

Review of: "Human and Environmental Factors Shape Tree Species Assemblages in West African Tropical Forests"

Shafeeq Ur Rahman¹

¹ Shenzhen University (SZU)

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Abstract

Clarity and Brevity:

- **Comment:** The abstract is dense and could be more concise. Some sentences are complex and could be simplified.
- **Revision:** Simplify sentences to enhance readability. For instance, "Tree data from 66 plots across Nigeria and Cameroon collected between 2002 and 2019 and Generalized Dissimilarity Models (GDMs) were used to assess pairwise beta-diversity" can be revised to "Tree data from 66 plots in Nigeria and Cameroon (collected between 2002 and 2019) were analyzed using Generalized Dissimilarity Models (GDMs) to assess beta-diversity."

Focus on Key Findings:

- **Comment:** The abstract should focus more on the key findings and their implications rather than detailing the methodology.
- **Revision:** Highlight the main findings such as the significant impact of human activities on beta-diversity and the different responses of edible and inedible species.

Introduction

Context and Background:

- **Comment:** The introduction provides a comprehensive background but can be streamlined to maintain focus on the study's objectives.
- **Revision:** Condense the background information and clearly state the study's objectives earlier in the section. For example, start with the significance of studying human impacts on tropical forests and then narrow down to the specific context of the Nigeria-Cameroon region.

Literature Review:

- **Comment:** Some references are repeated, and the literature review could be more organized.
- **Revision:** Group related studies together to provide a coherent narrative. Avoid redundancy by summarizing key points from similar studies collectively.

Hypothesis Statement:

- **Comment:** The hypothesis is somewhat buried in the text.
- **Revision:** Clearly state the hypothesis towards the end of the introduction. For example, "This study hypothesizes that human activities significantly impact the beta-diversity of edible and inedible tree species differently."

Materials and Methods

Study Area Description:

- **Comment:** The description of the study area and plot selection is detailed but could be more concise.
- **Revision:** Summarize the geographic and ecological characteristics of the study area in a few sentences. Move detailed descriptions of plot dimensions and selection criteria to an appendix.

Data Collection and Processing:

- **Comment:** The methodology section is well-detailed but could benefit from subheadings for better organization.
- **Revision:** Use subheadings such as "Data Collection," "Species Categorization," and "Human Influence Measurement" to improve readability. Ensure each subsection is concise and to the point.

Results

Presentation of Findings:

- **Comment:** The results are comprehensive but somewhat difficult to follow due to the dense text.
- **Revision:** Use bullet points or numbered lists to highlight key findings. Include more visual aids like graphs or tables to summarize data.

Clarity and Detail:

- **Comment:** Some results are not clearly linked to the hypotheses stated.
- **Revision:** Explicitly connect the results to the hypotheses. For example, state how the findings support or refute the initial hypotheses.

Discussion

Interpretation of Results:

- **Comment:** The discussion provides good insights but can be more focused on the implications of the findings.
- **Revision:** Emphasize the implications of the results for conservation and forest management. Discuss how the findings relate to existing literature and the broader context of tropical forest ecology.

Limitations and Future Research:

- **Comment:** The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are not sufficiently covered.
- **Revision:** Add a section on the limitations of the study, such as potential biases in data collection or the generalizability of the findings. Suggest specific areas for future research.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings:

- **Comment:** The conclusion should succinctly summarize the key findings and their significance.
- **Revision:** Provide a brief summary of the main findings and their implications for tropical forest conservation. Avoid introducing new information.

Final Remarks:

- **Comment:** The conclusion can end on a stronger note by emphasizing the importance of the research.
- **Revision:** Conclude with a strong statement on the importance of understanding human impacts on forest ecosystems and the need for informed conservation strategies.

Overall

Language and Grammar:

- **Comment:** Ensure that the language is formal and scientific, with correct grammar and punctuation throughout the document.
- **Revision:** Proofread the document for grammatical errors and improve sentence structures for clarity and conciseness.

Figures and Tables:

- **Comment:** Some sections refer to figures and tables that are not present or not clearly linked in the text.
- **Revision:** Ensure all figures and tables are appropriately referenced in the text and add captions that explain their relevance.

By addressing these comments and suggestions, the article will be more concise, coherent, and impactful.

After careful evaluation of the article, I will suggest major revisions. If authors revise the manuscript as per my comments, then this article can be considered for publication in this journal.