

interaction played an important role in the generation of groundwater discharge in the basin, especially during the low flow period.

Monitoring sediment movement at a basin level is time-consuming and expensive when using the physical observation method. Thus the use of geospatial techniques requires the use of drainage basin models in monitoring. This study is important at this time for effective erosion and flood-prone areas monitoring and prioritizing areas that need urgent attention. The choice of Imo River Basin (IRB), is as a result of previous works carried out which showed that erosion by water in the IRB has been identified to be a major cause of gully erosion and sediment yield especially in the northern region of the basin and siltation of river in the south

(Ofomata, 1980). This study aims to evaluate the dynamics of sediment yield in IRB and to provide data for appropriate land and water development policymaking.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The IRB is located in the Eastern region of Nigeria, (Figure 1) cutting across the States of Imo, Abia, and Rivers. It is bounded on the east by Ebonyi, Cross River, and Akwa-Ibom states and in the West by the Niger River, in the North by Enugu and Anambra States, and in the South the Atlantic Ocean.

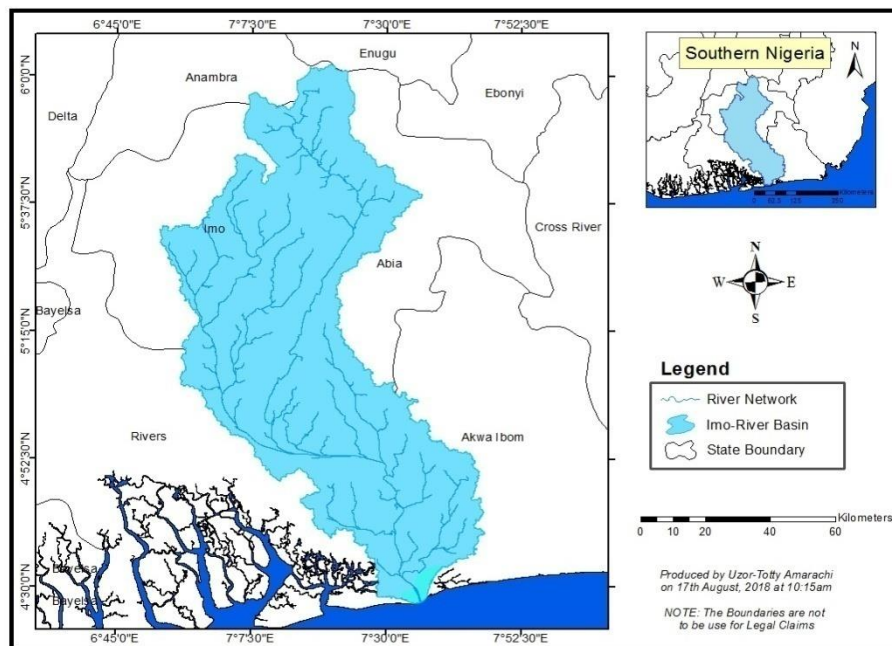


Fig. 1: Extent and Location of IRB.

The highest point on the study area is located in the northern part with an elevation of 255m above sea level while the lowest point is towards the south with an elevation of 3m above sea level. The climatic condition of the area can be classified as consisting of tropical monsoon (Am) and tropical rainforest (Af) according to Koppen climatic classification. Rainfall amount ranges from over 2500mm in the southern part of the basin to about 1500mm annually towards the northern borders with an average number of rain days ranging between 120 - 152 rain/days annually. Rainfall intensities are high and often above 50mm/h with short interval intensities over 100 mm/h (Igwe, 2012; Chiemelu, et al., 2019). Rainfall often comes between March and lasts till October and a two-week break in August. However, in some years the basin experiences either an early onset of rain with early cessation or late-onset with late cessation. The average maximum and minimum air temperature of the basin ranges from 30C and 21C in the south and 31C and 22C in the north while the hottest months are January and March (NIMET). The relative humidity is about 85% in the south and 65% in the north. The

average annual sunshine hours and solar radiation are about 5hrs and 4.2 (MJ/m² day) respectively.

The basin has two prominent features Udi-Okigwe-Arochukwu at the north-eastern part and the Awka-Umuchu- Umuduru sedimentary cuestas at the north-western side (Uma, 1989). The IRB sits on layers of sedimentary rocks of about 5480m thick and with ages ranging from Upper Cretaceous to Recent (Uma, 1986). The deposition of these sedimentary rocks is related to the opening of the South Atlantic Ocean and the formation of the rift-like Benue Trough of Nigeria in the Mesozoic (Schlumberger, 1985). According to Ijeh and Onu (2013), 80% of the basin consists of Coastal plain sand, which composes of non-hardened sediments that constitute the Benin and Ogwashi-Asaba formations, with alluvial deposits at the estuary, south of the basin. The remaining 20% shows a series of younger sedimentary rock units when moving southwestward.

SWAT Model Description

The SWAT model is a physically-based distributed model designed to predict the impact of land

management practices on water, sediment, and agricultural chemical yields in large complex watersheds with varying soil, land use, and management conditions over long periods (Neitsch, et al; 2012). The recent version of the SWAT model uses the simplified stream power equation of Bagnold (1977) to route sediment in the channel. The maximum amount of sediment that can be transported from a reach segment is a function of the peak channel velocity. Sediment transport in the channel network is a function of two processes, degradation, and aggradation (i.e. deposition), operating simultaneously in the reach (Neitsch et al., 2005). SWAT subdivides a basin into sub-basins connected by a stream network and further delineates each sub-basin into hydrological response units (HRUs) consisting of homogenous land use and soils. The model also simulates other physical processes at the basin level, such as hydrological routines inland and routing phases, vadose zone processes (infiltration, evaporation, plant uptake, lateral flows, and percolation), and groundwater flows (Zhang et al; 2009). At the HRU level evapotranspiration from various plant and soil, surface runoff, sediment, water yield, and non-point loads are calculated and summed up to sub-basin level. The Modified Universal Soil Loss Equation (MUSLE) is used by the model to compute soil erosion by computing sediment yields from each sub-basin and routing the sediment yields to the basin outlet.

$$SYLD = 11.8 * (Q_{surf} * qp)^{0.56} * K * LS * C * P * CFRG \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

Where

SYLD is the sediment yield to the stream network in metric tons; Qsurf is the surface runoff volume in mm, qp is the peak flow rate in m³/s; K is the soil erodibility factor; LS is the slope length and gradient factor; C is the cover management factor and can be derived from land cover data; P is the erosion control practice factor which is a field-specific value, and CFRG is the coarse fragment factor.

Also, the hydrological cycle uses water balance equation in SWAT:

$$SW_t = SW_0 + \sum_{i=1}^t (R_i - Q_i - ET_i - P_i - QR_i) \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

Where:

SW_t is the final soil water content (mm H²O); SW₀ is the initial soil water content on day i (mm H²O); t is the time (days); R_i is the amount of precipitation on day i (mm H²O); Q_i is the amount of surface runoff on day i (mm H²O); ET_i is the amount of evapotranspiration on day i (mm H²O); P_i is the amount of water entering the vadose zone from the soil profile on day i (mm H²O), and QR_i is the amount of return flow on day i (mm H²O).

Data Set

SWAT input data includes weather, topographic slope), soil, and land use. Weather data for the study was obtained from the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET), the weather parameters include precipitation, solar radiation, relative humidity, sunshine, wind, and air temperature. The land use (30m resolution) for 1995 was obtained generated from the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry Unit while 2010 was obtained National Geomatics Center of China. Elevation data for the study area was derived from the Shuttle Radar Topographic Mission (SRTM), a 30m resolution dataset from the U.S. Geological Survey. The data were extracted in the Georeferenced Tagged Image File Format (GeoTIFF); the horizontal datum is the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84 – Geographic) while the vertical datum is the Earth Gravitational Model 1996 (EGM 96) ellipsoid; and the vertical unit is the meter (USGS, 2016). The DEM was used to calculate the slope, streamflow direction, and stream order. The DEM and the soil type map are shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively.

The harmonised world soil data produced by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Institute of Applied System Analysis (IIASA), World Soil Information (ISRIC), Institute of Soil Science-Chinese Academy of Science (ISSCAS) and Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) was used. Seven soil classes were found in the study area (Figure 3). 52.87% of the basin is covered by Xanthic Ferraisols which covers 4,203.71 km² of the basin and is the largest soil type in the basin, Dystric Fluvisols type covered 395.96 km², Thionic Fluvisols covers 616.20 km². The Dystric Nitosols are of three types and they covered 2,611.12.km² of the basin while Dystric Regosols covered 27.83 km² of the total basin area. However, water bodies cover an area of 96.21km². SWAT2012 version was used to compile the SWAT input files. The IRB was divided into 173 sub-basins and 1338 HRUs based on a threshold of 5% soil, 5% slope, and 5% land use.

Results

Hydrologic Response to Sediment yield Change

Hydrological response places an important role in the movement of sediment within a basin; the Imo River which is the main river system is a fourth-order stream with a drainage density of 0.17 km/km² and relatively flat topography at a scale of 1:5km. The ArcSWAT model simulation process was carried out using Land use of 1995 for hydrological processes for 1995 and the 2010 Land uses for the hydrological processes for 2010. The results are shown in Table 1.

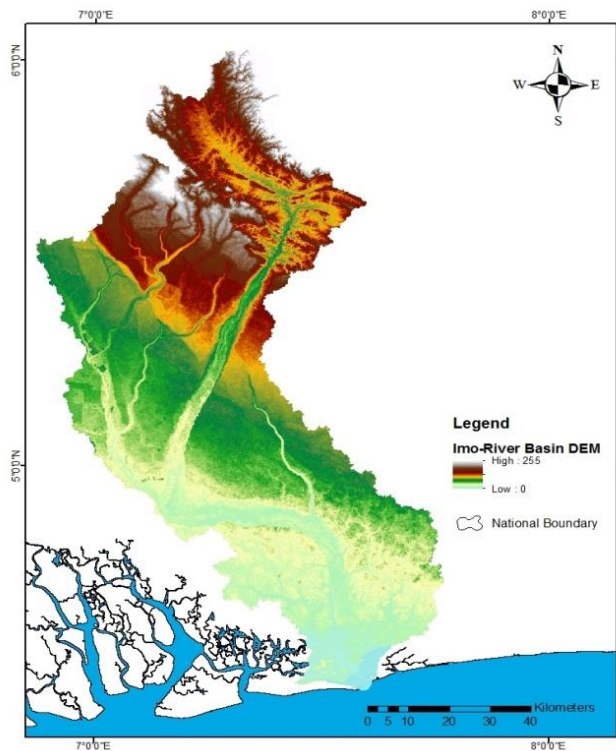


Fig. 2. Sub-basins from DEM

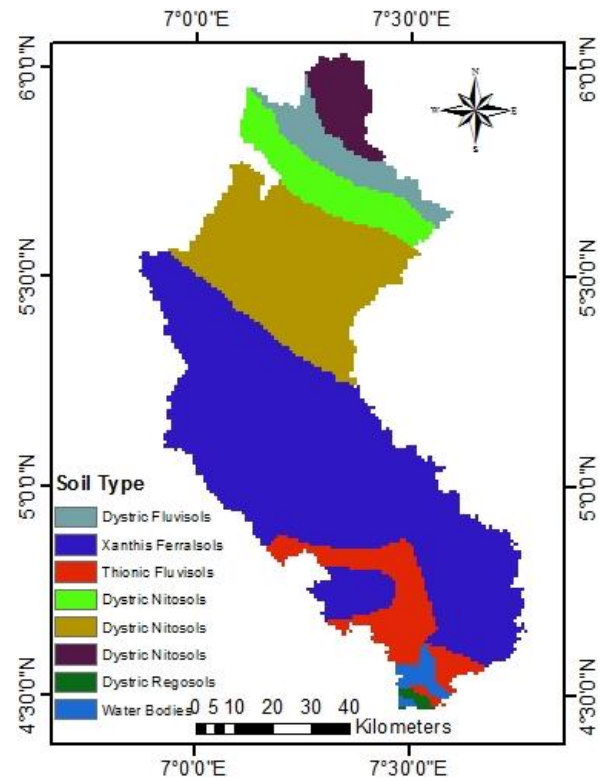


Fig. 3. Soil type

Table 1: Mean Annual hydrological summaries in the IRB for 1995/2010.

Year	PREC	SURQ	LATQ	GWQ	SW	ET	WYLD	SYLD	LATE
1995	252.87	37.34	1.92	120.37	132.04	80.97	165.99	1.20	130.11
2010	266.36	46.93	1.98	124.59	130.43	81.90	177.57	1.93	133.59
Change	13.49	9.59	0.06	4.22	-1.61	0.93	11.58	0.73	3.48

Notes: * *PREC*: Average amount of precipitation (mm), *SURQ*: Average amount of surface runoff, *LATQ*: Lateral flow contribution for the year (mm), *GWQ*: Groundwater contribution for the year (mm), *LATE*: Water percolation past bottom of soil profile in basin for the year (mm), *SW*: Amount of water stored in soil profile for the year (mm), *ET*: Actual evapotranspiration in basin for the year (mm), *WYLD*: Water yield for the year (mm), and *SYLD*: Sediment yield in basin for the year (t/ha).

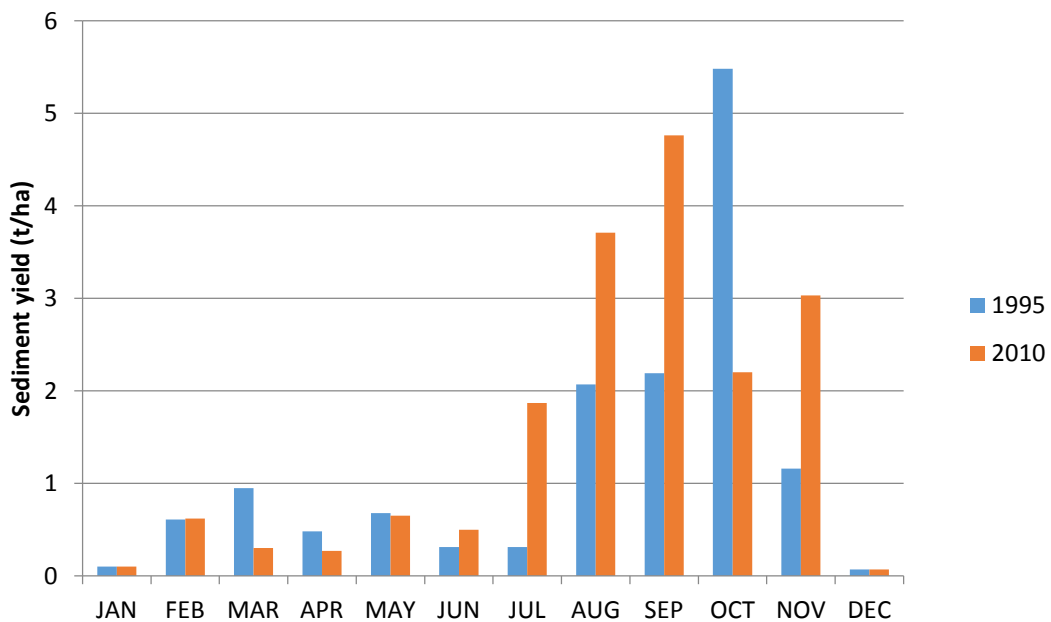


Fig. 4: Monthly sediment yield in the IRB

The annual hydrological result shows that a 2.6% increase in rainfall was able to generate an 11.4% increase in surface runoff which caused a remarkable change of 23.3% increase which is 0.73 t/ha of sediment across the IRB from 1995 to 2010. This reveals that an increase in rainfall can increase surface runoff as well as sediment yield in the IRB.

Temporal variation of sediment yield in the IRB

December and January of 1995 and 2010 recorded the same value of sediment yield of 0.07 t/ha and 0.10 t/ha respectively in the two years under investigation. October recorded the highest sediment yield for 1995 with rainfall of 409.75 mm while September recorded the highest for 2010 with 487.75 mm rain. 1995 showed a relatively low sediment yield of below 2.2 t/ha across the months apart from October recording 5.48 t/ha which

is 38%. In 2010, September recorded the highest value of 4.76 t/ha representing 26% of total sediment yield for the year. There was an increase of 3.67 t/ha in the total annual sediment yield between 1995 and 2010.

Ten sub-basins out of 173 sub-basins showed a relatively high sediment yield change, sub-basin 2 recorded the highest change of 2.46 t/ha of sediment from 1995 to 2010. The lowest change occurred in sub-basin 3 with a change of 0.66 t/ha of sediment as seen in Table 2. The increase in sediment can be associated with an increase in rainfall. Furthermore, during the two years under investigation sub-basin, 10 recorded the highest sediment yield with an increased chance of 0.78 t/ha from 1995 to 2010. 70% of the sub-basins with the highest sediment yield change are located in the northern region.

Table 2: Largest change of sediment yield among Sub-basins.

Sub-basin	Area (km ²)	SYLD 1995	SYLD 2010	Change
1	47.49	5.11	6.80	1.69
2	28.22	5.65	7.09	2.46
3	29.82	6.86	7.52	0.66
6	35.83	3.89	5.13	1.24
7	34.98	3.19	4.25	1.06
10	48.58	7.72	8.50	0.78
26	66.76	1.07	2.31	1.24
88	10.66	4.54	5.81	1.27
94	50.06	4.04	5.26	1.22
102	56.31	2.37	3.10	0.73

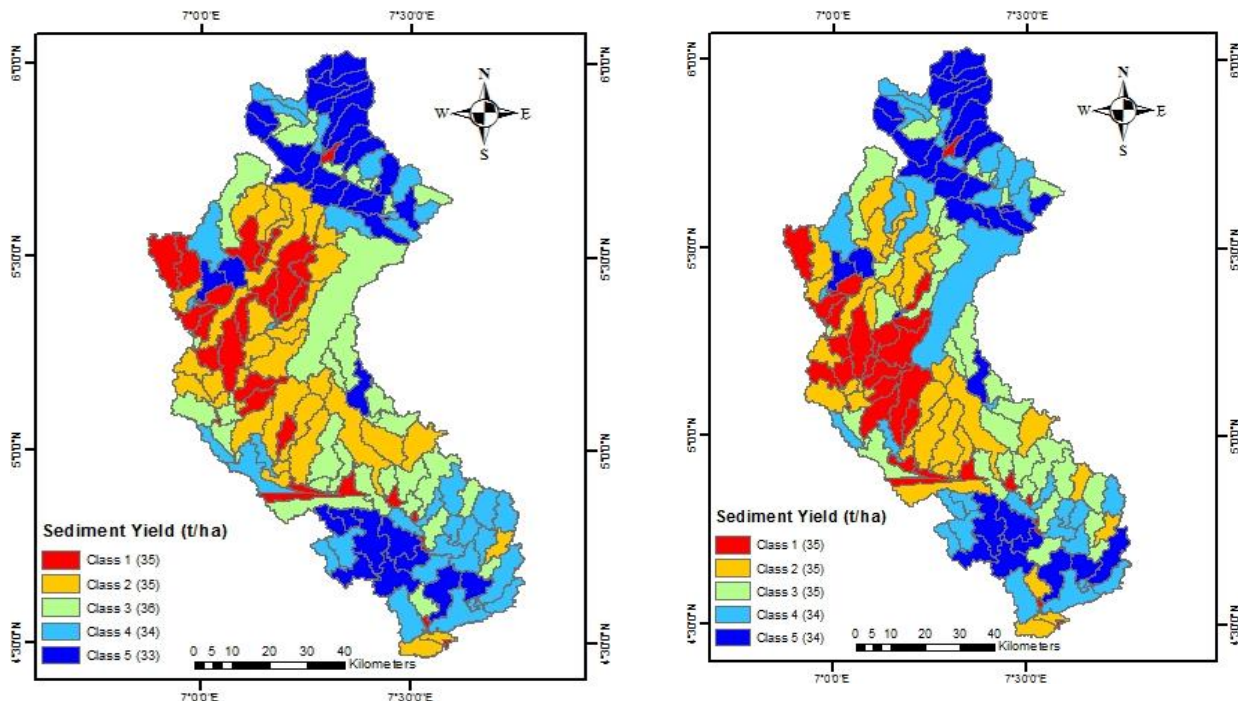


Fig. 5. Spatial distribution of sediment yield 1995(a) and 2010(b).

Spatial variation of sediment yield in the IRB

The spatial distribution of sediment yield across IRB in 1995 and 2010 was classified using the quintile method, class 5 which represents those with the highest volume of sediment has 33 and 34 sub-basins in 1995 and 2010 respectively and are more around the northern region

while class 1 which represents those with the lowest volume of sediment yield are located towards the western region with 35 sub-basins for the two periods under investigation. The southern region has a combination of class 5, 4 and 3, while the eastern region is a combination of class 3 and 4 and 5, the presence of

class 5 in the south is because that is the location of the outlet of the basin. Sediment yield of 23.3 % occurred with a 2.6 % increase of rain, this implies that there is a tendency of having more sediment yield in the IRB if there is more rain in the region. Land-use changes could also contribute to the increase of 0.73 t/ha experienced from 1995 to 2010.

Discussion and Conclusions

Sustainable natural resource management, which is a sub-goal under Goal 13 of the SDGs, should be the main focus of policymakers in the IRB. Soil and water degradation and the after effect needs prompt and effective monitoring to achieve sustainability. The model runs for different land use period are performed on similar weather conditions as the annual rainfall is about 252.87 mm and 266.36 mm for 1995 and 2010, respectively. According to the model results, it is necessary to prescribe appropriate soil and water conservation practices to control sedimentation problems in the Imo River Basin. The variation in sub-basin sediment yield will help prioritize any best management practices (BMP) implementation areas. The sediment load spatial distribution showed that a larger amount of sediment is from the northern part (Okigwe environs) of the basin which also corresponds with heavy sediment removal and gully formations recorded from that area from other studies (Ofomata 1973, 1978 and 1980). This study has shown that SWAT can model the temporal and spatial variation of sediments yield and is capable of identifying areas within the basin with high sediment yield. This provides a useful guideline for formulating policies and developing plans to counteract erosion effects which the basin is known for and to achieve sustainable land development within the basin. High erosion areas may be easily identified within the basin using the model output results at the HRU level. Subsequent land development should avoid such areas because of the need to adequately protect them with appropriate conservation strategies. Human activities within the IRB deserve more attention due to their impact on soil and water loss. To avoid illegal development activities, the government should formulate laws and regulations to limit indiscriminate use of land within the basin.

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