that was examined exceeded the WHO threshold limits for pH and turbidity, it is recommended to implement suitable water treatment techniques such as coagulation, sedimentation, and filtration in order to reduce turbidity and regulate pH levels in order to meet the required standards. Further research is necessary to investigate the presence of alternative contaminants in open well water, like heavy metals, microbial contaminants, or organic pollutants.

Keywords: Seasonal Study, Open well waters, Physico-chemical, water quality and Kura district

INTRODUCTION

Water plays a vital role in a number of industries, including industry, agriculture, and others, and is an essential requirement for human life. It is also a highly vulnerable component of the environment. Over the past few decades, rapid industrialization and population growth have substantially increased the demand for freshwater (Med Crave, 2017). Access to safe drinking water is not only a fundamental human right but also vital for maintaining good health. In order to achieve optimal health and development, a continuous supply of safe drinking water is imperative for

any country's population (Miner *et al.*, 2016; Fatima *et al.*, 2020). Unfortunately, a large part of the world's population does not have adequate access to safe water, and approximately 884 million people are faced with this problem. Over one third of this population lives in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kassie and Hayelom, 2017; Fatima and Kollegen, 2020).

Physical, chemical, and biological parameters in the water and sediments typically determine surface and groundwater quality (Cherotich und Kollegen, 2023). These parameters show significant variation according to seasonal changes and the type of pollution (Kithiia, 2012;

UN/WWAP in Jahr 2019; Kerich und Fidelis in Jahr 2020; Cherotich and Kollegen, 2022). Physical and chemical pollutants change the quality of receiving water bodies, contributing to water quality deterioration (Bairu *et al.*, 2022).

Chemical contaminants in drinking water are a major concern worldwide, and they pose a risk to human health. They are frequently found in the vicinity of canyons, where waste products negatively affect the water quality (Meseret, 2012; Arasaretnam *et al.*, 2018).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2003), poor sanitation, contaminated water, or a lack of water account for up to 80 per cent of all diseases worldwide. A review of 28 studies conducted by the World Bank revealed a correlation between the quality and quantity of available water and sanitation and the incidence of specific waterborne, washable, and sanitation-related diseases (Ramesh *et al.*, 2015; Arasaretnam *et al.*, 2018). Longe and Balogun (2010) reported that a significant number of Nigerians still rely on shallow wells, while the majority obtain their domestic and drinking water from ponds and streams. Approximately 40 million Nigerians are at risk of waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, diarrhea, and typhoid because they depend on alternative water sources (Adelegan, 2004; Orubu, 2006; WHO, 2017). The prevalence of these diseases further burdens Nigeria's inadequate healthcare services, leading to a severe economic downturn for both the struggling health system and the predominantly impoverished population (Okonkwo *et al.*, 2014).

Nigeria also faces challenges in managing and developing groundwater resources, with resource management lagging behind the pace of development and exploitation often being poorly regulated. The current state of groundwater resources is unsatisfactory and requires significant changes (Nwankwoala, 2011). Groundwater withdrawals in arid regions of Nigeria account for 20% of the total water use, showing the importance of these resources. Researchers have directed their attention towards the pollution problem and the quality of these internationally valuable resources, making it a relevant topic in groundwater resource

management (Pradhan, 2009; Shirazi *et al.*, 2012; Manap *et al.*, 2013; Saidu *et al.*, 2021). In Kano metropolis, several studies have assessed groundwater quality from boreholes (Bichi, 2000; Abdullah *et al.*, 2008; Akan *et al.*, 2009; Bolagun *et al.*, 2021; Saadu *et al.*, 2021), but little attention has been given to the water quality of open wells in rural areas of Kano State. Consequently, this study aims to comparatively analysed the physicochemical properties of selected open wells waters in selected towns of Kura District, Kano State, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area

The study was conducted in selected towns of Kura districts, Kura Local Government, Kano State, Nigeria. Kura is located at 11° 46'17" E and 8° 25'49" N (Figure 1). With a population of about 14,601 in 2006 (NPC, 2006), Kura's growth rate in 2006 was an estimated 3.6% by 2021, with an estimated population of 21416.86. Kura is known for its edible and herbal production. The dry season usually starts from October to April, with an average annual rainfall of 134.4 mm (Osang *et al.*, 2013). The main business of the inhabitants is agriculture, and the main crops are rice, wheat, corn, millet, beans, tomatoes, sugarcane, and cabbage. The inhabitants are also into the production, processing and trading of locally produced rice.

Research Materials

Each water sampling site's geographical coordinates were recorded using the GPS German 76 model. At these sampling points, water samples were taken in plastic bottles with secure lids. When collecting water from open wells, a ladle or scoop was used to ensure that the scoop did not come into contact with the sides of the well or any other surface that could contaminate the sample.

Sampling sites selection

For this study, well water samples were randomly collected from five different locations within and around the Kura district. These areas were labelled as A, B, C, D, and E, specifically Kosawa, Dalili, Karfi, Gundutse, and Dan Hassan. Consequently, five sampling sites were selected, as can be observed in Figure 1.

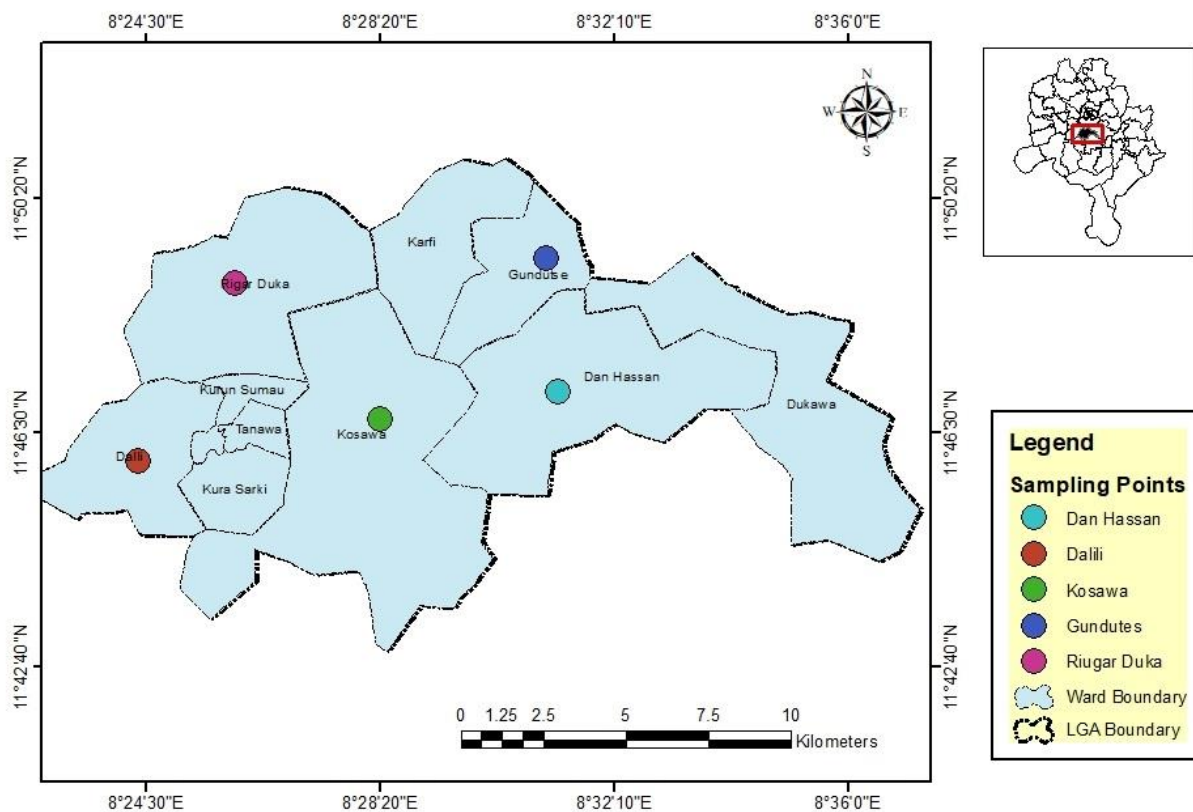


Figure 1 Map showing the Sampling Sites

Sample Collection

Ten (10) water samples were taken from five selected wells located in different towns in Kura district (Figure 1). The wells were categorized as A, B, C, D, and E. Samples were collected in August and November 2022, which represent the wet and dry seasons respectively. Plastic sample bottles were rinsed with distilled water and then filled with a small amount of the corresponding water sample to ensure proper collection. These bottles were placed in a cooler with an ice pack for transportation to the laboratory and sealed tightly to prevent air from entering.

Physicochemical Analyses

In the laboratory, the water samples were analysed for various physico-chemical parameters, including pH, turbidity (NTU), total dissolved solids (TDS), electrical conductivity (EC), nitrate (NO₃), chloride (Cl⁻), and calcium ions concentration. The pH level was measured using a HANNA pH meter (Model HI 28129). Turbidity was determined through the nephelometric method employing a HACH 2100AN turbid meter (APHA, 2005). Total dissolved solids were assessed using the gravimetric method described by Kazi *et al.* (2009). The electrical conductivity was measured using a Jenway 4510 conductivity meter (Jenway, 2017). Until a stable reading was

obtained and recorded, the meter probe was immersed into the water sample container. Spectroscopic analysis using the HACH DR/2010 was performed to determine the concentrations of major ions, such as nitrates (NO₃⁻) and chlorides (Cl⁻) (APHA, 2017). After the digital Jenway 3505 pH meter was calibrated using standard solutions of pH 4 and 10.0, the concentrations of calcium ions were determined using a flame spectrometer (APHA, 2017).

Statistical Analyses

Average wet and dry season concentrations were calculated using IBM SPSS version 20, a statistical program for social scientists. In addition, the paired t-test was used to investigate the significant differences in physicochemical parameter concentrations during the dry and wet seasons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2-5 presents the results for all the physico-chemical parameters (pH, EC, turbidity, chloride, calcium ions, TDS, and nitrate) for both dry and wet seasons in the studied locations.

pH

The pH values across all sampling points ranged from strongly acidic to alkaline. Specifically, Riugar Duka exhibited a higher pH of 9.0 during

the dry season, while Gundutse recorded the lowest pH of 6.0, also during the dry season.

Except for the sample from Rugar Duka, the average concentration in five wells fell within the WHO-recommended range of 6.5-8.5 for drinking water in 2021. This finding contradicts reports by others in similar studies (Adebayo *et al.*, 2022). It is important to note that variations

in the optimal pH range can influence the toxicity of toxins in aquatic environments. Previous studies by Okonkwo *et al.* in 2008, Chikezie *et al.* in 2018, and Adebayo *et al.* in 2022 have highlighted this potential impact

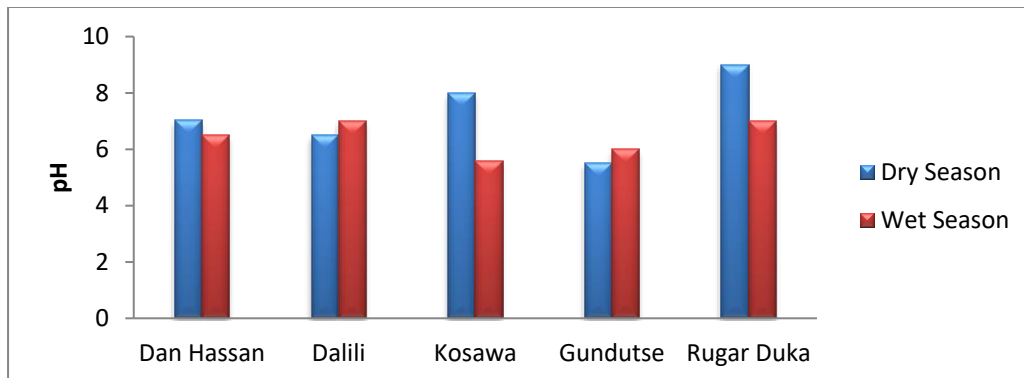


Figure 2: pH values across the study locations

Turbidity

Turbidity values in the study area varied between 4.0 and 7.03 NTU (Figure 3). The highest average turbidity value (7.03 NTU) was recorded at Dan Hassan site during the dry season and the lowest average turbidity value (5.0 NTU) was recorded at Gundutse during the

dry season. This contradicts the results of Nura *et al.* (2020) who reported that turbidity values for water samples taken at Metropolis Kano ranged from 1.05 NTU to 2.87 NTU. In another study done in Ghana, Schafer *et al.*, (2010) found that the turbidity of most well waters across Ghana ranged from 2 to 266 NTU.

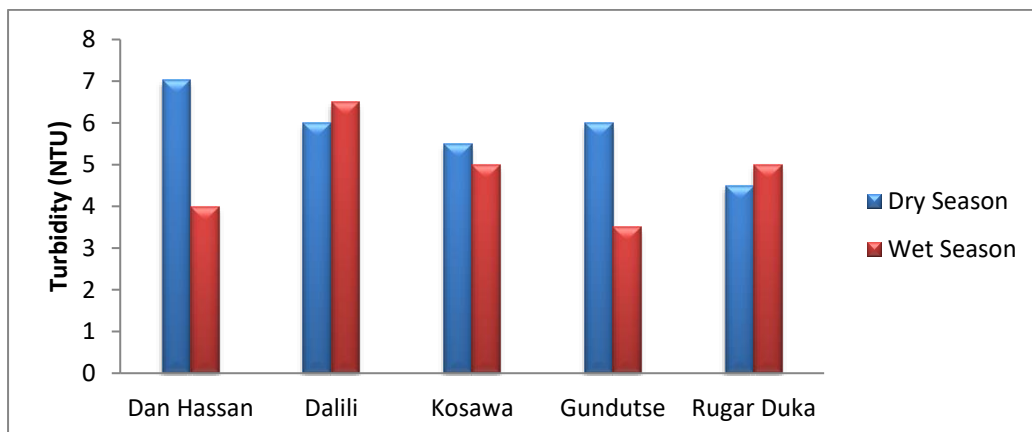


Figure 2: Turbidity Values of Well Water sample across Sample Site

Conductivity

The conductivity values of well water samples obtained from the study area are shown in Figure 4. During the wet season Rugar Duka showed the highest mean EC value (457.02), while Dalili showed the lowest mean concentration (89) during the same period. The average EC value measured for the water samples conformed to

the WHO standard (2021) of 1000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. The reduced conductivity recorded in this investigation may be attributed to either the inherent salinity of the water in the study area or the leaching of rocky reservoirs where water accumulates (Nouayti *et al.*, 2015; Malek *et al.*, 2016).

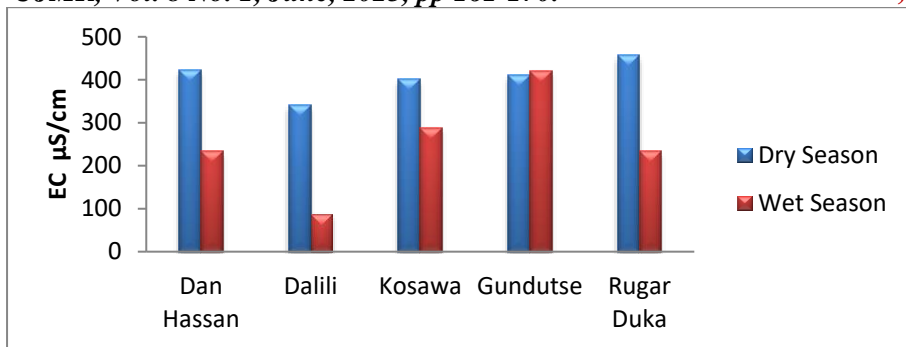


Figure 4: EC Values of Well Water samples across sampling Sites

Chloride ions

In both wet and dry seasons, chloride ion levels fluctuate from 7.0 to 25.35 mg/L, as shown in Figure 5. These concentrations are significantly below the safety limit of 250 mg/L set by the World Health Organization. Among the samples collected, Kosawa exhibited the highest chloride ion concentration (25.35 mg/L), while Gundutse displayed the lowest levels. This research contradicts the findings of Addo *et al.* (2014) in

Ghana, who reported chloride concentrations ranging from 155.95 to 165.95 mg/L in groundwater near cement plants. Chloride ions, an important inorganic anion present in natural waters, serve as an indicator of pollution (Makhouk *et al.*, 2011; Malek *et al.*, 2016). Their presence in groundwater may suggest anthropogenic contamination, as they can be traced back to urine and personal care products (Malek *et al.*, 2016).

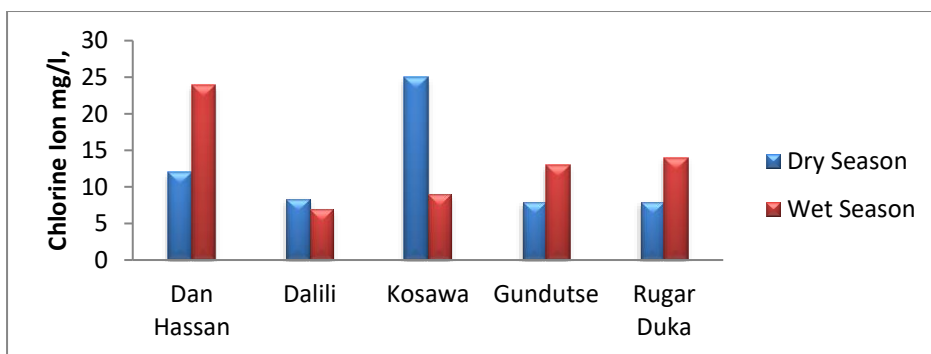


Figure 5: Chloride ions concentration at Sample Sites

Total Dissolve Solid (TDS)

The TDS levels measured at the current sampling point range from 374.03 mg/l to 717.3 mg/l. Dan Hassan had the lowest TDS concentration of 374.03 mg/l, while Dalili had the highest TDS concentration of 717.3 mg/l in a well water sample (Figure 6). These results show higher TDS

values than those reported by Baraka *et al.*, (2022), who recorded TDS values between 18 and 55 for certain boreholes at the Balaton Centre, Kenya. As noted by Ketata *et al.* (2011) and Baraka *et al.* (2022), significant variations in TDS concentrations across regions are caused by geological variations in mineral solubility.

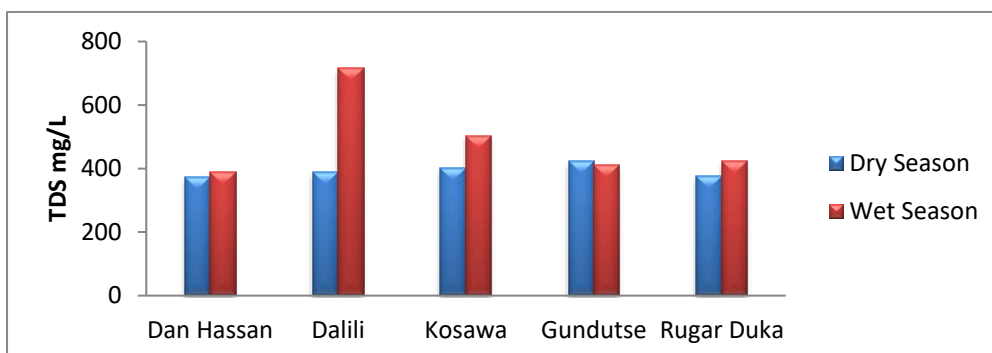


Figure 6: TDS Concentration for Different Sampling Sites

Nitrate

According to Figure 7, the Gundutse sampling site recorded the highest nitrate value (2.15 mg/kg) during the dry season, while the Kosawa sampling site recorded the lowest nitrate value during the wet season (0.79 mg/kg). The results of this study indicate significantly lower nitrate levels compared to the findings reported by

Saidu *et al.*, (2021), who reported nitrate levels ranging from 1 to 12 mg/kg. The World Health Organization has set a maximum contamination level (MCL) of 1 mg/l for nitrite and nitrogen in water. According to Addo *et al.*, (2011) high nitrite levels in water are an important indicator of biological contamination due to the presence of nitrogen compounds.

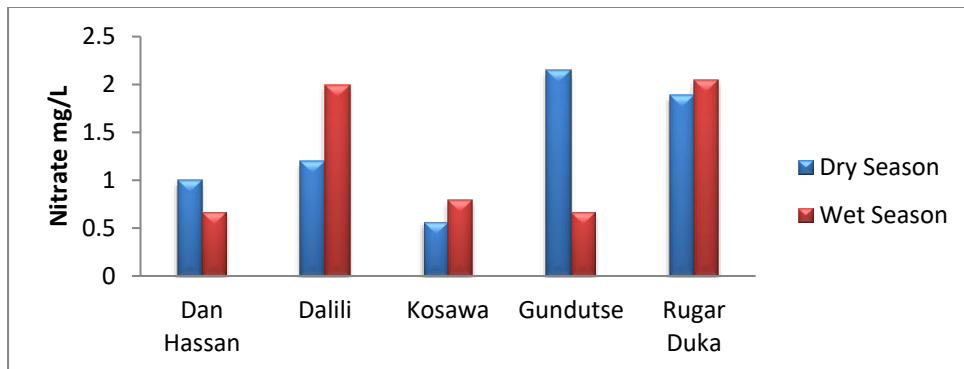


Figure 7: Nitrate (NO₃⁻) concentrations for Different Sampling Sites

Calcium ions Concentrations

Figure 8 displays the calcium concentration span ranging from 374.03 mg/L to 717.3 mg/L. During the rainy season, Kosawa documented the highest calcium concentration at 456 mg/L, while water samples collected on the outskirts of Gundutse recorded the highest calcium

concentration at 717.3 mg/L. In comparison to Yani *et al.*'s (2019) findings, which reported an average groundwater calcium content of 126.75 mg/liter (classified as high), the results of this study demonstrate relatively higher calcium levels.

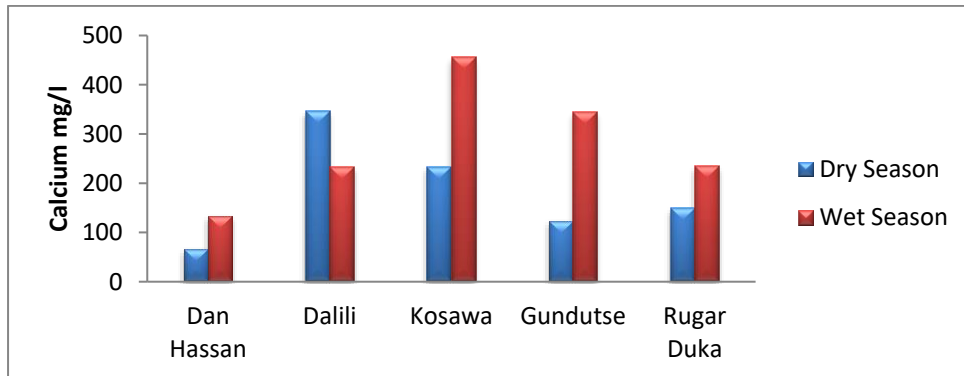


Figure 8 Calcium Concentrations at the Sample Sites

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality (WHO 2011), the average calcium content in drinking water is 75 mg/L, with a maximum permissible limit of 200 mg/L. Water containing calcium levels above the upper limit can cause digestive disorders, kidney disease, bladder stones, and urinary tract obstruction in humans.

Paired T-test

A paired-sample t-test was used to show the seasonal differences in concentrations between

wet and dry seasons in five groups of open-well water samples (A, B, C, D, and E), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Paired Sample t-test for Difference in Physico-chemical Concentration between Wet and Dry Seasons

Parameters	Season	Mean	N	SD	t- cal.	P< 0.05	Remark
pH	Dry Season	7.00	5	1.32	3.24	1.41	NS
	Wet Season	6.42	5	1.27	1.27		
Turbidity	Dry Season	5.90	5	1.18	4.400	1.41	NS
	Wet Season	4.64	5	1.07			
Conductivity	Dry Season	400	5	10.00	6.87	1.41	NS
	Wet Season	246	5	7.84			
Nitrate	Dry Season	1.33	5	0.57	3.451	1.41	NS
	Wet Season	1.08	5	0.43			
Calcium	Dry Season	180.0	5	6.70	1.48	1.41	Sig
	Wet Season	246.0	5	7.84			
Chloride	Dry Season	12.2	5	1.74	1.57	1.41	Sig
	Wet Season	14.0	5	1.80			
TDS	Dry Season	388.0	5	9.84	1.43	1.41	Sig
	Wet Season	484.0	5	11.0			

Sources: SPSS Analysis (2023)

The finding reveals that most parameters, including pH, turbidity, conductivity, and nitrate, have higher mean values during the dry season (Table 3). On the other hand, parameters such as chloride, total dissolved solids (TDS), and calcium have higher mean values during the wet season. These findings contradict a previous study by Cherotich *et al.*, (2023) in Kenya, which reported higher TDS levels in the wet season compared to the dry season and an increasing trend from upstream to downstream during the wet season. In addition, the paired student t-test shows that parameters such as pH, conductivity, nitrate, and turbidity have calculated values (t calculated) lower than the table values at p less than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant concentration difference between the wet and dry seasons. But parameters like TDS, calcium, and chloride have calculated t values higher than table values, indicating a big difference in concentration between wet and dry seasons. Furthermore, the paired student t-test shows that parameters such as pH, conductivity, nitrate, and turbidity have calculated values (t) lower than the table values at p less than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant concentration difference between the wet and dry seasons.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The finding of the study revealed that average values for the physicochemical properties in the dry season were as follows: pH ranged from 5.5 to 9, electrical conductivity ranged from 340 to 456 S/cm, turbidity ranged from 4.6 to 7 NTU, total dissolved solids ranged from 400 to 420 mg/l, nitrate ranged from 0.6 to 2.15 mg/l, chloride ranged from 259 to 590 mg/l, and calcium ranged from 8 to 25 mg/l. The average values during the rainy season were as follows. pH 5.8 to 6.4, conductivity 89 to 420 S/cm, turbidity 3.4 to 6.4 NTU, total dissolved solids 380 to 720 mg/l, nitrates 0.5 to 1.8 mg/l, chlorides 3.4 to 6.4 NTU 8-14 mg/l, calcium content 160-450 mg/l. Paired-sample t-tests revealed that pH, conductivity, turbidity, and nitrate concentrations were not significantly different between wet and dry seasons ($p < 0.05$). However, calcium, chloride, and TDS showed large differences in concentrations between the wet and dry seasons. Given that the dry season exceeds WHO limits for pH and turbidity, appropriate water treatment techniques such as flocculation, sedimentation and filtration should be introduced to reduce turbidity and adjust pH to levels that meet the required standards.

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