

Comparative analysis of rainwater quality from rooftop harvesting systems in a university staff residential buildings

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Paper History

Received: 01st March, 2025

Accepted: 22th March, 2025

Published: March, 2025

Abstract:

Access to clean water is a pressing global issue, with millions of people relying on rainwater harvesting as a supplementary water source. However, the quality of harvested rainwater is often compromised by contaminants from roofing materials, posing serious health risks to consumers. This study assesses the quality of rainwater captured from galvanized steel, aluminum, concrete, asbestos, and thatch roofs in Taraba State University's Jalingo staff quarters, with a focus on essential physicochemical and bacteriological characteristics. Key water quality metrics were investigated, demonstrating considerable impacts from roofing materials. Lead levels in galvanized steel and asbestos roofs (0.015 mg/L and 0.020 mg/L) surpassed WHO guidelines, while fecal coliform counts in thatch and asbestos roofs (9-10 CFU/100 mL) made the water unsafe to drink. Aluminum and concrete roofs produced superior results, with lead levels below 0.01 mg/L and turbidity below 3.0 NTU, however microbiological contamination remained. The findings emphasize the need of using proper roofing materials and water treatment technologies to improve the safety of captured rainwater for home usage. The study concluded that, while rainwater collection is a sustainable water supply, it requires adequate roofing materials and water treatment procedures to ensure water safety. These findings are useful for improving water resource management in areas that rely on rainwater gathering.

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Keywords: Metals, Microbial contamination, Rain water, Roofing materials

1. Introduction

Rainwater harvesting (RWH) is an ancient method that has recently regained popularity as a sustainable water supply alternative, particularly in areas with inconsistent or limited access to clean water [1]. The approach entails collecting and storing rainwater, usually from rooftops, for later use, and is especially important in areas prone to water scarcity or lacking sufficient municipal water infrastructure [2]. Rooftop rainwater harvesting (RRWH) systems are widely used due to their low cost and simple design. However, worries concerning water quality remain, as contaminants from atmospheric deposition, roofing materials, and environmental sources may jeopardize the safety of captured water without proper treatment [3].

Because of inconsistencies in water supply systems, emerging regions such as Taraba State, Nigeria, are turning to alternative water sources such as rainwater more frequently. Institutions, notably universities, rely heavily on RRWH systems. Thus, it is necessary to assess the quality of captured rainwater to assure its safety for drinking, household, and industrial use [4]. This study looks on the physicochemical and bacteriological properties of rainwater collected from various rooftop materials in the Taraba State

University staff quarters in Jalingo. Water quality is affected by elements such as roofing material, climatic conditions, and microbial contamination, needing a thorough examination [5].

Prior study has found significant diversity in the quality of gathered rainwater, with some samples carrying heavy metals, microbiological contaminants, and other pollutants over safe drinking water levels [6, 7]. This study will compare factors such as pH, turbidity, electrical conductivity, and microbiological loads to established water quality criteria in order to assess the potential health effects of untreated rainfall. The study's extensive research aims to provide significant insights into water resource management, leading to the development of treatment regimens for captured rainwater in institutional and comparable contexts.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Materials and equipment

To meet the research objectives, various materials and equipment were used for sampling, laboratory analysis, and data interpretation. Rainwater samples were collected in sterilized polyethylene or glass vials to ensure sample integrity. These samples were collected from

rooftops made of a variety of materials, including galvanized steel, aluminum, concrete, asbestos, and thatch, utilizing funnels and collection devices intended to prevent external contamination.

In the laboratory, devices such as a pH meter, turbidity meter, and conductivity meter were used to evaluate the physicochemical parameters of the water samples. A spectrophotometer and an atomic absorption spectrophotometer (AAS) were used to detect and quantify trace heavy metals such as lead. Petri plates, agar material, and an incubator were used in microbiological testing to help develop and identify bacterial colonies, notably coliform bacteria. To keep all equipment and surfaces clean, proper sterilization tools such as an autoclave, Bunsen burner, and alcohol were employed.

The analysis employed various chemical reagents such as standard calibration solutions, Griess reagent, and Ammonium molybdate, to accurately quantify nutrient levels. Microbial staining kits facilitated microscopic examinations of bacterial morphology. Field measurements were taken using a rain gauge, while temperature and humidity sensors continuously monitored environmental conditions that could impact water quality.

To document and evaluate the results, data recording sheets were used in conjunction with statistical analysis and graphical representation applications such as Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and MATLAB. Personal protection equipment (PPE) such as gloves, lab coats, and goggles were used to ensure safety during the sampling and analytical processes.

These materials and procedures combined to provide a comprehensive framework for examining the physicochemical and bacteriological properties of rainwater captured from various roofing materials, ensuring the study's findings' dependability and validity.

2.2 Methods (Experimental)

The study accomplishes its goals using a systematic process that involves fieldwork, laboratory analysis, and data interpretation. The technique was structured to fulfill each of the research objectives, focusing on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of rainwater quality data from the staff quarters of Taraba State University, Main Campus in Jalingo.

2.2.1 Study area and site selection

The study was carried out in the staff quarters of Taraba State University's Main Campus Jalingo. Five sampling sites were selected; each representing a different type of roofing material typically utilized in the area (e.g., galvanized steel, aluminum, asbestos, concrete, and thatch). These rooftops are the most common structures in the study area and will allow for a comparison of the impact of roofing material on rainwater quality.

2.2.2 Sampling procedure.

To ensure the gathering of representative and trustworthy data, a consistent sampling process will be used. The details of the sample technique are described below.

2.2.2.1 Rainwater collection

Rainwater samples were collected from designated rooftops during the rainy season as seen in plates 1. The samples were then stored in sealed laboratory tubes for further analyses. The reagents use are shown in Plates 2. A consistent procedure was utilized to guarantee that all samples were represented:

- a. Water was collected directly from rooftop runoff using clean, sanitized polyethylene containers.
- b. Fresh rainwater samples were collected at the start of rain events to minimize contamination from previous events.
- c. To prevent contamination, containers were sealed and labeled soon after collection.



Plate 1: Roof tops at university quaters



Plate 1: Reagents utilised in the research

2.2.2.2 Sample transport and preservation

Rainwater samples were collected and delivered to the laboratory in insulated coolers for examination within 6 hours. Samples were maintained at 4°C until further testing to protect their integrity, especially for bacteriological analysis.

2.2.3 Physico-chemical analysis

The physicochemical parameters of rainwater samples were investigated to evaluate their quality and characteristics. This examination was conducted using the conventional methodologies for water and wastewater testing. The rainwater's physicochemical parameters will be examined using standard methodologies for water and wastewater testing [8]. The parameters measured include:

- a. pH: Measured using a digital pH meter.
- b. Turbidity: Determined using a turbidimeter.

- c. Electrical conductivity (EC): Measured with a conductivity meter to determine the ion concentration.
- d. Total dissolved solids (TDS): Calculated using the relationship between EC and TDS.
- e. Heavy metal content: The concentration of heavy metals (e.g., lead, zinc, copper) will be determined using an atomic absorption spectrophotometer (AAS).
- f. Nitrate and phosphate concentrations: Measured using a UV-visible spectrophotometer.

2.2.4 Bacteriological analysis.

The bacteriological quality of rainwater samples was assessed in order to detect the presence and number of microorganisms. The investigation offered useful information about the safety and potential health hazards linked with the usage of rainwater.

The bacteriological quality of rainwater was tested using established microbiological procedures as reported in [8].

- a. Total coliform count: Using the membrane filtration method and incubating the samples on m-Endo agar at 37°C for 24 hours. The number of colonies will be counted and expressed as colony-forming units (CFU) per 100 mL.
- b. Fecal coliform (*E. coli*) count: Using the same membrane filtration method but incubating the samples at 44.5°C to specifically detect fecal coliforms.
- c. Total plate count: Performed to quantify the general microbial population in the water samples.

2.2.5 Data analysis.

The data acquired from the physicochemical and bacteriological analyses were statistically analyzed to find trends, patterns, and correlations. This helps to analyze the results, draw relevant inferences, and make informed judgments.

2.2.5.1 Statistical comparison.

The findings of the physicochemical and bacteriological investigations were statistically examined using descriptive and inferential statistics:

- a. Descriptive statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and range values were calculated for each water quality parameter.
- b. Inferential statistics: A one-way ANOVA was performed to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in water quality parameters between rainwater collected from different roofing materials.
- c. The statistical software SPSS or R was used for data analysis, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

2.2.5.2 Comparison with standards.

The results were compared to the Nigerian Standard for Drinking Water Quality [9] and World Health Organization [10] recommendations to determine the safety of rainwater for human use.

2.3 Method (Mathematical model)

To develop a mathematical model for the study from scratch, we focused on the fundamental processes influencing the physicochemical and bacteriological properties of rainwater collected from rooftops. The main elements affecting water quality as defined in Lee, *et al.* [14] are:

- a. Contaminant deposition from the atmosphere and rooftop surfaces.
- b. Runoff dynamics as rainwater flows over the rooftop.
- c. Dissolution of substances (heavy metals, chemicals, etc.) from the roofing material into the water.
- d. Microbial growth influenced by environmental conditions.

2.3.1 Mathematical formulation

In this study, rain water quality is defined in terms of pollutant concentrations (physicochemical and bacteriological). The water quality model is generally represented as a mass balance equation that takes into account the input (contamination), transformation (dissolution or growth), and output (runoff) for each parameter.

2.3.1.1 Contaminant deposition

The deposition of contaminants from the atmosphere onto the rooftop can be represented as a mass flux [11]. Let:

- a. $C_{atmos}(t)$ = concentration of atmospheric contaminants at time t (mg/m^3 for chemical contaminants, CFU/m^3 for microbial contaminants).
- b. A = surface area of the rooftop (m^2).
- c. $v_{deposition}$ = deposition velocity of contaminants (m/s).
- d. t = time (s).
- e. $Q_{deposited}(t)$ = mass of contaminants deposited on the rooftop at time t (mg or CFU).

The rate of contaminant deposition on the rooftop was calculated using equation 4 as reported in Shaw, *et al.* [16]:

$$\frac{dQ_{deposited}(t)}{dt} = v_{deposition} \cdot A \cdot C_{atmos}(t) \quad (1)$$

$$Q_{deposited}(t) = \int_0^t v_{deposition} \cdot A \cdot C_{atmos}(t) dt \quad (2)$$

2.3.1.2 Runoff dynamics

As rainwater flows over the rooftop, pollutants deposited on the surface disintegrate and are taken away by the runoff [16]. Let:

- a. $R(t)$ = Rate of rainfall (m^3/s).
- b. $C_{roof}(t)$ = Concentration of contaminants on the rooftop surface (mg/m^2 or CFU/m^2).
- c. $V_{runoff}(t)$ = Volume of runoff water (m^3).

The mass of contaminants carried by the runoff was calculated using equation 4 as reported in Shaw, *et al.* [16]:

$$\frac{dQ_{runoff}(t)}{dt} = C_{roof}(t) \cdot R(t) \cdot A \quad (3)$$

Where $Q_{runoff}(t)$ is the total amount of contaminants in the runoff at time t .

2.3.1.3 Dissolution of substances from roofing

Certain toxins (such as heavy metals) leak into the water through the roofing material. The dissolving rate is dependent on the type of substance and the surface interaction with rainwater [17]. Let:

- $C_{leach}(t)$ = Concentration of leached substances in rainwater (mg/L).
- k_{leach} = Leaching rate constant (s^{-1}).
- $C_{roof}(t)$ = Concentration of leachable contaminants on the roof surface (mg/m²).

The rate of change of contaminant concentration due to leaching was calculated using equation 4 [17]:

$$\frac{dC_{leach}(t)}{dt} = k_{leach} \cdot C_{roof}(t) \quad (4)$$

2.3.1.4 Microbial growth

Bacteriological pollution is influenced by microbial growth and atmospheric deposition. First-order kinetics can be used to describe microbial growth, which is determined by available nutrients and environmental conditions as reported in Thomas, et al. [18]. Let:

- $C_{microbial}(t)$ = concentration of microbial contaminants in water (CFU/m³).
- k_{growth} = microbial growth rate constant (s^{-1}).

The microbial growth is governed by equation 5 as reported in Thomas, et al. [18]:

$$\frac{dC_{microbial}(t)}{dt} = k_{growth} \cdot C_{microbial}(t) + \text{atmospheric deposition term} \quad (5)$$

2.3.1.5 Overall water quality model

The total concentration of a contaminant in the harvested rainwater, $C_{total}(t)$, at any given time t is a combination of the atmospheric deposition, leaching, and microbial growth terms. Therefore, the concentration of a specific contaminant in harvested rainwater can be represented using the equation 6 as reported in Simmons, et al. [15]:

$$C_{total}(t) = C_{atmos}(t) + C_{leach}(t) + C_{microbial}(t) \quad (6)$$

Total mass of contaminants in the harvested rainwater, $Q_{total}(t)$, can be expressed using equation 7 as reported in Simmons, et al. [15]: This equation provides a comprehensive framework for modeling the dynamics of

rainwater quality harvested from rooftops. Parameter definitions as reported in Simmons, et al. [15] are:

$$Q_{total}(t) = \int_0^t (v_{deposition} \cdot A \cdot C_{atmos}(t) + R(t) \cdot A \cdot C_{roof}(t) + k_{leach} \cdot C_{roof}(t)) dt \quad (7)$$

- $v_{deposition}$: Deposition velocity for atmospheric contaminants.
- $C_{atmos}(t)$: Concentration of contaminants in the atmosphere.
- A : Surface area of the rooftop.
- $R(t)$: Rainfall rate.
- C_{roof} : Contaminant concentration on the rooftop surface.
- k_{leach} : Rate of leaching from roofing materials.
- k_{growth} : Microbial growth rate constant.
- $C_{microbial}(t)$: Microbial concentration in the rainwater.

3. Results and discussion.

The research objectives and methodology were clarified through the specification of parameters (measurable components) and variables (particular values or elements measured) for both the physicochemical and bacteriological studies, as well as other variables involved in the study.

3.1 Physico-chemical parameters

These characteristics supplied information about the water's chemical composition and physical properties. The following physicochemical factors were measured in the collected rainwater samples, as indicated in Table 1.

These characteristics are tested on different rooftops, allowing for comparisons of the quality of rainfall from different roofing materials.

Galvanized steel rooftop had a pH of 6.9 and lead concentration of 0.015 mg/L, exceeding the safety threshold for lead. Concrete rooftop had a turbidity of 2.1 NTU and TDS of 180 mg/L, meeting the water quality standards.

3.2 Bacteriological parameters

These parameters analyzed microbial contamination in rainwater samples, which is significant for determining health hazards as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1: Physico-chemical contamination in the rainwater samples

Parameter	Unit	Value	Standard/Threshold
pH		6.5-8.2	6.5-8.5 (NSDWQ, WHO)
Turbidity	NTU	3.5 NTU	≤ 5 NTU (NSDWQ, WHO)
Electrical Conductivity (EC)	μS/cm	120-450 μS/cm	≤ 1000 μS/cm (WHO)
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)	mg/L	80-300 mg/L	≤ 500 mg/L (NSDWQ)
Nitrate (NO ₃)	mg/L	15-25 mg/L	≤ 50 mg/L (WHO)
Phosphate (PO ₄)	mg/L	0.2-0.5 mg/L	-
Lead (Pb)	mg/L	0.01 mg/L	≤ 0.01 mg/L (WHO)
Zinc (Zn)	mg/L	0.2 mg/L	≤ 5.0 mg/L (NSDWQ)
Copper (Cu)	mg/L	0.03 mg/L	≤ 2.0 mg/L (WHO)

Table 2: Microbial contamination in the rainwater samples

Parameter	Unit	Value	Standard/Threshold
Total Coliform Count	CFU/100 mL	100-300 CFU/100 mL	0 CFU/100 mL (WHO, NSDWQ)
Fecal Coliform (E. coli) Count	CFU/100 mL	5-10 CFU/100 mL	0 CFU/100 mL (WHO, NSDWQ)
Total Plate Count	CFU/mL	50-200 CFU/mL	≤ 500 CFU/mL (NSDWQ)

- Rainwater from an aluminum roof showed a total coliform count of 200 CFU/100 mL and an E. coli count of 7 CFU/100 mL, indicating microbial contamination above acceptable limits.
- Thatch roof rainwater showed no fecal coliform but a total plate count of 180 CFU/mL, which is within safe limits.

3.3 Comparison for various roofing materials

The study findings on the comparative investigation of physicochemical and bacteriological features of rainwater samples provide vital insights into the quality and safety of harvested rainwater and potential health hazards connected with each kind of roof as in Figures 1 to 3:

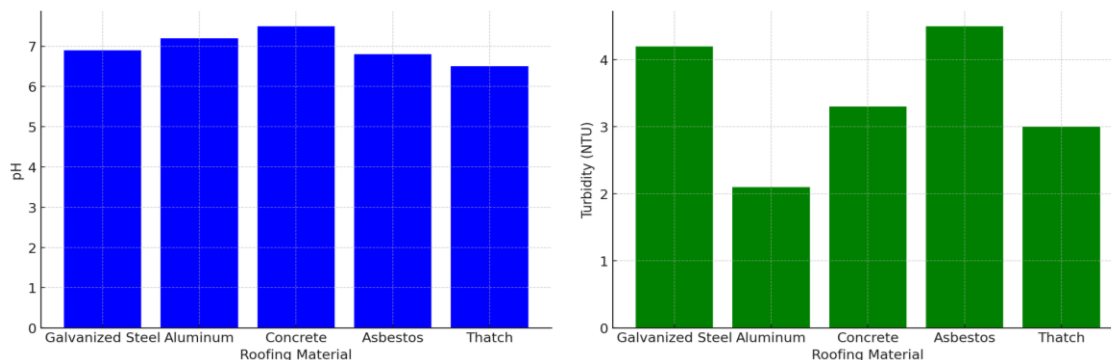


Figure 1: (a) pH Levels and (b) Turbidity (NTU) across different roofing material

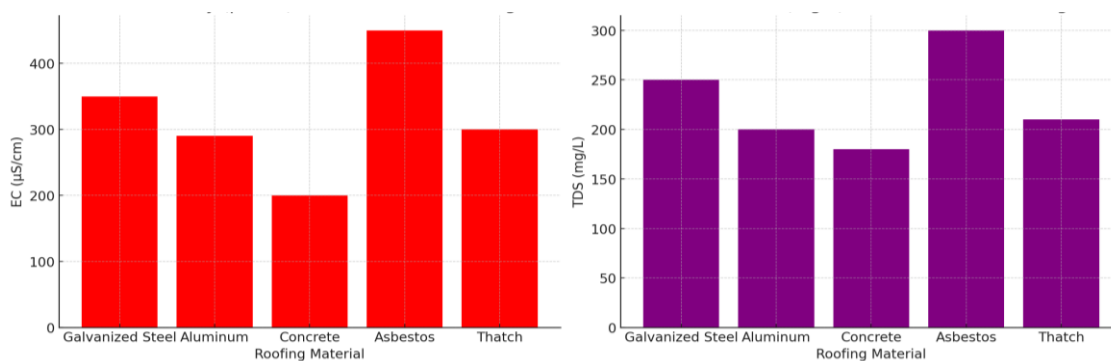


Figure 2: Electrical conductivity (μS/cm) and (b) Total dissolve solids (mg/l) across different roofing materials

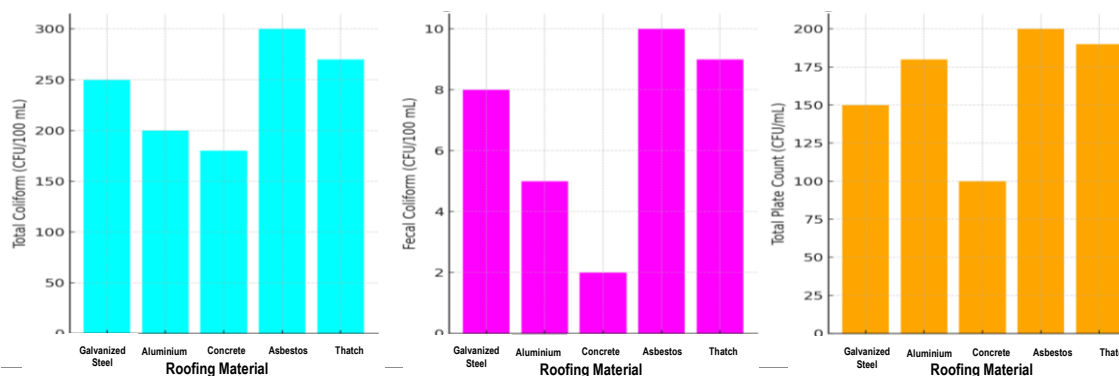


Figure 3: (a) Total coliform (CFU/100ml) (b) Fecal coliform (CFU/100ml) (c) Total plate count (CFU/ml)

A thorough investigation of the data reveals remarkable trends and patterns, necessitating a detailed description of the parameters. Also, Figures 1 to 3 shows the examination of the physicochemical and bacteriological properties of rainwater collected from various roofing materials.

3.3.1 Physico-chemical parameters

3.3.1.1 pH levels

The pH of rainwater collected from five different roofing materials ranges from 6.5 to 7.5. Aluminum and

concrete roofs have the most stable and neutral pH levels, approximately 7.2 and 7.5, respectively. Galvanized steel, asbestos, and thatch roofs have more acidic properties, with pH levels closer to 6.5, which may indicate leaching from these materials. Lower pH values could contribute to corrosion in water storage tanks and may decrease water usage for drinking or domestic reasons since mildly acidic water can be corrosive.

3.3.1.2 Turbidity

Turbidity is a strong indicator of the presence of suspended particles in water. The findings suggest that

rainwater collected from galvanized steel (4.2 NTU) and asbestos roofs (4.5 NTU) has a higher turbidity than aluminum (2.1 NTU) and concrete (3.3 NTU). This shows that rainwater collected from galvanized steel and asbestos roofs may include more particle matter or debris, which could compromise water quality. Higher turbidity levels may also indicate pollution from air dust or runoff from the roof surface, especially with materials that are susceptible to surface degradation.

3.3.1.3 Electrical conductivity (EC)

Electrical conductivity (EC) monitors the concentration of dissolved ions in water and serves as an indicator of its cleanliness. Asbestos (450 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) and galvanized steel (350 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) have the greatest EC values, while concrete and aluminum roofs have lower values of 200 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and 290 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$, respectively. This suggests that galvanized steel and asbestos roofs contribute increased ion content to harvested rainwater, possibly due to metal leaching from these materials, including lead, zinc, and iron. High EC values can be troublesome for domestic purposes, like as drinking, because they may reflect the presence of salts or metals at unsafe amounts.

3.3.1.4 Total dissolved solids (TDS)

TDS closely resembles the pattern seen in EC, as both quantities measure total ion concentration. The highest TDS levels are seen in rainwater from asbestos (300 mg/L) and galvanized steel roofs (250 mg/L), indicating the possibility of material leakage from these surfaces. Aluminum and concrete roofs have lower TDS levels, which is beneficial to drinking water quality. Elevated TDS can decrease water palatability and contribute to scale in pipes and storage systems.

3.3.1.5 Heavy metal content (Lead and Zinc)

The amounts of lead (Pb) and zinc (Zn) are crucial for determining possible toxicity in water. Galvanized steel roofs had the highest lead concentration (0.015 mg/L), exceeding the WHO standard of 0.01 mg/L and posing a considerable health risk if eaten over time. Zinc concentrations are very constant among roofing materials, with all readings falling much below the allowed limit (5 mg/L). However, the elevated lead levels in galvanized steel roofs indicate concern, because persistent lead exposure can cause major health issues, particularly in children.

3.3.2 Bacteriological parameters

3.3.2.1 Total coliform count

Total coliform count is a useful measure of bacterial contamination in water. The study found significant total coliform counts in rainwater collected from asbestos (300 CFU/100 mL), thatched roofs (270 CFU/100 mL), and galvanized steel (250 CFU/100 mL). Aluminum and concrete roofs have reduced contamination levels, however they still above the acceptable limit (0 CFU/100 mL for drinking water, according to WHO recommendations). The presence of coliform bacteria

indicates pollution from environmental sources, such as bird droppings, air contaminants, or filthy roof surfaces.

3.3.2.2 Fecal coliform (E. coli) count

Fecal coliforms, particularly *E. coli*, are a direct signal of fecal contamination, which is a serious health danger. Asbestos and thatched roofs have the highest fecal coliform levels (10 CFU/100 mL and 9 CFU/100 mL, respectively); indicating that rainwater gathered from these materials may be dangerous for direct human consumption without suitable treatment. Even though the results are very modest compared to total coliform, the presence of *E. coli* is deemed dangerous to drinking water.

3.3.2.3 Total plate count

The total plate count measures the overall microbial burden in the water. Asbestos roofs had the highest total plate count (200 CFU/mL), followed by thatched roofs (190 CFU/mL), with aluminum and concrete roofs having lowered microbial loads (100 and 150 CFU/mL, respectively). Higher microbiological counts may suggest water storage pollution, organic matter buildup on the roof surface, or inappropriate water harvesting system design. Although the total plate count is under acceptable limits (≤ 500 CFU/mL), it implies that particular roofing materials harbor greater microbial activity, raising the risk of contamination.

3.3.3 Interpretation and implications

3.3.3.1 Material influence

The findings indicate that roofing materials play an important influence in determining rainwater quality. Galvanized steel and asbestos roofs, in particular, contribute to elevated levels of dissolved metals (lead, zinc) and suspended particles, creating chemical and physical contamination hazards. Aluminum and concrete roofs provide more steady water quality in terms of both physicochemical and bacteriological characteristics, making them more suited for rainwater collection systems.

3.3.3.2 Health risks

The presence of fecal and total coliform bacteria in most samples, particularly those from thatched and asbestos roofs, implies a high risk of waterborne disease if the water is consumed untreated. Higher microbial contamination in organic roofing materials, such as thatch, is expected due to the possibility of organic matter accumulation and animal activity.

4. Conclusion

This study conducts a complete comparative examination of the physicochemical and bacteriological properties of rainwater collected from various rooftop materials in Taraba State University's Main Campus Jalingo staff quarters. The study emphasizes the importance of roofing materials on rainwater quality, demonstrating considerable differences in both chemical and microbiological parameters. Galvanized steel and asbestos roofs were discovered to contribute higher levels

of heavy metals, such as lead, and increased turbidity, while organic materials like thatch were more prone to microbial contamination, particularly fecal and total coliforms, indicating possible health issues.

Aluminum and concrete roofs, on the other hand, produced more consistent water quality with lower levels of chemical and microbiological pollutants, making them better suited to rainwater gathering. However, across all roofing materials, the presence of pollutants such as total and fecal coliforms highlights the necessity for water treatment before use, especially for drinking purposes.

The findings highlight the need of using proper roofing materials and implementing water treatment technologies like filtration and disinfection systems to increase the safety of gathered rainwater. To reduce contamination hazards, it is also necessary to install first flush diverters and maintain roof surfaces and storage tanks on a regular basis.

This work adds to our understanding of rainwater harvesting as a sustainable water supply option, especially in areas with unstable water infrastructure. It also makes specific recommendations to improve the quality of gathered rainwater, making it suitable for home and potable usage. More research could investigate long-term monitoring of water quality and the efficiency of various treatment approaches in minimizing contamination.

The first-principles mathematical model shows how different pollutants (chemical and biological) accumulate in rainwater collected from rooftops. The model takes into account atmospheric deposition, roofing material disintegration, and microbiological development to provide a thorough understanding of the dynamics of rainwater contamination. Fitting this model to experimental data, we forecasted water quality over time and proposed relevant mitigation techniques for safe water use.

Declaration of conflict of interest

All necessary permissions were obtained from Taraba State University authorities for access to the sampling sites. The study also adhered to environmental guidelines to minimize disturbance to the site and prevent contamination of the water sources during sample collection.

Recommendations

Installing treatment systems, such as sand filters or UV disinfection units, can enhance the quality of rainwater, particularly by removing microbiological contaminants. Implementing first flush diverters is also crucial, as they reject the initial runoff that usually carries the greatest impurities, thereby improving water quality.

The selection of suitable roofing materials is vital, especially in locations where water safety is a priority. Aluminum and concrete roofs are preferable, as they contribute less to contamination compared to other materials. Regular maintenance, including frequent cleaning of rooftops and storage tanks, is also essential to decrease particle and microbiological contamination in gathered rainwater.

A comparative investigation at Taraba State University in Jalingo found considerable differences in water quality from various roofing materials. The study emphasized the importance of properly treating and maintaining rainwater harvesting systems to ensure safe use for household and potentially potable applications.

To enhance the safety and efficiency of rainwater harvesting systems, recommendations were made based on physicochemical, bacteriological, and contamination source identification analyses. These suggestions aimed to improve the overall quality of harvested rainwater through the implementation of filtration or disinfection systems and optimizing system design.

The installation of first flush diverters was recommended to reduce contamination from the initial flow of rainwater. Chemical treatment or filtration systems were also suggested to remove heavy metals, such as lead, from the water. Furthermore, the choice of roofing material was highlighted as a critical factor, with concrete or aluminum considered safer options than galvanized steel or thatch in terms of minimizing contamination risks.

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