

Assessment of indoor air quality for closed cafés in Baghdad City, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of young people frequenting closed cafes spread in Baghdad to smoke hookahs and cigarettes has increased. This phenomenon is associated with unemployment, an increase in leisure time and the deterioration of economic conditions. This phenomenon has an impact on indoor air quality and exposes workers to the risk of exposure to various pollutants, including particulate matter, therefore, we examined some indicators (PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀) IAQ for a month in summer and another month in winter in six different locations in the Rusafa district. PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations, relative humidity (RH) and temperatures were measured using (Multifunction Air Quality Detector BENETECH -China). The results showed an increase in temperatures inside closed cafes, exceeding the recommended limits, and regardless of the seasonal fluctuations, the average concentrations of both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ inside closed cafes for the months of August and December exceeded the daily and annually PM standards recommended by World Health Organization for both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations were higher in summer than in winter were the most of young people enjoy a long holiday. The peak of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations also occurred during evening rush hour, more than the highest readings in the morning periods.

Keywords: Indoor Air Quality, PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀.

Article type: Research Article.

INTRODUCTION

Indoor air quality is essential for human health and well-being. The air we breathe inside our homes and other indoor spaces can contain a range of pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, and allergens (Al-Easawi *et al.* 2015; Lin *et al.* 2022). These pollutants can cause a range of health problems (Thamie 2017; Al-Azzawy *et al.* 2017; Mahmmud 2019; Masoudi *et al.* 2019; Farivar Ghaziani *et al.* 2021; Idris *et al.* 2022; Semin *et al.* 2023), including respiratory issues, headaches, allergies, and infections (Ibraheem, 2017; Singh & Tripathi 2021). Additionally, poor indoor air quality can also impact our comfort, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating (Langiano *et al.* 2008). There are several key factors that can influence indoor air quality (Bettaieb *et al.* 2020). The most important include:

Ventilation. Mahdi *et al.* (2020) and Francisco *et al.* (2017) pointed out that the proper ventilation is crucial for maintaining healthy indoor air quality. It helps to dilute indoor air pollutants and remove them from the indoor environment. Wolkoff (2018) and Hassan & Al-Waeli (2022) found that indoor humidity levels can have a significant impact on indoor air quality. High humidity levels can promote the growth of mold and other allergens, which can become airborne and contribute to indoor air pollution. They also mentioned that high indoor temperatures can increase the levels of particulate matter in the air by promoting the evaporation of volatile organic compounds. Low indoor temperatures can increase indoor humidity levels, leading to a higher risk of mold growth and other indoor air quality problems.

Building materials. The materials used in construction and furnishings can release VOCs into the indoor environment, contributing to indoor air pollution.

Pests. Pests such as cockroaches, mice, and dust mites can release allergens into the indoor environment, contributing to indoor air pollution.

Household cleaning products. The use of household cleaning products can release VOCs into the indoor environment, contributing to indoor air pollution.

Particulate matter defined as a complex mixture of solid and/or liquid particles suspended in the air. It is often referred to as particulate matter or particulate pollution. The content, size, and form of these particles can all vary (Yang *et al.* 2018; Arias-Pérez *et al.* 2020; Philip *et al.* 2017). Particles of a diameter of 10 micrometers or less are of special concern to the EPA since they can be inhaled. The particles, when inhaled, have the potential to have major health consequences, including impacts on the heart and lungs (Perry *et al.* 2023; Zhang *et al.* 2019). Fine particle matter's negative effects on human health are well known, and they are used to set health standards for outdoor air (National Ambient Air Quality Standards, NAAQS). Additionally, PM is present in all indoor settings. The NAAQS and outdoor particle matter thresholds could be exceeded by indoor particulate matter levels. Unfortunately less is understood, regarding the precise effects of indoor PM on health (Humadi 2016; Zaman *et al.* 2021). PM_{2.5} (particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less) can come from a variety of sources, including:

1. Combustion sources: PM_{2.5} can be generated by the combustion of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, in power plants, industrial processes, and vehicles (Hassoon 2019).
2. Agricultural sources: PM_{2.5} can be generated by agricultural practices, such as plowing fields, harvesting crops, and raising livestock (Al-Taay *et al.* 2018).
3. Wildfires: PM_{2.5} can be generated by wildfires, which can release large amounts of smoke and soot into the air (Aguilera *et al.* 2021).
4. Construction and demolition activities: PM_{2.5} can be generated by construction and demolition activities, such as sanding, cutting, and grinding building materials (Cheng *et al.* 2020).
5. Industrial processes: PM_{2.5} can be generated by various industrial processes, such as mining, smelting, and manufacturing (Karagulian *et al.* 2015).
6. Residential sources: PM_{2.5} can be generated by residential sources, such as cooking, burning cigarette tobacco, wood or other biomass for heating, and using candles or incense (Camilleri *et al.* 2022).
7. Natural sources: PM_{2.5} can be generated by natural sources, such as dust storms, volcanic eruptions, and sea spray (Achilleos *et al.* 2022).

While particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM₁₀) can come from a variety of sources, including:

1. Natural sources: PM₁₀ can be generated by natural sources, such as windblown dust, wildfires, and pollen (Evagelopoulos *et al.* 2022).
2. Construction and demolition activities: PM₁₀ can be generated by construction and demolition activities, such as sanding, cutting, and grinding building materials (Azarmi *et al.* 2014).
3. Agricultural sources: PM₁₀ can be generated by agricultural practices, such as tilling soil and harvesting crops (Arslan & Aybek, 2012; Chen *et al.* 2017).
4. Industrial processes: PM₁₀ can be generated by various industrial processes, such as mining, smelting, and manufacturing (Larionov *et al.* 2022).
5. Transportation: PM₁₀ can be generated by vehicle emissions, including exhaust from diesel engines and brake and tire wear (Timmers & Achten 2016).
6. Residential sources: PM₁₀ can be generated by residential sources, such as burning wood or other biomass for heating and cooking (Lachowicz *et al.* 2022).
7. Fossil fuel combustion: PM₁₀ can be generated by the combustion of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, in power plants, industrial processes, and vehicles (Maciejczyk *et al.* 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 6 public places of one type (closed cafe) in Al-Rusafa district in Baghdad City were chosen in this study; indoor PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ were monitored by Multifunction Air Quality Detector BENETECH. Data under varying conditions were collected and analyzed, such as doors or windows or mechanical ventilation devices being opened, rooms cramped with people and smoking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The highest mean temperature for the morning peak was recorded in the sixth station in August at 36.35 °C, while the highest mean for the evening peak temperature was 31.65 °C for the same station, and the highest mean relative humidity was recorded in the morning peak at 53.95% in the second station, while the humidity reached 62.7% in the fifth station at its evening peak (Table 1; Fig. 1).

Table 1. The monthly average of temperature and humidity in the study sites – August.

Stations	Average T- AM	Average T- PM	Average H- AM	Average H- PM
St.1 A	28.85	31.15	44.65	51.9
St. 2 A	28.7	30.35	53.95	43.5
St. 3 A	28.95	30.35	42.65	49.25
St.4 s.c	32.5	29.75	50	56.15
St. 5s.c	33.35	28.85	50	62.7
St. 6F.S	36.35	31.65	44.75	47.15

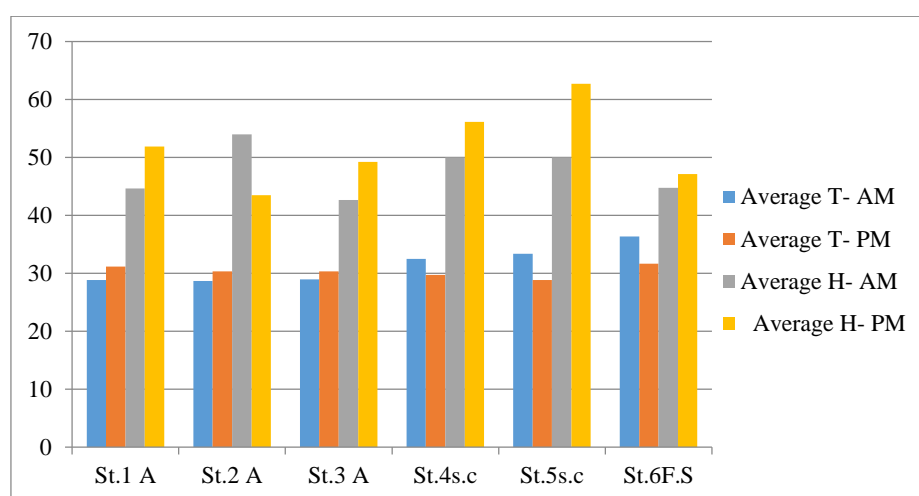


Fig. 1. The monthly mean temperature and humidity in the study sites – August.

The highest average concentration of PM_{2.5} was recorded at the second station and for the morning peak, amounting to 541.5 µg m⁻³, while the highest rate at the first station during the evening peak, amounting to 1247.5 µg m⁻³. The highest concentration for PM₁₀ was recorded for the peak morning and reached 650.5 µg m⁻³ at the second station, while 1605 µg m⁻³ at the first station and at its evening peak (Table 2; Fig. 2).

Table 2. The monthly average concentration of particulate matter in the air (µg m⁻³) during August.

Stations	Average-PM _{2.5} - AM	Average-PM _{2.5} - PM	Average-PM ₁₀ - AM	Average-PM ₁₀ - PM
St.1 A	437.5	1247.5	466.5	1605
St.2 A	541.5	798	650.5	1025.5
St.3 A	194.5	490.5	379	575
St.4s.c	168.5	274	222	324
St.5s.c	220	306.5	255.5	387
St.6F.S	250	376.5	297.5	441

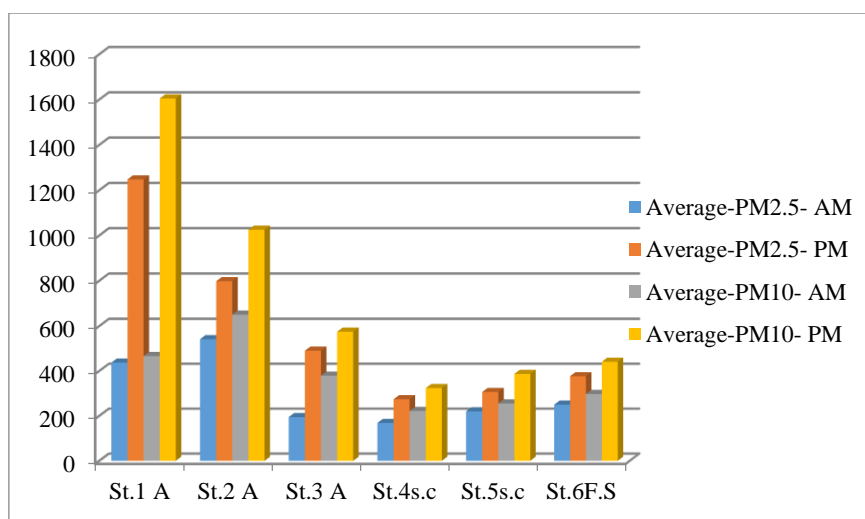


Fig. 2. Monthly average concentration of particulate matter in the air ($\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) during August.

The highest average temperature was recorded at the fifth station and in the morning and evening peaks during December, reaching 24 and 23.45 °C, while the highest average relative humidity and in the morning peak was 51.5% in the sixth station, whereas in the evening peak it reached 57.8% in the fifth station (Table 3; Fig. 3). The highest average concentration of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ in the morning and evening peaks were recorded in the sixth station, which amounted to 271.5, 514, 386.5 and 666.5 respectively (Table 4; Fig. 4).

Table 3. Monthly average of temperature and humidity in the study sites, during December.

Items	Average T-AM	Average T-PM	Average AM-RH	Average PM-RH
St.1 A	22.95	23.3	48.9	52.6
St.2 A	23.15	22.6	49.6	52.8
St.3 A	23.4	23.45	48.8	51.4
St.4s.c	23.25	22.9	51.35	53.9
St.5s.c	24	23.45	50.25	57.8
St.6F.S	23.35	23.25	51.5	54.4

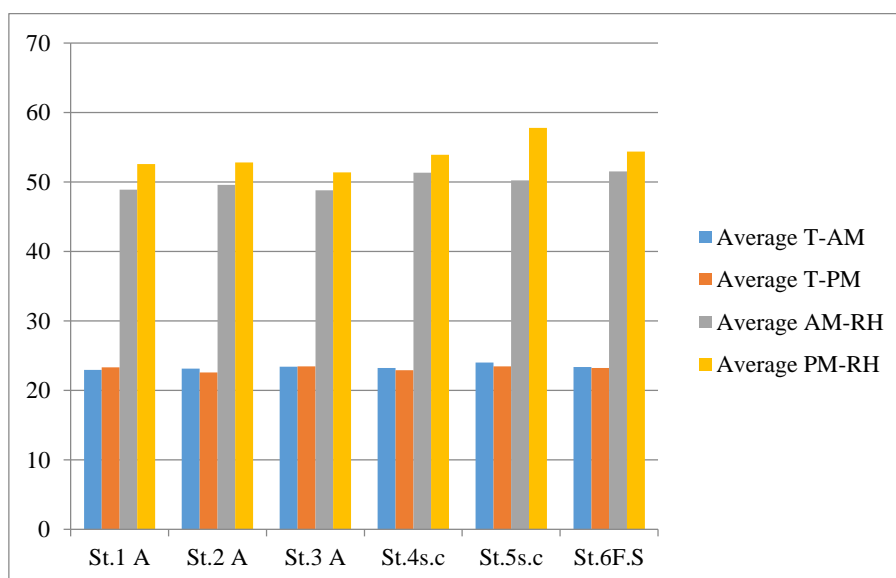
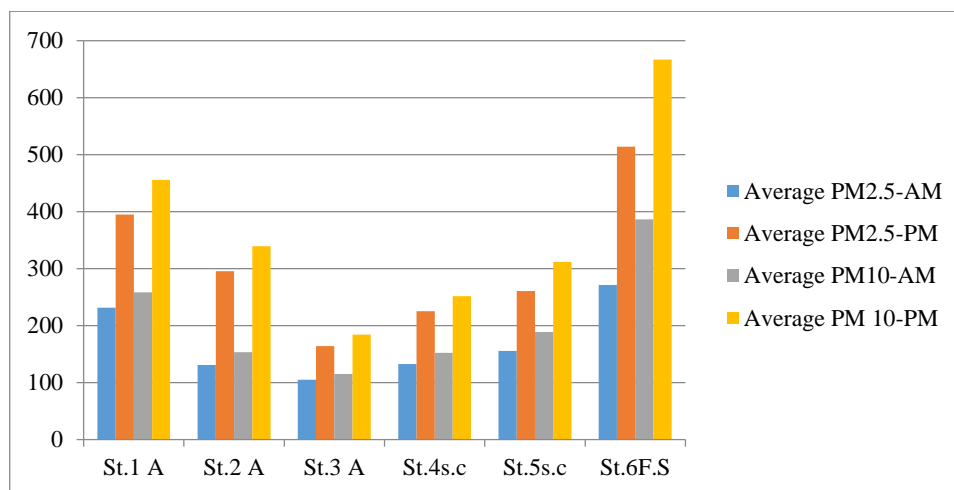


Fig. 3. Monthly average of temperature and humidity in the study sites, during December.

Table 4. Monthly average concentrations of particulate matters in the air ($\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) during December.

Items	Average PM _{2.5} -AM	Average PM _{2.5} -PM	Average PM ₁₀ -AM	Average PM ₁₀ -PM
St. 1 A	231.5	395	258.5	455.5
St. 2 A	131	295.5	153.5	339.5
St. 3 A	105	164	115	184
St. 4s.c	132.5	225	152	251.5
St. 5s.c	155.5	260.5	188.5	311.5
St. 6F.S	271.5	514	386.5	666.5

**Fig. 4.** The monthly average concentration of particulate matter in the air ($\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) during December.

The average temperatures inside closed cafes for the months of August and December exceeded the limits recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency, considered that the comfortable room temperatures were about 68-76 degrees Fahrenheit (20-24 °C). The unstable air temperatures contribute to heat stress for both workers and customers (Hajizadeh *et al.* 2016). The exposure to excessive heat has wide ranging physiological impacts for all humans, often amplifying existing conditions and resulting in premature death and disability (Bobb *et al.* 2014; Al-Kaabie 2019; Shindell *et al.* 2020; de Schrijver *et al.* 2022), while humidity was within the recommended percentages (30% and 60%; WHO 2021). The human body can suffer from high humidity levels. It can make the person feel tired with lack of energy since the air feels warmer than the recommended measured temperature. In addition, in environments with high humidity, hyperthermia, or overheating as a result of body's inability to adequately release heat, can have a detrimental influence on health. Overexposure to humidity (hyperthermia) poses a number of health hazards, including: Dehydration, weariness, cramping muscles, heat exhaustion, fainting, and heat stroke (Razjouyan *et al.* 2020), regardless of seasonal fluctuations temperature and humidity can play a role in elevate stress for the workers who spent the majority of their time at the office in bad conditions (Turunen *et al.* 2014; Al horr *et al.* 2016). The average concentrations of both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ inside closed cafes for the months of August and December exceeded the daily and annually PM standards recommended by World Health Organization (2011, 2021). Both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations were higher in summer than in winter, where the most of young people enjoy a long holiday. The peaks of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations also occurred during evening rush hour, more than the highest readings in the morning periods, cause of the significant indoor sources of PM (2.5 and 10) like burning of coal for hookah (Wei & Semple 2022), burning of sticky mixture of tobacco (maassel; Milner *et al.* 2011; Loffredo *et al.* 2016), regular cigarette smoking (Fernandez *et al.* 2015), electronic cigarettes (Li *et al.* 2020), poor ventilation depend mainly on mechanical ventilation to recirculate indoor air with a very low amount of outdoor air dilution leading to the accumulation of pollutants indoors (Chen & Zhao 2011), and due to the increased number of visitors to these cafes (Cobb *et al.* 2012), as well as out-door particles that infiltrate indoors and remain suspended (Matthaios *et al.* 2021) mostly from unpaved streets where the cafes are located (Amato *et al.* 2014; Chithra & Shiva Nagendra 2014).

CONCLUSION

The PM (2.5 and 10) concentrations observed among the cafés sampled indicated a bad air quality, the concentrations exceed national and international air quality standards, potentially putting both staff and customers' health at risk. Smoke-free laws that cover all combusted tobacco products, including the waterpipe, are required to safeguard the public from the risks of secondhand smoke and to alter social norms regarding tobacco use.

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