

Impact of Rainfall and Severe Flooding on PM2.5 Dynamics in Hat Yai, Thailand

Students (Grade 10, 11): Kongpop Suwan, Chutikan Songsoem, Chatmongkhol Dechasak Jaronwit Srithip, Parothai Songrung, Suwaphat Kaewklang, Thanaboon Weraprasertsakun Jiraphat Nookong, Phatsakorn Nongnual, Kanthipha Thipchuai, Pitchaya Chaikong, Chongtham Butpradit, Pharita Khongthongkum, Waritsanun Hemtanon, Thawanrat Wattakeejaroen, Woranittha Pannin, Pitsinee Sirawirod, Sirinat Nuntarat, Phisit Oaksonthong, Phimchanok Kanjanasanhit

School: Srithammaratsuksa School

Teacher: Chatlada Poolsuk, Patipon Thawornnuwong

Scientists: Assoc.Prof.Dr.Krisanadej Jaorensutasinee, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Mullica Jaroensutasinee, Miss Thunwarut Sutthipun, and Miss Chacha Sattharat, Center of Excellence for Ecoinformatics, School of Science, Walailak University.

Email: patipon@kkumail.com Chatlada021240@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzed the relationships between rainfall, air temperature, relative humidity, and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations during a major flood crisis in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, from 1 November to 14 December 2025. This flood event was caused by a rapid and continuous increase in rainfall.

The study divided the analysis period into three main phases: the pre-flood accumulation period (1–18 November), the active flood period (19–26 November), and the post-flood recovery period (27 November–14 December). The results clearly demonstrate significant relationships between rainfall and key meteorological variables. A strong negative relationship was observed between rainfall and air temperature $t_{(43)} = 140.107$, $P < 0.001$. Substantial increases in rainfall led to a marked decrease in air temperature, primarily due to dense cloud cover and the cooling effects associated with evaporative heat processes. In contrast, rainfall exhibited a strong positive relationship with relative humidity $t_{(43)} = 101.921$, $P < 0.001$. Very high relative humidity levels, with averages exceeding 90%, were identified as a critical factor promoting heavy and continuous rainfall, reflecting a saturated atmospheric condition. Rainfall also showed a weak negative relationship with PM2.5 concentrations $t_{(43)} = 27.513$, $P < 0.001$. Rainfall acts as a natural mechanism for removing PM2.5 from the atmosphere through the rain washout effect, resulting in a rapid reduction of particulate concentrations during the flood period. However, after the flood, PM2.5 concentrations increased markedly, reaching a maximum of 23.72 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on 28 November. This increase is attributed to dry surface conditions and the re-suspension of dust and sediments, a process known as secondary dust resuspension. In addition, a comparison of cumulative rainfall between Cha-uat District and Hat Yai District in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province revealed that Cha-uat District had a significantly higher average daily rainfall than Hat Yai District $t_{(43)} = 3.148$, $P < 0.05$, although Hat Yai recorded the highest single-day rainfall during the same period. The study concludes that rainfall is a key meteorological factor exerting significant impacts on both atmospheric conditions and air quality in the study area. Understanding these relationships is

essential for improving air quality management, disaster preparedness planning, and post-flood recovery strategies in both the short and long term.

Keywords: Rainfall, Relative Humidity, PM 2.5, Flooding, Hat Yai, Atmospheric Saturation

1. Introduction

Throughout November 2025, the rapid and continuous increase in rainfall in the lower Southern region, primarily due to the monsoon trough/low-pressure area, led to the accumulation of water volume in the critical area of Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province (Cao et al., 2009; Jia et al., 2020). Especially in the urban areas and communities along the canal, the drainage system's inability to keep up with the heavy rainfall, coupled with the problem of waterway obstructions in some regions, caused flash floods and sudden inundation at several key points of the city (PM), main roads (SO₂), economic zones (NO₂), and agricultural areas (O₃), including the severance of transportation routes (CO).

This flood event severely affected residents, destroying property and agricultural land, posing a threat to public health, and undermining the city's short-term sustainability (Hu et al., 2015; Shah & Patel, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). According to preliminary reports, the unusually high rainfall directly caused the flooding, as the rainfall rapidly exceeded the drainage system's capacity, resulting in water accumulation in the area (Tian et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). This differs from the case of air pollution; instead, excessive rainfall was the primary cause that led the city to face this crisis.

Precipitation data is crucial in hydro-meteorological and climate research, particularly in regions prone to extreme weather events. Thailand's mountainous terrain and variable monsoon patterns increase the risk of hydrometeorological hazards, including landslides, floods, and droughts. With only 2.93% of the nation's land dedicated to agriculture, primarily dryland farming, extreme rainfall poses a significant threat to food security and water resource management (LMIRD, 2016).

To quantify regional rainfall anomalies and assess wet and dry periods, climatologists employ various indices, including the Rainfall Anomaly Index (RAI), rainfall deciles, the Crop Moisture Index (CMI), the Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI), and the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI).

Among these, SPL has gained widespread acceptance due to its simplicity, consistency, standardization, and ability to assess drought and wetness across multiple timescales. Over short periods, SPI correlates well with soil moisture and agricultural impacts, while over longer durations, it reflects groundwater levels and reservoir storage. It has been extensively used for drought monitoring (Bong & Richard, 2019; Kundu et al., 2020) and flood risk assessments (Seiler et al., 2002; Olanrewaju & Reddy, 2022).

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Study site

Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, is characterized by low-lying topography, with parts forming basins, particularly in areas served by the U-Tapao Canal, the city's main waterway. Due to this, the topography of Hat Yai District can be primarily divided into (1) Urban areas and communities along the canal, (2) Lowland agricultural areas (mainly to the east and west of the city), and (3) High hill areas (such as Khuan Lang and Kho Hong) which serve as watershed zones or areas where runoff originates.

From mid-October to the end of December, Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, is at high risk of severe impacts from the Northeast Monsoon and low-pressure areas. This period is the monsoon season in the lower Southern region, which increases the likelihood of heavy, prolonged rainfall that exceeds the drainage capacity of the U-Tapao Canal and its tributaries. This results in flash floods and river overflow that directly impact economic areas and urban communities. Furthermore, owing to its low-lying geography and its role as a waterway, Hat Yai is at high risk of runoff from upstream areas during the rainy season.

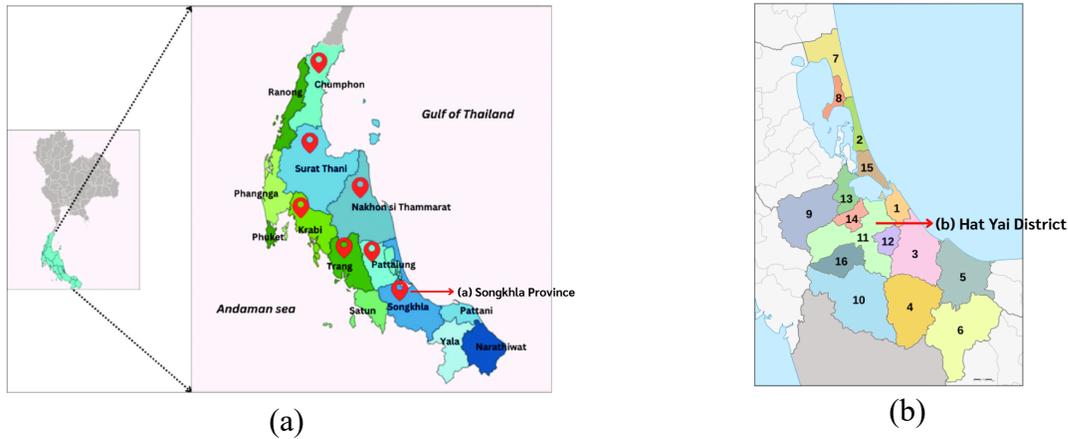


Figure 1. (a) Map of Songkhla, Southern Thailand (b) Map of Hat Yai District

2.2 Monitoring stations

Data on rainfall and delicate particulate matter (PM2.5) levels were collected by extracting real-time data from monitoring stations operated by the Meteorological Department and the Pollution Control Department in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, between November 1 - December 14, 2025. Raw data from these monitoring stations were processed and are directly available for download from the agencies' information databases. Figure 2 shows an example of weather data recorded from the monitoring stations during the flood event.

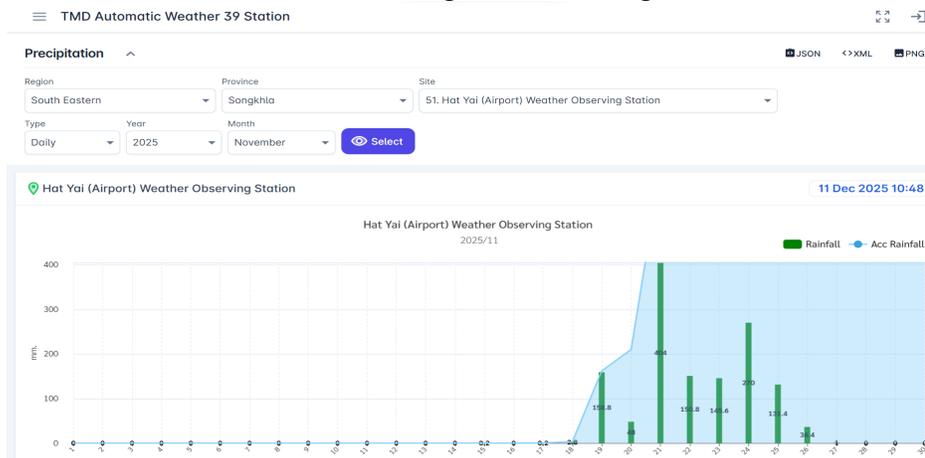


Figure 2. Rainfall data from the Meteorological Department, November - December 2025

2.3 Data collection

Data were collected using a database from monitoring stations in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, covering 44 days from November 1 - December 14, 2025. High-resolution rainfall data were obtained from the Meteorological Department, and PM_{2.5} concentration data were obtained from the Pollution Control Department. Both agencies collect data hourly, resulting in a continuous 24-hour dataset (Figure 3).

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation among rainfall volume, temperature, relative humidity, and PM_{2.5} concentration during the flood crisis period.

To assess the variations in PM_{2.5} concentration over the pre-flood, crisis, and post-flood phases, and to ascertain the impacts of rain scavenging and subsequent resuspension.

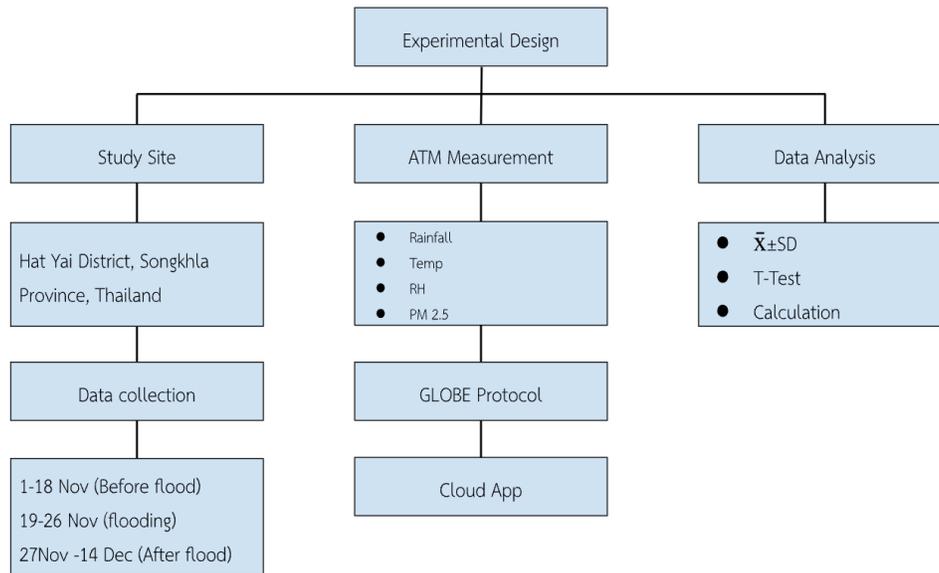


Figure 3. Conceptual Experimental Design.

2.4 Data Analysis

The study team analyzed data from the Hat Yai district of Songkhla Province and produced graphs of the results. T-Test was used to examine the relationship between rainfall and PM_{2.5} concentration, and linear regression was used to assess the trend in this relationship in the study area.

Study Period Data was collected over 44 days (November 1 - December 14, 2025) to cover the flood crisis and mitigate the impact of short-term weather fluctuations. Weather variability during the flood was accounted for in the data analysis.

Data Recording Consistency Data was collected at consistent intervals (hourly) using standard databases from the Meteorological Department and the Pollution Control Department to ensure data set uniformity and reduce potential bias caused by differences in recording time periods.

2.5 GLOBE Observer Application: Air temperature and Relative humidity

The GLOBE Observer Cloud App was used to collect data on cloud types and cloud cover percentages at the five study sites. This application, part of the GLOBE Program, facilitates environmental observations that supplement NASA satellite data, supporting scientists studying Earth and the global environment (Figure 4).

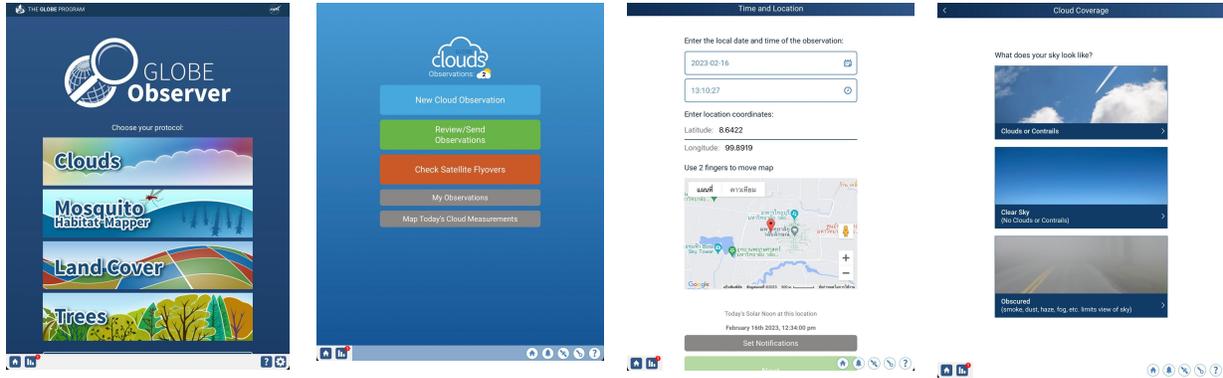
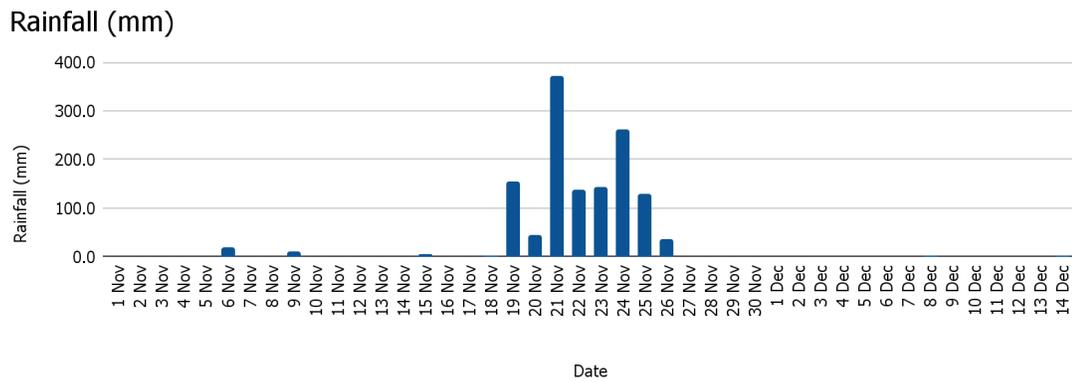


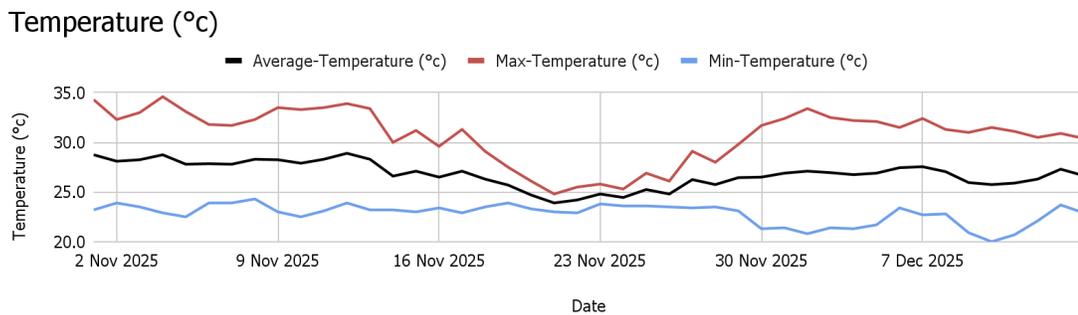
Figure 4. GLOBE Observer: Cloud App

3. Results and Discussion

(a)



(b)



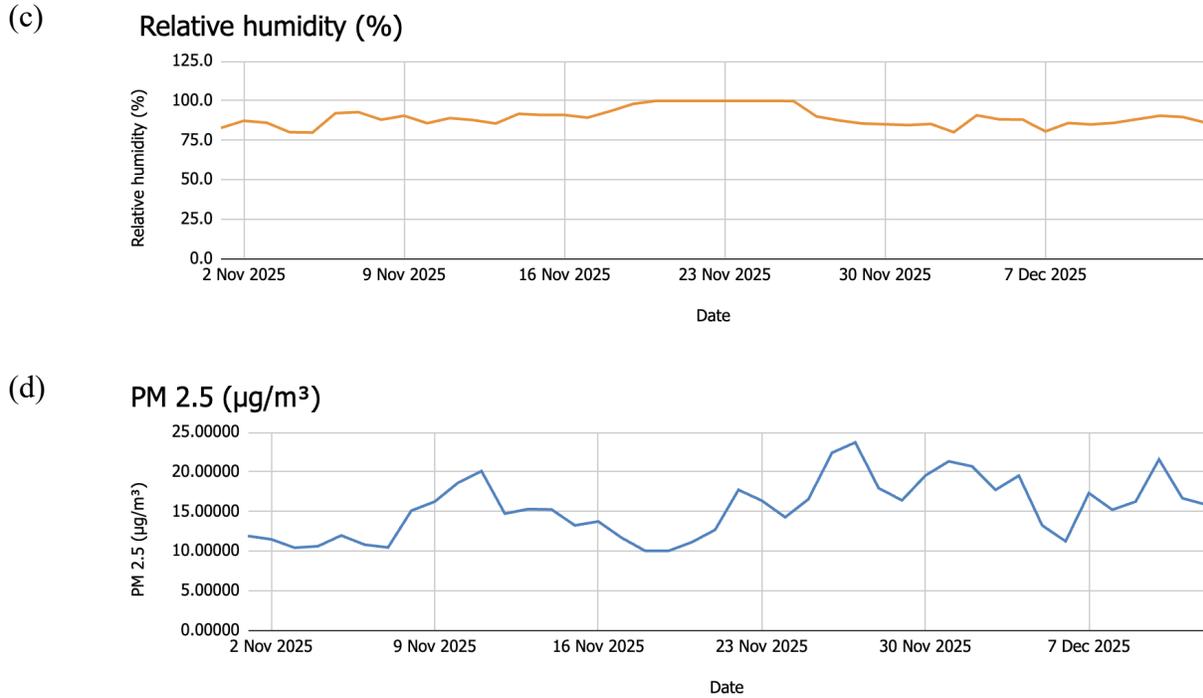


Figure 5 (a) Rain, (b) Temperature (Max, Min, Average), (c) Relative humidity (%), and (d) PM 2.5 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in Hat Yai, Thailand

3.1 Rainfall

An analysis of the rainfall recorded in the Hat Yai area between November 1 and December 14, 2025, clearly demonstrates a relationship with the flood events in the area. The analysis is divided into three main periods to understand the process of accumulation, occurrence, and mitigation of the flooding situation, as follows: Pre-Flood Accumulation Period (November 1 - 18, 2025)

During this initial phase, the Hat Yai area was influenced by meteorological factors, including monsoons and tropical depressions, resulting in intermittent rainfall and accumulation of total precipitation. Notably, on November 6, 9, 15, and 18, 2025, the rainfall amounts (with a maximum of 20.0 mm on November 6) were not yet significantly high (i.e., above 100 mm/day). This level of precipitation led to rainfall accumulation, causing the soil to become increasingly saturated, and the water levels in natural water sources, canals, and rivers to rise slightly. However, levels remained manageable and did not yet exceed the banks' thresholds. This period is thus considered a preparatory accumulation phase preceding the main event.

Flood Event Period (November 19 - 26, 2025). This period represents the critical phase during which rainfall intensity increased rapidly and continuously over a short duration, serving as the primary cause of the flood event. On November 19, 2025, rainfall rose significantly to 155.0 mm. On November 21, 2025, the peak rainfall for the entire analysis period was recorded at 371.0 mm. This extremely high volume was the principal cause of the significant flooding. Rainfall surged again on November 24, 2025, reaching 262.0 mm due to heavy, sustained precipitation. The pattern of alternating decreases (e.g., November 20, 22–23, 25–26) and severe increases (November 19, 21, 24) in rainfall volume indicates the occurrence of intense, continuous, and heavy rainfall.

Post-Flood Mitigation Period (November 27 - December 14, 2025). During this final phase, rainfall conditions began to normalize, initiating flood mitigation. Beginning on November 27, 2025, rainfall decreased significantly or ceased entirely, with many days recording 0.0 mm. Although minor amounts were recorded on December 8, 13, and 14 mm, they were less than 5.0 mm and did not impede drainage efforts.

3.2 Temperature

During the study period, the data indicate that weather conditions can be distinctly divided into three phases. The first phase (1 – 14 November) was characterized by relatively stable weather with low rainfall, ranging from 0.0 to 0.6 mm. During this period, the average air temperature remained relatively high at around 28 °C, while the daily maximum temperature could rise to as high as 34.6 °C. Subsequently, weather conditions changed markedly in the second phase (15 – 27 November), which represented the period of continuous heavy rainfall associated with the flood situation. Rainfall intensity increased significantly, particularly between 19 and 25 November, with cumulative rainfall reaching its peak on 24 November at 371.0 mm. During this phase, both average and maximum temperatures declined noticeably. The lowest average temperature during the entire study period was recorded at 24.2°C on 22 November, and the daily maximum temperature did not exceed 30°C at all, a clear contrast to the preceding period. The final phase (28 November – 14 December) marked a substantial decrease in rainfall and a gradual recovery of weather conditions. Average temperatures steadily increased and stabilized again at approximately 26 – 27°C, while daily maximum temperatures once more exceeded 30 °C. This pattern indicates the waning influence of the intense rainfall system.

The results demonstrate a clear inverse relationship between rainfall intensity and temperature variation in Hat Yai District. A key factor contributing to the pronounced decrease in temperature during periods of heavy rainfall is the extensive coverage of dense cloud systems. When continuous rainfall occurs, large amounts of cloud cover act as a barrier that limits the penetration of incoming solar radiation to the Earth's surface. As a result, daytime heating typically reflected in maximum daily temperatures is significantly suppressed, often remaining below 29 °C during heavy rainfall events. In addition, atmospheric processes associated with evaporation during rainfall release latent heat into the surrounding air, which further contributes to cooling near the surface. Beyond the reduction in temperature itself, the difference between daily maximum and minimum temperatures also narrows considerably during periods of intense rainfall. This reflects a more uniform thermal environment throughout the day, as cloud cover not only reduces daytime heat accumulation but also helps retain some heat at night. Once the rainfall system dissipates and cloud cover decreases, average temperatures return to normal relatively quickly, with maximum temperatures rising again as solar radiation reaches the surface more effectively. In summary, the meteorological data during the flood period in Hat Yai District highlight distinctive weather characteristics associated with abnormally high rainfall and clearly differentiated temperature patterns. These conditions are primarily driven by dense, persistent rain cloud systems, which play a crucial role in short-term weather variability during flood events.

3.3 Relative humidity

The data presented comprises a daily series of Relative Humidity (RH) values (in percentage) for the Hat Yai district from November 2 to December 14, 2025. The analysis period can be divided into three main phases corresponding to the flood situation, as follows:

Pre-Flood Period (November 1 - 18, 2025) During the initial phase of observation, the Relative Humidity exhibited a continuous upward trend. Starting at approximately 87.3% on November 1, it increased steadily, reaching 98.0% by November 19 (just before entering the period of near-saturation). This rising trend in RH values indicates that the local atmosphere was approaching saturation, a condition conducive to the formation of rain clouds and subsequent condensation. The consistently high and clearly rising Relative Humidity level serves as a meteorological warning of atmospheric moisture accumulation. In practical terms, this information can be used to support the forecasting of the likelihood of heavy, continuous rainfall in the subsequent period.

Flood Event Period (November 19 - 26, 2025). Throughout this period, the data show that Relative Humidity values consistently increased and remained near 100%. The RH reached a high of 99.9% for several days (from November 20–25). This extremely high relative humidity, nearly at saturation, is directly attributable to continuous heavy rainfall and the accumulated water volume in the area. This highly saturated condition significantly affected floodwater drainage.

Post-Flood Period (November 27 - December 14, 2025) After November 26, the data indicate a clear decreasing trend in Relative Humidity. The value declined from a high of 99.8% to a low of 79.9% on December 5, then fluctuated between 80% and 90% until the end of the observation period.

The decrease in Relative Humidity aligns with the reduction in rainfall and the transition to more stable atmospheric conditions, thereby increasing evaporation. As the atmospheric relative humidity decreases, the vapor pressure of the air also drops. This creates a greater vapor pressure deficit between the standing floodwater and the air. The result is an accelerated rate of evaporation from surface water. This increased evaporation rate accelerates water removal from the area, allowing flood levels to recede and the affected areas to begin drying, a key mechanism of post-flood recovery.

3.4 PM 2.5

The data analyzed consist of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations and rainfall amounts in the Hat Yai area from November 1 to December 14, 2025. The analysis is divided into four main periods corresponding to the flood situation, as outlined below.

Pre-Flood Period (1–15 November 2025) During the early part of November (1–7 November 2025), PM_{2.5} concentrations remained consistently low, generally below 12.00 µg/m³, with several days recording values below 10.00 µg/m³. However, before the onset of heavy rainfall in mid-November, PM_{2.5} levels began to increase noticeably. Elevated concentrations were observed on November 10 (18.64 µg/m³) and peaked on November 11 (20.11 µg/m³), before declining slightly during November 12–15. *Low PM_{2.5} period* Rainfall occurring between November 5 and 9 coincided with a reduction in PM_{2.5} concentrations, indicating that heavy or continuous rainfall played a significant role in removing airborne particulate matter. This reflects the effectiveness of precipitation as a natural cleansing mechanism that removes PM_{2.5} from the atmosphere—thereby increasing *PM_{2.5} concentrations*. The increase in PM_{2.5} on November 10–11 may be attributed to the resumption of routine human activities after a period of rainfall.

Increased traffic density and industrial operations likely contributed to elevated particulate matter emissions before the next significant rainfall event.

Flood Period (Approximately 19–20 November 2025): During the flood period, the area experienced intense, continuous rainfall (e.g., 155.0 mm on November 19 and 46.0 mm on November 20). As a result, PM_{2.5} concentrations declined to very low levels, with values of 10.04 µg/m³ on November 19 and 11.13 µg/m³ on November 20. Even during the extremely heavy rainfall events between November 21 and 25, PM_{2.5} concentrations remained below 17.00 µg/m³. The pronounced reduction in PM_{2.5} during this period confirms that sustained and intense rainfall is among the most effective natural mechanisms for removing delicate particulate matter from the air. PM_{2.5} particles are effectively scavenged by raindrops and deposited onto the ground, leading to a rapid improvement in air quality during the flood crisis.

Post-Flood Period (27 November – 14 December 2025) After November 26, rainfall decreased substantially, with little to no precipitation recorded between November 27 and December 14. In contrast, PM_{2.5} concentrations showed an apparent, continuous increase. Levels rose to 22.41 µg/m³ on November 27 and reached the highest observed value of the study period at 23.72 µg/m³ on November 28. Several interacting factors can explain the post-flood increase in PM_{2.5}. First, secondary dust resuspension occurred as soils, mud, and sediments that had been saturated during flooding began to dry. As surface moisture declined, these materials disintegrated into fine particles that were easily resuspended into the air as PM_{2.5}, with peak concentrations occurring shortly after floodwaters receded. Second, the resumption of traffic and human activities accelerated the dispersion of road dust and other particulates. Finally, the lack of rainfall during this period eliminated the natural atmospheric cleansing process, allowing PM_{2.5} emissions to accumulate and persist in the air.

3.5 Comparing cumulative rainfall in Hat Yai (Songkhla) and Cha-uat (Nakhon Si Thammarat)

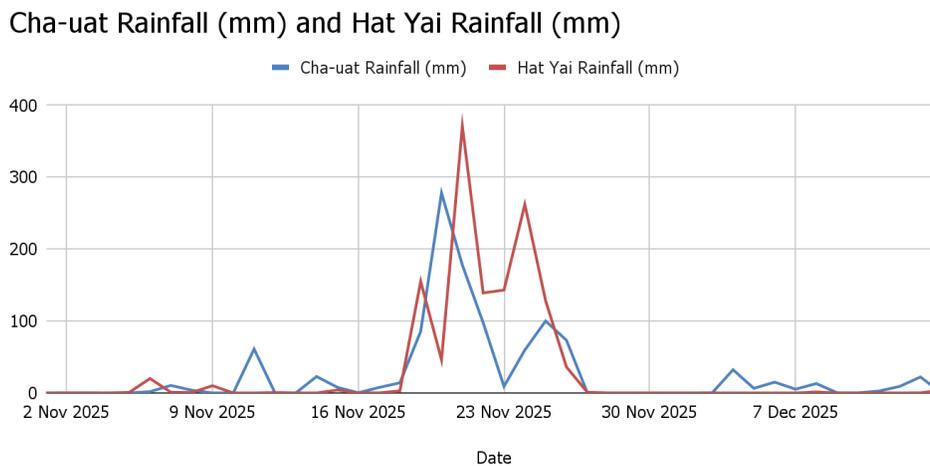


Figure 6 Cumulative rainfall comparison between Hat Yai, Songkhla Province, and Cha-uat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province

This study analyzed daily rainfall data from Cha-uat District and Hat Yai District over 44 days, from November 1 to December 14, 2025. The analysis used raw daily rainfall data, time-

series plots, and a one-sample t-test to assess differences in daily rainfall between the two locations, under the null hypothesis that the mean difference is zero.

Time Series Analysis of Rainfall. The time-series plots clearly illustrate the temporal variation in daily rainfall across both study areas. The rainfall pattern can be divided into three main periods. During the first period (November 1–17, 2025), both Cha-uat and Hat Yai experienced relatively low rainfall, with most daily values below 25 mm. Only occasional moderate rainfall events were observed, such as 61.0 mm in Cha-uat on November 11, and 20.0 mm and 10.0 mm in Hat Yai on November 6 and 9, respectively. Overall, this period reflects relatively mild weather conditions. The second period (November 18–26, 2025) represents the critical phase of extreme rainfall events, during which a severe weather system strongly influenced both areas. Hat Yai recorded the highest daily rainfall of 371.0 mm on November 21, 2025, while Cha-uat experienced its peak rainfall of 278.0 mm one day earlier, on November 20, 2025. During this period, several days of rainfall exceeding 100 mm were recorded at both locations, indicating the event's severity and persistence. Notably, Hat Yai also experienced a second peak of 262.0 mm on November 24, suggesting more prolonged or intense impacts in this area compared to Cha-uat. In the final period (November 27 to December 14, 2025), rainfall in both locations declined sharply following the extreme event. From November 27 to December 3, rainfall was minimal or absent in both areas. During the first half of December, Cha-uat received light rainfall on several days, including 32.2 mm on December 4 and 22.2 mm on December 13. In contrast, Hat Yai continued to record consistently low rainfall, generally below 5 mm.

Differences in Rainfall (One-Sample t-test) To evaluate differences in daily rainfall between Cha-uat and Hat Yai, a one-sample t-test was conducted on the daily rainfall differences over the 44-day study period. The results indicate a mean difference of 25.3955 mm in daily rainfall, with Cha-uat receiving a higher average daily rainfall than Hat Yai. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of $t_{(43)} = 3.148$, $P < 0.05$, which is well below the conventional significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the actual mean difference in daily rainfall between the two areas equals zero is rejected. Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from 9.1267 to 41.6642 mm. Since this interval excludes zero and is entirely positive, it provides strong evidence that the actual population mean difference is positive, indicating higher average daily rainfall in Cha-uat.

Although Hat Yai recorded the highest single-day rainfall during the most extreme event, the overall analysis indicates that Cha-uat received rainfall more consistently throughout the study period. This resulted in a significantly higher mean daily rainfall in Cha-uat compared to Hat Yai. These findings highlight spatial variability in rainfall patterns in southern Thailand and underscore their importance for flood risk assessment, water resource management, and local-level disaster preparedness.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of meteorological data over a 44-day period, the results indicate that rainfall has a significant and clear relationship with temperature, humidity, and PM2.5 concentration in the study area. The details of these relationships are as follows

Relationship with Temperature A strong negative correlation was found between rainfall and daily mean temperature. The t-test results $t_{(43)} = 140.107$, $P < 0.001$ confirm that the mean

temperature is significantly different from zero. This relationship is consistent with meteorological principles, as increased rainfall tends to substantially reduce temperature, mainly due to dense cloud cover and the latent heat process associated with evaporation.

Relationship with Humidity A strong positive correlation was observed between relative humidity and rainfall. The t-test results $t_{(43)} = 101.921$, $P < 0.001$ indicate that mean humidity is significantly different from zero. These findings suggest that relative humidity is a major driver of rainfall. Very high relative humidity (averaging above 90%) creates favorable conditions for atmospheric water vapor condensation, leading to precipitation.

Relationship with PM2.5 Concentration A weak negative correlation was found between rainfall and PM2.5 concentration. The t-test results $t_{(43)} = 27.513$, $P < 0.001$ confirm that the mean PM2.5 concentration ($15.38 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) is significantly different from zero. This negative relationship indicates that increased rainfall tends to reduce PM2.5 concentrations, primarily through the rain washout effect, a natural air-cleaning mechanism. However, the weak correlation suggests that PM2.5 levels are also influenced by stronger factors, such as local pollution sources.

Rainfall is a key meteorological factor that significantly affects local weather conditions. It plays an important role in lowering temperature and is closely associated with atmospheric humidity. In addition, rainfall acts as a natural mechanism that can partially mitigate PM2.5 air pollution. Understanding these relationships is essential for effective air quality management and environmental planning in the study area.

Acknowledgments

We thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krisanadej Jaroensutasinee, Assoc. and Prof. Dr. Mullica Jaroensutasinee, Miss Thunwarut Sutthipunand, and Miss Chacha Satharat for helping with experimental design, fieldwork, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. The director, teachers of Srithammaratsuksa School and the Center of Excellence for Ecoinformatics, Walailak University, partly supported this work.

I would like to claim IVSS badges

1. I make an impact

This research establishes a clear impact by linking analyzed weather patterns to the major flood crisis in Hat Yai. The work identifies the core causes of the significant flooding, pointing to exceptionally high cumulative rainfall and continuous near-maximum atmospheric moisture saturation during the crisis period. Critically, the analysis extends beyond the immediate flood event to highlight the subsequent rise in airborne particulate matter. This escalation suggests that post-flood activities, such as recovery efforts and debris resuspension, adversely affected air quality. By providing these specific environmental insights, the research provides crucial data for policymakers to prioritize both structural recovery and necessary public health interventions related to air quality in the disaster's aftermath.

2. I am a STEM professional.

As a piece of STEM research, this study employs rigorous scientific methods to examine complex hydro-meteorological phenomena. The investigation uses high-resolution data on rainfall and particulate matter, obtained from reliable sources provided by government monitoring agencies. The analysis employs formal statistical techniques to systematically evaluate the relationship between precipitation levels and changes in air quality. This structured, evidence-based approach enhances the reliability of the findings and provides sophisticated insights into how intense rainfall affects temperature and air quality dynamics in the affected region.

3. I am a data scientist.

This work employed rigorous data science methods to manage and analyze diverse environmental datasets relevant to the crisis. The project used continuous, high-resolution data on rainfall and PM_{2.5}, collected at regular intervals from official databases. Furthermore, external data sources, such as the GLOBE Observer Cloud App, were incorporated to supplement the primary weather measurements. The analysis focused on the critical flood period to accurately assess the relationship between weather variables and pollution under highly dynamic conditions. This comprehensive use of multi-source data and established analytical methods enables robust conclusions regarding regional climate dynamics and environmental responses to the extreme weather event.

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