

PARAMETER ESTIMATION METHODS FOR NON-STATIONARY DATA
USING L-MOMENTS AND TL-MOMENTS APPROACHES

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated

To my beloved parents

My father, Hj. Mat Jan bin Hj. Abu Bakar

My mother, Hjh. Asiah bt Hj. Hanapi

To my lovely family members

Nur Amirah bt Hj. Mat Jan

Nur Amanina bt Hj. Mat Jan

Muhammad Firdaus bin Azman

Muhammad Aqil Iman bin Muhammad Firdaus

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ABSTRACT

Non-stationary flood frequency analysis (NFFA) plays an important role in defining the probabilities of flood occurrences by taking into account of the non-independence and non-stationary aspects of hydrological extreme events data. This analysis overcomes the issue of the stationary assumptions (independent and identically distributed flood series) applied in flood frequency analysis (FFA), which are no longer valid in infrastructure-designed methods. This is because ignoring the non-stationarity of hydrological records may result in inaccurate future flood event predictions. Flood estimation is one of the important components in frequency analysis. Thus, an appropriate parameter estimation method should be established to deal with flood frequency analysis in the likely case of non-stationary. The objective of this study is to propose a parameter estimation method to estimate the parameter of non-stationary distribution model. The proposed methods are Trimmed L-moments (TL-moments) method and performance comparison of TL-moments with L-moments method in NFFA study. The TL-moments method was applied to the Generalized Extreme Value (GEV) distribution model with time as covariate. Four GEV distribution models examined in this study were stationary model (GEV0) and three non-stationary models (GEV1, GEV2, and GEV3). Comparisons of the parameter estimation methods were carried out using Monte Carlo simulation and bootstrap techniques. The simulation study showed that TL-moments performed better than L-moments method for GEV1 and GEV3 models. Streamflow data for three of eleven rivers in Johor, Malaysia were found to exhibit non-stationary behaviour in the annual maximum streamflow. These rivers showed decreased trend in the flood series based on the Mann-Kendall trend test and Spearman's Rho test. From the bootstrap analysis, the TL-moments method performed better as compared to the L-moments method for GEV0, GEV1, and GEV3 models. The overall result concluded that the TL-moments method could provide an efficient prediction of the flood event estimated at quantiles of the higher return periods.

ABSTRAK

Analisis frekuensi banjir tidak pegun (NFFA) memainkan peranan penting dalam menentukan kebarangkalian kejadian masa hadapan dengan mengambil kira aspek ketidakbersandaran dan tidak pegun bagi data hidrologi kejadian ekstrim. Analisis ini mengatasi isu andaian data pegun (siri banjir bebas dan tersebar sama) yang diterapkan dalam analisis frekuensi banjir (FFA), yang tidak lagi sah dalam sistem pembangunan infrastruktur. Ini kerana pengabaian ciri tidak pegun dalam rekod data hidrologi boleh menghasilkan ramalan banjir masa depan yang tidak tepat. Penganggaran banjir adalah salah satu komponen penting dalam analisis frekuensi. Oleh itu, kaedah anggaran parameter yang sesuai harus dibentuk untuk menangani analisis frekuensi banjir bagi kes data tidak pegun. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mencadangkan kaedah penganggaran parameter bagi menganggar parameter model taburan tidak pegun. Kaedah yang dicadangkan adalah kaedah Trim L-momen (TL-momen) dan perbandingan prestasi kaedah TL-momen dengan kaedah L-momen di dalam kajian NFFA. Kaedah TL-momen telah digunakan ke atas model bagi taburan Nilai Ekstrim Teritlak (GEV) dengan masa sebagai kovariat. Empat model bagi taburan GEV yang dikaji dalam kajian ini adalah model pegun (GEV0) dan tiga model tidak pegun (GEV1, GEV2, dan GEV3). Perbandingan kaedah penganggaran parameter dijalankan melalui teknik simulasi Monte Carlo dan bootstrap. Kajian simulasi telah menunjukkan kaedah TL-momen adalah lebih baik berbanding dengan kaedah L-momen bagi model GEV1 dan GEV3. Data aliran sungai bagi tiga daripada sebelas sungai di Johor, Malaysia didapati mempamerkan ciri tidak pegun dalam aliran sungai maksimum tahunan. Sungai-sungai ini menunjukkan aliran menurun dalam siri banjir berdasarkan ujian tren Mann-Kendall dan ujian Spearman's Rho. Daripada analisis bootstrap, kaedah TL-momen menunjukkan prestasi yang lebih baik berbanding dengan kaedah L-momen bagi model GEV0, GEV1, dan GEV3. Hasil keseluruhan keputusan menyimpulkan bahawa kaedah TL-momen dapat memberikan anggaran kejadian banjir yang cekap dalam penganggaran kejadian banjir pada kuantil aliran tinggi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	-	Akaike Information Criterion
AICc	-	Corrected Akaike's Information Criterion
AMS	-	Annual maximum series
ADF	-	Augmented Dickey-Fuller test
BIC	-	Bayesian Information Criterion
CVM	-	Cramer von Mises test
FFA	-	Flood frequency analysis
GAMLSS	-	Generalized Additive Models for Location, Scale, and Shape
GEV	-	Generalized extreme value distribution
GML	-	Generalized maximum likelihood method
GPA	-	Generalized Pareto Distribution
KS	-	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test
LRT	-	Likelihood ratio test
MMK	-	Modified Mann-Kendall test
MK	-	Mann-Kendall test
MLE	-	Maximum Likelihood Estimator
NFFA	-	Non-stationary flood frequency analysis
OLS	-	Ordinary least square
PML	-	Penalized Maximum Likelihood method
PPCC	-	Probability Plot Correlation coefficient test
PW	-	Pre-Whitening test
PWM	-	Weighted Probability Moments method
RBIAS	-	Relative bias
RRMSE	-	Relative mean square error
SR	-	Spearman's Rho test
TFPW	-	Trend-Free Pre-whitening test
TS	-	Two Stage method
WLS	-	Weighted least square method

LIST OF SYMBOLS

ξ	-	Location parameter
α	-	Scale parameter
k	-	Shape parameter
$\xi(t)$	-	Non-stationary location parameter
$\alpha(t)$	-	Non-stationary scale parameter
t	-	Time
μ	-	Mean
σ	-	Standard deviation
$\mu(t)$	-	Non-stationary in the mean
$\sigma(t)$	-	Non-stationary in the standard deviation
$F(x)$	-	Cumulative distribution function (cdf)
$x(F)$	-	Quantile function
$x(F, t)$	-	Non-stationary quantile function
$x(F)^C$	-	Calculated quantile function
$x(F)^S$	-	Simulated quantile function
$x(t)$	-	Generated quantile function
$x(T)$	-	Quantile of flood at T -year
T	-	Return period, year
U	-	Uniform random numbers
$E[X]$	-	Expectation of order statistic
q	-	Flood
x	-	Random variable
f_i	-	Plotting position
$F(f_i)$	-	Generated cumulative distribution function
Z_i	-	Ordered values for $i = 1, \dots, n$
$F^{-1}(f_i)$	-	Generated of inverse cumulative distribution function
(t_1, t_2)	-	Smallest and largest trimmed L-moments (TL-moments)
β_r	-	r^{th} probability weighted moments
λ_r	-	r^{th} L-moments

$\lambda_r^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	r^{th} TL-moments
l_r	-	r^{th} sample L-moments
$l_r^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	r^{th} sample TL-moments
b_r	-	r^{th} sample probability weighted moments
τ_2	-	L-coefficient of variation (L-Cv)
τ_3	-	L-coefficient of skewness (L-Cs)
τ_4	-	L-coefficient of kurtosis (L-Ck)
$\hat{\tau}_r$	-	r^{th} sample L-moments ratio
$\tau_2^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	TL-coefficient of variation (TL-Cv)
$\tau_3^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	TL-coefficient of skewness (TL-Cs)
$\tau_4^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	TL-coefficient of kurtosis (TL-Ck)
$\hat{\tau}_r^{(t_1, t_2)}$	-	r^{th} sample TL-moments ratio
$\tilde{\tau}$	-	Tau
$\Gamma(\cdot)$	-	Gamma function
$\text{sgn}(\cdot)$	-	Signum function
$\log(\cdot)$	-	Logarithm function
iid	-	Independent and identically distributed
F	-	Non-exceedance Probability
L	-	Likelihood function
n	-	Sample size
N	-	Total number of samples
p	-	Number of parameters
Y	-	Output variable
Z	-	Test statistic

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Flood is one of the most common natural disasters in Malaysia, especially during the rainy season. US Geological Survey (2013) defined flood as an overflow or inundation that comes from a river or other water body that can cause damages. The primary cause of the river flooding is the presence of heavy rainfall, assisted with waste disposal into the river. This problem has affected the livelihoods and economic development in the country and can lead to serious damage, property losses, and even human life losses. The hydraulic structure such as weir, spillway and dam is an innovative technique in the management of water system for potential energy or flood control. The development of these structures needs information on accurate estimation of flood prediction. The design of the structures is constructed through the maximum flows that exceed a certain level in a given return period (the time period of flood occurrence).

Flood frequency analysis (FFA) suggested by Stedinger *et al.* (1992) is mostly used by engineers and hydrologists all over the world to determine the best probability distribution (or model) that fits streamflow data. It consists of estimating flood peak quantiles (frequency of flood occurrence) (Hosking & Wallis, 1997). The FFA is related to the magnitude of extreme events by determining their frequency of occurrence using probability distributions. The validity of the findings of frequency analysis is based on the classic principles of independence and stationary observations to proceed with the distribution fitting method (Khaliq *et al.*, 2006). It means that the probability distribution parameters are estimated from independent and identically distributed (iid) observations and the flood series free of trends and drastic changes.

However, the assumption of stationary is questionable when the flood is caused by severe storms like climate change, land-use modification, and watershed regulations, acting individually or together (Katz *et al.*, 2002; Milly *et al.*, 2008; Gilroy & McCuen, 2012; Salas & Obeysekera, 2014; Vasiliades *et al.*, 2015) and flood predictions made on that basis would be questionable. The changes of Earth's climate are altering the means and extremes of precipitation and rates of discharge of rivers (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2007). Thus, these changes cause to the criteria for the frequency of data samples or the statistical characteristics (e.g. mean and variance) of the related data may have changed over time (i.e. inconstant pattern) (Khaliq *et al.*, 2006) which is known as non-stationary data.

In flood frequency analysis, the analysis implies the annual extreme flood with time-invariant (or 1-year-periodic) on probability density function (pdf) (Milly *et al.*, 2008). The pdf is used to evaluate and manage risks to water infrastructure; water supplies and floodplains. Thus, handling FFA by taking into account the presence of non-stationary behaviour in data will make the distribution parameter model changes over time and the distribution get more complicated (Gado & Nguyen, 2016a). Recent flood frequency studies showed the seriously bias the result of estimated frequency of flood occurrence for future events when ignoring the non-stationary behaviour in the streamflow series (Cunderlik & Ouarda, 2006). Therefore, the standard parameter estimation method in FFA studies which assuming the parameter distribution as a constant parameter cannot be applied to non-stationary data records. New estimation procedures need to be used to allow modelling distribution parameters as a function of time. Thus, this study aims to estimate parameter and predict frequency of flood occurrence by suitable parameter estimation method in the application of non-stationary flood frequency analysis (NFFA).

In order to analyse hydrological extreme events such as annual maximum series of floods, the prediction of flood magnitude is usually estimated in large return period (flood occurrence in a high time period) such as 100 years and above (Wang 1990). Hence, it is advantageous to find a suitable parameter estimation method that intentionally censors (or eliminate) low-value observations because using only the larger value flood ensures that the extrapolation to large return periods flood is carried

out by exploring the trend of these larger flows only. Trimmed L-moments (TL-moments) method is a parameter estimation method which works by trimming a predetermined percentage of the extreme values from the samples (Elamir & Seheult, 2003). Sample of this method assigned no weight to the extreme value since censoring data from below value (i.e. smaller value) may remove a nuisance value in the upper quantile estimation (high return period) (Wang, 1990). The TL-moments method has been applied successfully as parameter estimation method in flood frequency analysis study in several case studies from Malaysia (Ahmad et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Shabri et al., 2011a, 2011b), Czech Republic (Bílková, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d), Pakistan (Ishfaq Ahmad et al., 2015, 2016), East India (Bora & Borah, 2017), Texas (Asquith, 2007). Thus, the application of TL-moments method will be carried out in this research to investigate the parameter estimation in non-stationary flood frequency analysis.

1.2 Problem Statement

The motivation to carry out this study arises from the need to estimate the parameter of the non-stationary model which is a time-dependent parameter and predict the frequency of flood occurrence. Before dealing with this research, a few issues need to be considered.

In flood frequency analysis for stationary data, the parameter distribution is a constant parameter. However, non-stationary flood frequency analysis is dealing with time-dependent parameters of flood frequency distribution which means the distribution parameter model changes over time. Thus, the technique of parameter estimation using the TL-moments method for non-stationary distribution model need to be discovered.

In order to evaluate the performance of the proposed parameter estimation method in non-stationary flood frequency analysis for real data, the proposed method should be applied to non-stationary streamflow data station. Hence, the non-stationary behaviour of streamflow series for each case study is needed to be known.

Since TL-moments method is the extension of L-moments method, the third issue is how the performance of TL-moments method in handling the non-stationary model compare with the non-stationary model and stationary model estimated by L-moments method.

Therefore, in this study, the non-stationary distribution model will be estimated by TL-moments method since there is no further research that has investigated the non-stationary flood frequency analysis of trimming sample. Hence, this research will provide further investigation and more comprehensive evaluation of TL-moments approach in non-stationary flood frequency analysis, especially on evaluating the performance of TL-moments compared to L-moments.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the application of non-stationary flood frequency analysis based on the GEV distributions by investigating the performance of non-stationary model in L-moments and TL-moments approaches. In achieving this, the following specific objectives were outlined:

- i. To develop the parameter estimation for non-stationary model of L-moments and TL-moments $(t_1, 0)$, $t_1 = 1, 2, 3, 4$ for GEV distribution.
- ii. To investigate the performance of TL-moments $(t_1, 0)$, $t_1 = 1, 2, 3, 4$ compared to L-moments for non-stationary of GEV distribution model based on Monte Carlo simulation when the data are generated from parent distribution.
- iii. To evaluate the non-stationarity of the annual maximum streamflow over stations in Johor, Malaysia and detect significant floods trend for each station.

- iv. To evaluate the performance of L-moments and TL-moments ($t_1, 0$), $t_1 = 1, 2, 3, 4$ in the context of a stationary and a non-stationarity approach using real data analysis of annual maximum streamflow data of Johor, Malaysia.
- v. To analyze the suitable model in the prediction of flood peak quantiles (frequency of flood occurrence) using the L-moments and TL-moments methods for annual maximum streamflow data in Johor, Malaysia.

1.4 Research Scope

This study involved major tasks as follows:

- i. The selection of eleven streamflow stations located in Johor, Malaysia. The period of the flow series varies from 15 – 49 years starting from 1960 – 2009. The data were obtained from the Department of Irrigation and Drainage, Malaysia. An annual maximum series (AMS), a series that contains only the streamflow level with the largest magnitude that occurred in each year is used. The selection is due to the data availability and the theoretical basis for extrapolating outside the range of the observations.
- ii. This study focus on the prediction of flood magnitudes in high frequency of flood occurrence which involving extreme events. The extreme events are more suitable modelled with heavy tails, which is characterised in the Generalized Extreme Values (GEV) distribution (Martins & Stedinger, 2000; Otiniano et al., 2019). Hence, this research covers the derivation of parameters estimation non-stationary models for GEV distribution based on TL-moments approach.
- iii. In non-stationary modelling, the number of parameters to be estimated from fixed-length time-series will increase. Thus, the time-dependent

parameters estimated from extreme flow data should be expressed as the functions with the smallest possible number of parameters (simple model function, such as linear and quadratic) (Strupczewski et al., 2016). Thus, the non-stationary GEV model in this analysis consisted of three types of GEV model, which are location parameter is a linear function of the time as a covariate (GEV1), location and scale parameters are a linear function of the time as a covariate (GEV2), and location parameter is a quadratic function of the time as a covariate (GEV3).

- iv. This study addressed models with time as a covariate for non-stationary flood frequency analysis for GEV distribution. Due to the lack of information and data on climate changes in Malaysia, this study only focuses on the time-varying model for GEV distribution.
- v. TL-moments with various levels of trimming trimming the smallest conceptual sample value, $(t_1, 0)$ are investigated in this research ranging from $t_1 = 1, 2, 3,$ and 4 . This is because the use of t_1 higher than 4 produced large sampling variability and will affect the tail fitting of distribution (Wang, 1997).
- vi. The selection of the best fitted model for the streamflow station is based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), and diagnostic plot.

1.5 Research Contribution

Although many studies have been conducted in the prediction of flood quantiles in flood frequency analysis (FFA), there are very few studies that used TL-moments method in the prediction of non-stationary flood quantiles (i.e. frequency of flood occurrence in future). This study attempts to use TL-moments method as a tool to predict flood quantile in non-stationary flood frequency analysis (NFFA). The expected contributions of this study are:

- i. This research contributes to the development of the NFFA model with three-parameter GEV distribution; GEV1, GEV2, and GEV3 based on TL-moments parameter estimation method.
- ii. By investigating TL-moments with trimming smallest values, t_1 ranging from 1 to 4, readers will have some ideas in choosing the suitable trimming values to improve the estimation of extreme events particularly in high return period events in NFFA studies.
- iii. The results of this study contributed to the understanding of the hydrological behaviour of the study areas as far as the extreme values are concerned. The direct beneficiaries of the study are the engineers and hydrologists working in the research areas of applications from the results of specifying the probability distribution of extreme events (i.e. flood). The application of the TL-moments method could be widened especially for modelling time series under non-stationary conditions for the flood management and comprehensive response to extreme climate events.
- iv. The identification extreme value of the non-stationary probabilistic model was improved in this study in order to evaluate its acceptability for the frequency analysis of floods in the Johor state and investigated changes occurring in the extreme discharge.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter 1 defines the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, scopes, the significance of the study and thesis organization.

Chapter 2 presents a review of this study's literature. The reviews consist of non-stationary flood frequency analysis and the common non-stationary models used for non-stationary flood frequency analysis. Other than that, the reviews also include the TL-moments method for estimating parameter. The simulation application parameter estimator in non-stationary frequency analysis is also reviewed. Lastly, the review of the best model selection method for a non-stationary model is also highlighted.

Chapter 3 presents in detail the related theories and methodologies for the development of non-stationary flood frequency analysis. The chapter begins with the analysis of non-stationary and trend detection used. Then, the background of L-moments and TL-moments are defined by explaining their population and sample theories. The development of the GEV model in the stationary and non-stationary environment are also discussed. Next, the parameter estimation using the methods of L-moments is revisited, and parameter estimation using the methods of TL-moments are derived for each GEV model.

Chapter 4 discusses the calculation procedure of simulation and bootstrap analysis. The L-moments and TL-moments(1,0) methods are used as parameter estimation method in this calculation. For real data application in bootstrap analysis, Sayong station is presented to estimate parameter and flood quantile prediction.

Chapter 5 presents the results of Monte Carlo simulation study to examine the sampling properties of the proposed parameter estimation methods of L-moments and TL-moments. The analyses of the simulations for each model are discussed.

Chapter 6 develops the procedures of non-stationary flood frequency analysis on streamflow data. The procedures include non-stationary test and trend detection for 11 stations in Johor, Malaysia, flood quantile bootstrap, parameter estimation of GEV models, and flood quantile estimation at recurrence intervals of interest using the bootstrap technique. This chapter ends with a conclusion of the best model for flood quantile.

Chapter 7 presents the summary and conclusion of this research. This chapter also suggests recommendations for future works.

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