

An Integrated Data-Driven Approach for Hydroplaning Risk Assessment in Asphalt Pavements Using Crash Narrative and Pavement Surface Texture Data

Gauri Mahajan, Xiaohua Luo, Feng Hong, Feng Wang

Ingram School of Engineering, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas

Introduction

- Hydroplaning is a critical wet-weather safety phenomenon caused by the interaction between pavement surface conditions, water accumulation, and vehicle dynamics.
- Pavement texture quantified using Mean Profile Depth (MPD), from road profilometer measurements influences surface drainage and water film thickness and thereby hydroplaning susceptibility.
- Crash narratives written by investigating officers contain rich contextual information about road conditions and vehicle behavior not captured by coded crash fields.
- Despite their complementary relevance, crash narratives and MPD data are rarely integrated within a unified analytical framework – creating a significant gap in wet-weather safety research.



Figure 1. Hydroplaning phenomenon

Research Question

- Can pavement texture alone explain the occurrence of hydroplaning-related crashes?

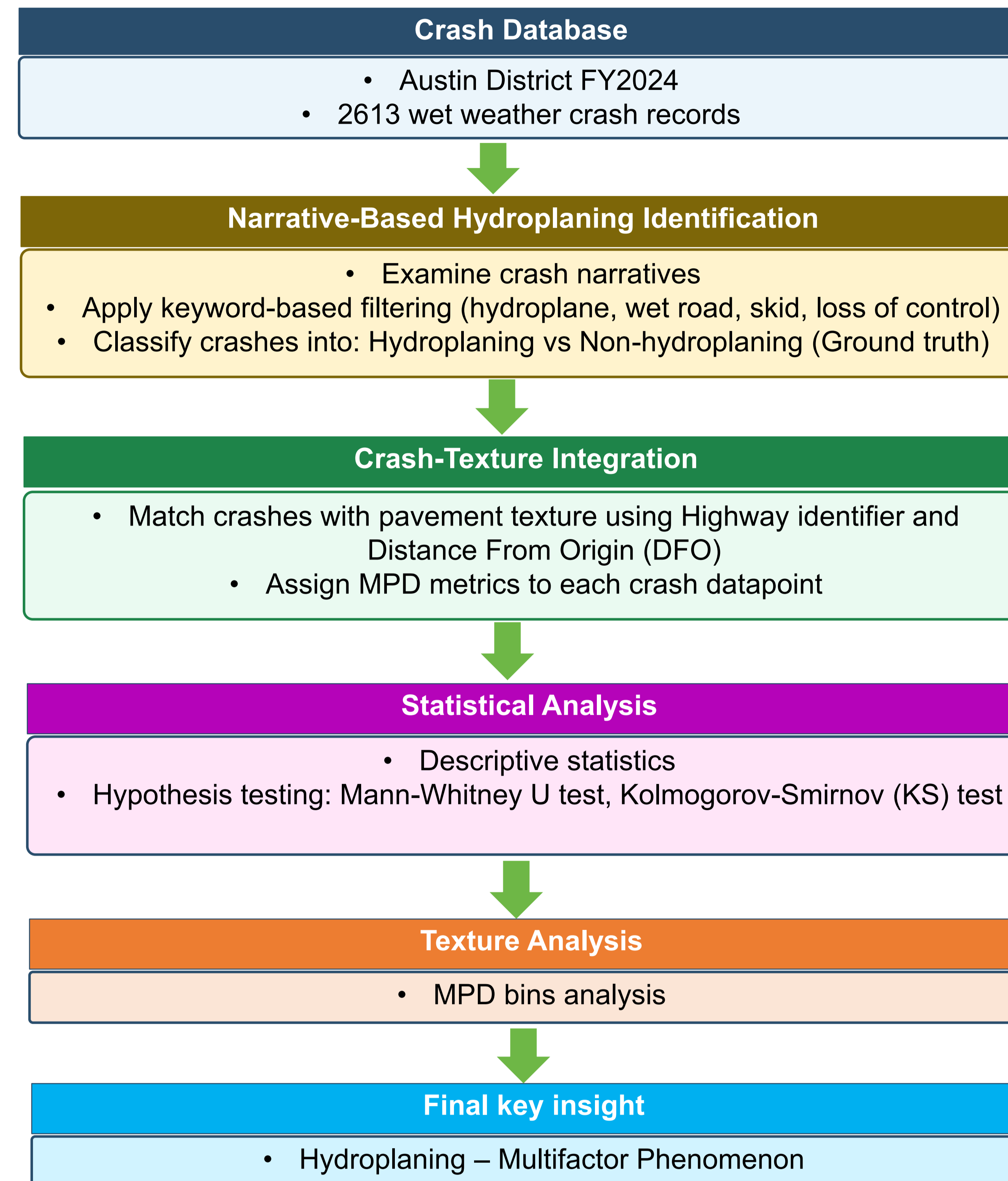
Objectives

- Identify hydroplaning-related crashes using crash narratives through keyword-based filtering of wet-weather crashes.
- Integrate crash records with pavement texture data using highway and DFO-based matching.
- Evaluate the influence of pavement texture on hydroplaning occurrence using statistical testing.
- Demonstrate the importance of integrating crash narratives with texture data for improved interpretation of hydroplaning risk assessment.

Dataset Description

- Data sourced from Texas statewide crash database for Austin District FY2024.
- Crash dataset includes:
 - Investigator narratives, roadway attributes, GPS coordinates, crash severity,
 - Speed limit, functional classification, roadway surface condition, weather condition.
- Texture dataset includes:
 - Average texture – MPD_{Mean}
 - Minimum texture – MPD_{Min}
 - Maximum texture – MPD_{Max}
 - Distribution of texture – MPD_{Dist}

Methodology



Results & Discussion

Narrative-based Hydroplaning Identification

- Hydroplaning crashes: 703, which contribute to 26.9% share of wet weather crashes.
- Non-hydroplaning crashes: 1910, which contribute to 73% share of wet weather crashes.

Mann-Whitney U Test

- Compares MPD values between hydroplaning and non-hydroplaning crashes.
- Evaluates difference in central tendency (median/rank).
- Considered hypothesis:
 - H_0 : MPD values are the same for hydroplaning and non-hydroplaning crashes,
 - H_1 : MPD values are different between the two groups.

Table 1. Mann-Whitney U test results

MPD metric	Hydroplaning	Non-hydroplaning	p - value	Significance
MPD_{Mean}	0.63	0.63	0.89	Not significant
MPD_{Max}	0.87	0.89	0.42	Not significant
MPD_{Min}	0.41	0.42	0.95	Not significant

- Key insight:** At the network-level, MPD is statistically indistinguishable between crash groups – all $p > 0.05$. This suggests that texture alone does not provide insights on hydroplaning occurrence.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) Test

- Non-parametric test comparing entire MPD distributions.
- Evaluates differences in distribution shape, spread, and cumulative behavior.
- Considered hypothesis: H_0 : MPD_{Dist} is the same for both groups, H_1 : MPD_{Dist} is different.

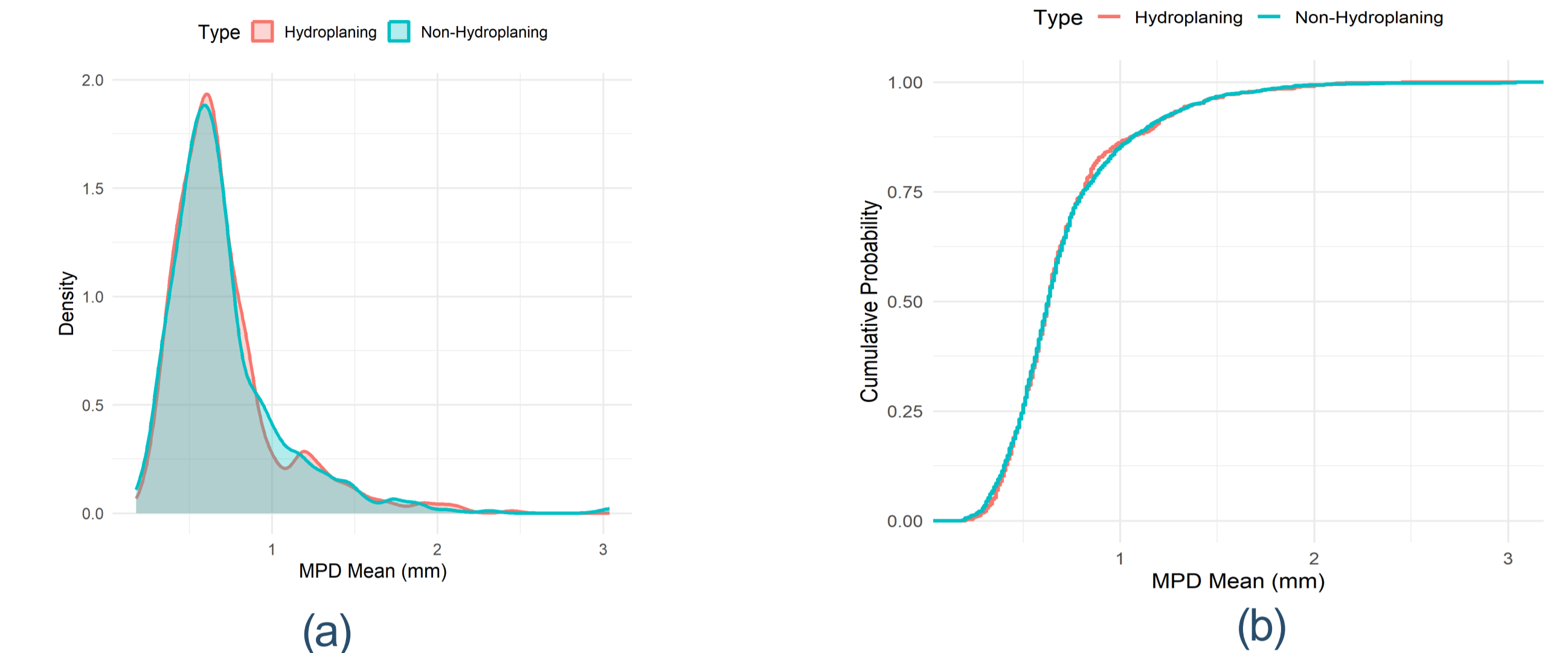


Figure 2. Comparison of MPD Distributions for Hydroplaning and Non-Hydroplaning Crashes: (a) Density Distribution of MPD (b) Empirical Cumulative Distribution Function

- Key insight:** Strong overlap in density and ECDF plots confirms similar MPD distributions for both hydroplaning and non-hydroplaning crashes.

Texture Analysis

- MPD bin analysis was performed to examine hydroplaning distribution across texture ranges.
- Majority of crashes in both groups occur in 0.4-0.79 mm MPD bins.

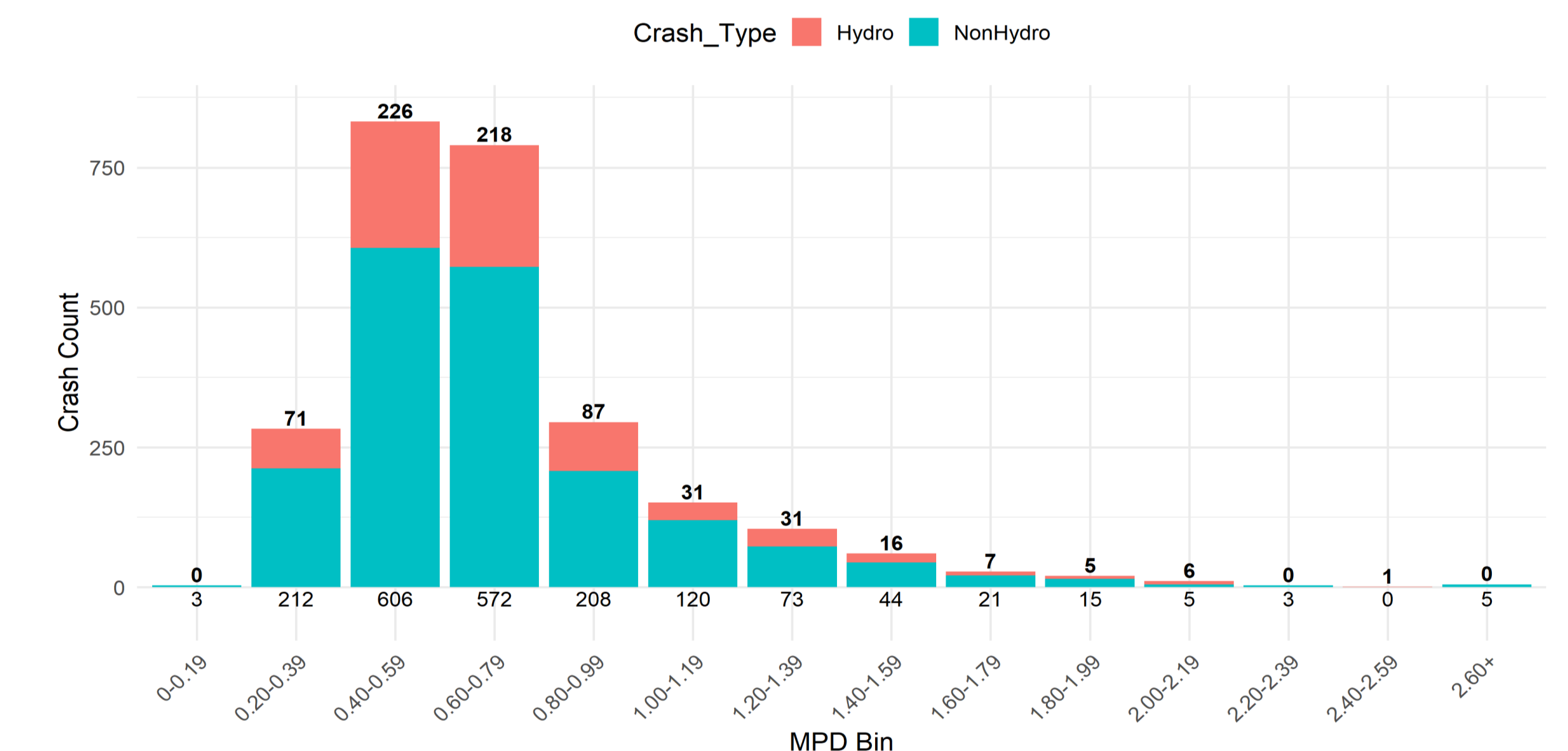


Figure 3. MPD bin analyses for hydro and non-hydro crashes

- Key insight:** Hydroplaning is distributed across all MPD ranges without a distinct texture threshold.

Role of Crash Narratives

- Hydroplaning directly identified using text-based crash narratives.
- Captures both wet surface and loss of control conditions.

- Key insight:** Provides context beyond texture and traditional coded crash variables.

Conclusions

- No statistically significant difference was observed in MPD values or distributions between hydroplaning and non-hydroplaning crashes.
- Hydroplaning crashes remained consistent across texture ranges, with no distinct MPD threshold.
- Statistical analyses results also confirmed strong overlap between hydro and non-hydro groups.

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