Review of: "Ecological diversity, structure and exploitation of rattan stands according to a disturbance gradient around the Nkoltang forest, Estuary province of Gabon"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The reference by Watanabe & Suzuki is of dubious quality, a correlation with n=6 stands is not to be trusted, you should replace it with a more sturdy one. The references by Chabot (1997) and Yembi (2000) are over two decades old. You should look for ones that are more recent or, alternatively, specify that there are no more recent studies on this subject. A map of the distribution of rattan species in Africa and Southeast Asia is highly recommended.

There is a wide range of the “average” rainfall 1800 to 2716! You should give one figure and the time window. The 400 mm of rainfall is referred to two months or monthly.

Your claim that the vegetation is “anthropogenic” is questionable, there are absolutely no native nor endemic species in the area? I. e. all species are introduced?

The first sentence in “Choice of study sites” needs rewording, it is grammatically wrong. In fact, a native English speaker should revise the whole paper. “…regulated by the regulations” is not a good style of wording.

Figures 1-5 should be translated from French to English. I suspect this paper was presented to a French-speaking journal and was rejected. This figure should have a polygon border in order to leave the satellite image viewable for all three levels of disturbance, low disturbance of blocked by the yellow polygon. No reference is made to the satellite image and date.

In the methods section you need to specify how the starting point of the transect was established. You need to specify the DAP of a mature stem. It isn´t clear if there was a minimum DAP for a tree to be measured. In the discussion section you mention this information is lacking. You mention that seedlings were counted but here you should warn the reader about the danger of an erroneous species classification. In this respect, there are several protocols in the literature. I suggest you consider using Rarefaction in order to compare the three disturbance gradients. Since you have a different number of individuals per environment, I see no other way of making comparisons other than Rarefaction. You should specify the number of individuals and the number of stems, this is a serious flaw in you analysis. This also gives room to another measure of ecosystem health, single versus multiple stems per individual.

The largest number of cuts were observed in the “undisturbed” sites which questions this category.

In tables 5-7 “cash” should be replaced by “species”.

In the discussion section, you mention that species richness is similar to another study but no species richness indicators are mentioned.

I do not recommed this paper to be published.