

Interactive comment on “Patterns in Woody Vegetation Structure across African Savannas” by Christoffer R. Axelsson and Niall P. Hanan

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During a group discussion of this paper several points were raised. I shall discuss the issues from the introduction and conclusion sections.

Introduction

1. On line 35 the authors state “climate, both rainfall patterns and temperatures, could change in many parts of Africa” and then the reference. It would benefit the reader if some of these changes, as they are relevant to your research, were stated and the effect that these changes could have on vegetation.

2. The use of words like ‘these’ and ‘those’ should be avoided to remove any ambiguity about the subject of the statement.

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3. The end sentence in the second introduction paragraph (beginning line 51) could be improved to reduce vagueness; how do we learn about the impacts of the underlying ecosystem processes?
4. Aggregation is discussed a lot but there is relatively little introduction to it. The relationship between woody plants and aggregation should be given some context.
5. A diagram of the spotted, labyrinthine, or gapped patterns of PVPs would be useful for readers less familiar with PVPs.
6. The last paragraph of the introduction seems out of place, and would be better suited for the methods section. A smaller summary of your work would be appropriate for the introduction, and Figure 1 would definitely be better placed in the method section.
7. It would be better to end the introduction with a research question, or the aim of your experiment. A lack of clear hypotheses made it hard to read the results and judge whether the experiment was successful or not. A clear research question helps the reader know what you are trying to achieve.

Conclusion

1. The conclusion was more of a summary of your results, rather than a rounding up of the issue explored. Ideas for future work could be given, and the importance of the work restated.
2. The phrase “possible difference maker” is a clumsy end to the paper.

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