

Dear editor Jocelyn Lavallee,

We really appreciate you to give us the chance of revision. Many thanks for your comments concerning our manuscript entitled “Soil nutrient contents and stoichiometry within aggregate size classes varied with tea plantation age and soil depth in the southern Guangxi of China” (SOIL-2021-147). We have made the corrections which we hope will meet with your approval. The revised portions are marked in blue ink in the paper. The main corrections and our responds to the comments are as follows.

I appreciate the effort you have put into addressing the reviewer comments and editing the manuscript. I believe this manuscript to be very nearly acceptable for publication, but have some editorial suggestions to improve the readability of this manuscript prior to publication. There are one or two places which require additional details or conceptual changes, which I have also included below.

Response: Thank you so much for your time and comments.

Line 10: remove “the” before “tea plantation”

Response: Removed (L 10) and elsewhere.

Line 17: replace “when” with “as”

Response: Revised (L 17) and elsewhere.

Line 19: remove “the totally”

Response: Removed (L 19).

Line 21: replace “was beneficial for the significant” with “corresponded with”

Response: Revised (L 21).

Line 23: remove “the” before “Ca²⁺ (as indicated...”

Response: Removed (L 23) and elsewhere.

Line 24: replace “. In the meanwhile, soil acidification” with “, which” (to combine this sentence with the next

Response: Revised (L 24).

Line 34: remove “overmuch”

Response: Removed (L 33).

Line 35: replace “the existing” with “these existing”

Response: Revised (L 34).

Line 38: replace “such” with “this” and “initiated the mode of” with “begun”

Response: Revised (L 36-37).

Line 49: replace “exerts a critical role in recognizing” with “is an invaluable tool for identifying”

Response: Revised (L 47-48).

Line 52: remove "the" before "critical control factors"

Response: Removed (L 50).

Line 55: remove "being"

Response: Removed (L 53).

Line 56: remove "the" before "pivotal"

Response: Removed (L 54).

Line 67: replace "Substantial" with "Several"

Response: Revised (L 65).

Line 68: replace "the increase in" with "increasing"

Response: Revised (L 66) and elsewhere.

Line 69: replace "are discovered" with "have been observed"

Response: Revised (L 67).

Line 70: replace "can be" with "were"

Response: Revised (L 68).

Line 71: replace "the increase in" with "increasing"

Response: Revised (L 69) and elsewhere.

Line 72: replace "is" with "was"

Response: Revised (L 70).

Line 75: replace "displays" with "showed", and "at different soil depths" with "with soil depth", and "as revealed by the" with "in an"

Response: Revised (L 73).

Line 78: replace "unite" with "unit"

Response: Revised (L 76).

Line 82: remove "humified" and replace with a different adjective if necessary which reflects the characteristic of interest. The idea of humification has been discredited. Perhaps something reflecting the size or chemistry of the OM would be more appropriate.

Response: Revised (L 80).

Lines 85-86: remove "Based on the above discussion,"

Response: Removed (L 84).

Line 91: replace "are ended with" with "have shown"

Response: Revised (L 88).

Line 93: replace ". Nevertheless less, some" with "while" (to combine the sentence with the next) and replace "draw the totally" with "observe"

Response: Revised (L 90-91).

Line 94: replace “These demonstrate that” with “Further,”

Response: Revised (L 91).

Line 95: replace “whereas” with “while”

Response: Revised (L 92).

Line 96: replace “rarely” with “less often”

Response: Revised (L 94).

Line 100: replace “deep root” with “deep-rooted”, and “reveal” with “understand”

Response: Revised (L 98).

Line 144: replace “totally” with “a total of”

Response: Revised (L 142).

Line 155: “replace “detected” with “measured” and include details of the method and instrument used to make the measurement.

Response: Revised (L 153) and elsewhere.

Line 170: replace “by the aqua distillate” with “in distilled water”, and “oscillated” with “shaken”

Response: Revised (L 169).

Line 174: replace “weighted” with “weighed”

Response: Revised (L 173).

Line 195: remove “Besides,”

Response: Removed (L 194).

Line 196: rewrite this sentence as: “The difference between analytical replicates was consistently less than 5%.”

Response: Revised (L 194-195).

Line 217: replace “when the” with “as”

Response: Revised (L 216) and elsewhere.

Line 263 and elsewhere: replace “alkali cation” with “alkaline-earth metals”. Alkali metals refer to the first group in the periodic table (“The alkali metals are six chemical elements in Group 1, the leftmost column in the periodic table. They are lithium (Li), sodium (Na), potassium (K), rubidium (Rb), cesium (Cs), and francium (Fr).” - <https://www.britannica.com/science/alkali-metal>)

Response: Thank you so much for your comments. Revised (L 261) and elsewhere.

Line 303: Remove “humification” per Reviewer comments. You can replace with “decomposition”.

Response: Revised (L 302).

Table 2: in the explanation of abbreviations, please revise to: “S: soil depth; T: tea plantation age; A: aggregate size. **, *, and NS indicate differences at $p < 0.01$, $p \leq 0.05$, and $p > 0.05$ (not significant), respectively.

Response: Revised (Table 1).

We believe that we have revised and improved this manuscript to the best of our abilities. In addition, we have made further changes according to the useful and helpful comments you have provided. We sincerely appreciate your time and effort on our behalf, and we truly hope that these corrections will meet with your approval.

Best regards,
Shengqiang