

Peer Review

Review of: "Review, Evolution, and Theoretical Implications of the Utility Concept"

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Comments to Authors on the draft of the article:

Review, Evolution, and Theoretical Implications of the Utility Concept

By

Giacomo Di Foggia, Ugo Arrigo

Thank you for the opportunity to review your work. It reflects an excellent contribution to the literature on the evolution of the concept of utility in economics, with particular attention to forms of utility that cannot be traced exclusively to the material results of choices. It was a pleasure having the opportunity to review this manuscript. I found the article interesting. Based on a sound literature query, the authors employed a bibliometric approach for analysing papers. The Authors describe the results, where they identified a remarkable increase in research, highlighting an emphasis on recent literature after examining the main theoretical approaches, from utility defined as preference to the newer understanding of utility as subjective satisfaction. The Author's contribution focuses on procedural utility derived from how decisions are made, and interactions occur. Authors suggest the following classification of utility understanding: individual, relating to autonomy and self-determination; interpersonal, linked to the quality of social relations; and institutional, connected to participation and recognition. Additionally, the authors discussed the potential for integration between welfare economics and communicative action theory. The mentioned point of view is often neglected but may be seen as central to extending the economic reflection of the well-being of individuals. The authors claim that they describe the results of an analysis using two criteria. First, based on the distinction between chrematistic and hedonic utility, and second, devoted institutionalised contexts of individual actions and intersubjective relationships.

After carefully reviewing this manuscript, I find that some areas need to be addressed before the paper is ready for publication. Please see the areas below for strengthening.

The formulated suggestions are meant to support the further development of the manuscript.

In fact, the text is ready to be published in its current form.

Before forwarding their text to the editor, Authors may decide:

- Make minimal improvements (abstract, conclusions); the text will be ready for publishing but may cause some criticism.*
- Invest some effort and improve the text; the text will be ready for publishing.*
- Invest some more effort in reconstructing indicated issues. The text will be a high-quality publication.*

Some aspects should be improved to avoid misunderstanding and lack of clarity and to enhance the publication's overall quality. Minor modifications include rewriting the abstract; therefore, the introduction and the new version of the conclusions would radically improve the text quality. The Authors are recognised experts on the topic. They should remember that the text is meant not only for equally expert readers.

General thoughts. Strengths.

- 1. Interesting Article. It has the potential for publication. Please find the areas below for strengthening. I have formulated some suggestions for your reference.*
- 2. The study takes up a significant theoretical discussion on crucial socio-economic problems.*
- 3. The article has the character of a report on methodological work based on the conceptual discussion of the literature query results. The originality consists in the expert description of state-of-the-art and creative discussion of new developments described in the latest publications, which seems to be an interestingly selected analysis area. The uniqueness of the approach consists of a comprehensive description of a specific socio-economic problem. The subject matter is so far insufficiently described.*
- 4. The submission contains an interesting study description based on the first-hand literature survey. The topic selection has particular significance, the research design is relatively reasonable, and the conclusions are consistent with common sense.*
- 5. The study's scientific value is based on discussing well-known, conceptual, theoretical, and analytical problems related to the vital socio-economic area. Some methodological contribution is provided.*
- 6. The article does have a correct and complete structure. The text division (headings) is chosen due to (implicit) justification.*
- 7. The Authors provided a review of the newest world literature on the topic.*

8. *The scope is sufficiently described and justified.*
9. *The reviewer makes no reservations about the justification for the choice of topic and scope.*
10. *The language is at an acceptable level. It may (and should) be improved.*

General thoughts. The work contains defects.

1. ***The severe weakness of the text.*** *The goal is NOT specified explicitly enough. Authors should explain why the document was prepared and who should profit from the new knowledge acquired in their investigations. Unfortunately, the Authors fail to specify WHICH TYPE OF BENEFITS and WHAT TYPE OF STAKEHOLDERS. The description of their inquiry results may be of interest or support managerial and policy decisions.*

Authors inform:

1. ***This article reviews the evolution of the concept of utility in economics, with particular attention to forms of utility that cannot be traced exclusively to the material results of choices.***

The review (...) can never be a task (goal). There has to be a reason why the research is necessary. Therefore, reviewing can only be a tool to achieve the ultimate goal. Usually, The Authors propose analytical tools to pursue some

- *theoretical,*
- *cognitive,*
- *methodological,*
- *empirical, or*
- *practical (implemental) goal.*

The Authors did not (explicitly) formulate such tasks.

1. ***The theoretical base for the analysis needs to be further strengthened.***
 1. *The Authors make logical deductions according to general common sense, and scientific rationality is insufficient. It is suggested that the Authors identify the core classical theories involved in the research, strengthen the dialogue with classical theories, and carry out this research under the guidance of classical theories.*
2. ***The Authors provided a review of the newest world literature on the topic. It is not clear which inference results are from the literature query. Which recommendations for the current article come from the***

surveyed literature? It seems desirable that the analytical part of the text should have elements of a generalising style. Authors may try to enrich recommendations.

3. The abstract and introduction should be modified.

1. The research problem and research goals were NOT identified in the work.
2. The selection of the theoretical basis of the research was NOT appropriately described and justified.
3. Therefore, the methods of cited literature selection are not precisely explained.

4. A major weakness of the text lies in its narrow conceptualisation of the term *UTILITY*. The authors refer to the term *HEDONIC* no fewer than sixty-three times, indicating a heavily pleasure-centred interpretation of utility. Unfortunately, they completely overlook the closely related concept of *EUDAIMONIC* utility, which plays a central role in more recent theories of well-being. It is also surprising that, despite its significance as a broader and more balanced framework for understanding utility in both psychological and philosophical contexts, the term *WELL-BEING* appears only once in the whole text of the submission.

5. Authors should try to distinguish which statements are the authors' opinion, the literature knowledge, and the outcome of the analysis. The used literature references are (almost exclusively) referred to in such a manner that it is unclear why the publication is cited. Usually, there are no details on whether the individual mentioned by the Authors supports the Authors' theses and findings. Authors should precisely specify which references support their position and why, which oppose their conclusions and why. There is no generalisation effort in the literature review. Authors should reformulate the text of the literature review. Instead of being purely reporting and descriptive, the text's style needs to be analytical, with generalising indications.

6. The severe weakness of the text. In the part entitled *CONCLUSIONS*, the conclusions are NOT included. It is merely a description of the submission text. The Authors repeated analogous illustrations from the introductory parts of the article.

The formulation of conclusions should contain elements that are anchored in research findings. They should be based on analytical statements describing the *MERIT TOPIC* analysis results.

DETAILED REMARKS

1. The abstract should be modified. The abstract should contain parts:

1. Purpose of the publication; *GOAL*;
2. Literature review (state of the art) indication;
3. Design/methodology/approach indication;
4. Main findings;

5. Conclusions. Summary of results, research implications, and limitations; the policy recommendations;
6. Keywords;
7. The alternative structure may include Background/Aim; Methods; Results; Research implications; and Originality.

The abstract's requirements and structure are formulated in the journal template for the authors. Authors should refer there.

1. Unclear statements

1. Figure 3. It is unclear how the influence is defined. Utility type U6 probably covers almost a hundred per cent of situations in the era of consumerism.

2. The personification of inanimate phenomena

1. This paper proposes an analysis (...). The paper is a research results dissemination tool that cannot propose. People can propose. The sentence should be modified, e.g.

We (The Authors) will propose (...).

1. And many other formulations of such type.

2. The references.

1. The referenced literature is relatively old.
2. The newest publication appeared in 2023;
3. The oldest was published in 1951;
4. The median of the publication years is 2010,5
5. The arithmetic mean of the publication years is 2005,5
6. The modal year of publication is 2006

3. The language.

1. The tool Grammarly indicates over three hundred issues with the language quality. It should be checked and addressed.
4. The Authors did not formulate Conclusions that are anchored in the research results. The text of the part contains NO conclusions. The text should be added with elements that are anchored in research findings.

The text should contain analytical statements describing the MERIT TOPIC. Further research recommendations should (might) be included.

1. The possible solution for the Conclusions part is dividing it into three parts:

1. *Conclusions resulting from the STATE OF ART analysis,*
2. *Findings resulting from own research, but only from the study described in the current text,*
3. *Policy implications,*
4. *Further research directions.*
5. *Conclusions should be fully anchored in the methodological proposals and analysis results drawn from the empirical material. The last part should be formulated based on the GOAL formulation, i.e.*
 1. *WHY the findings are essential;*
 2. *for WHOM and*
 3. *WHAT FOR; for which use type or which kind of utilisation.*

Statements may be complemented with information on

1. *HOW the results were obtained and*
2. *HOW the results may be implemented and by WHOM.*

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.