



Exploring the intersection of utilitarianism and sustainability in business: A conceptual analysis

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Abstract: *Purpose:* This research aims to elucidate the benefits commercial entities strive to accrue by implementing sustainability practices, using a conceptual analysis framework to probe into the anticipated benefits underpinning sustainability adoption. *Methodology:* The study employs a comprehensive literature review to define and establish a framework for utilitarianism and sustainability, focusing on their relationship and implications within the business context. *Results:* The research findings indicate that sustainability practices can considerably augment the utilitarian objectives of businesses. Energy efficiency initiatives, for instance, can enhance profitability by curtailing energy costs and simultaneously alleviating environmental impacts. Social responsibility endeavours can amplify brand value, solidifying customer loyalty. Elevated employee satisfaction and engagement can foster heightened productivity and competitiveness. *Theoretical contribution:* This study contributes to the existing body of literature by critically examining the definitions of critical terms and interrogating the ontological validity of the assumed linkage between sustainability initiatives and the anticipated benefits. It also offers a framework illustrating how businesses might integrate the principles of sustainability and utilitarianism, setting a foundation for further exploration of this theme. *Practical implications:* The research provides valuable insights for businesses seeking to harmonize their activities with environmental, social, and economic impacts in the pursuit of sustainability, while simultaneously aiming to maximize benefits. It underscores the importance of maintaining a delicate equilibrium between sustainability and utilitarianism, as the incorporation of sustainability principles can assist



businesses in achieving their profit and benefit creation objectives, thereby fortifying their prospects for enduring success.

Keywords: sustainability, utilitarianism, environmental sustainability, environmental ethics

1. Introduction

The confluence of sustainability and utilitarianism plays a pivotal role in shaping the decision-making framework within businesses. As they endeavour to harmonize their activities with environmental, social, and economic impacts in the pursuit of sustainability, businesses simultaneously aim to maximize benefits, as Schaltegger and Burritt (2005) indicated.

Defining sustainability necessitates understanding it as a multidimensional construct. From an environmental standpoint, sustainability translates into efficient utilization of resources, protection of natural life, and reduction in carbon emissions. Concurrently, social sustainability encapsulates efforts to enhance employee and societal well-being, advocate for human rights, and address social inequalities. Furthermore, economic sustainability underscores the sustainable attainment of profitability and long-term growth aspirations (Mumcu & Bakoğlu, 2022; Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers, & Steger, 2005).

Contrastingly, utilitarianism extols the profit-driven modus operandi of businesses, with an underlying objective of value creation for stakeholders. Within this framework, businesses strive to extend benefits to a diverse stakeholder base, including shareholders, employees, suppliers, customers, and society (Parmar et al., 2010). This philosophy encompasses goals oriented towards profit maximization, productivity enhancement, and market share expansion (Frost, 1998).

Establishing a harmonious relationship between sustainability and utilitarianism is a balancing act that is pivotal for the long-term prosperity of businesses. Businesses must mitigate their operations' environmental and social repercussions while adhering to sustainability principles, even as they remain profit-oriented and focus on generating benefits (Littig & Griebler, 2005).

Sustainability practices can considerably augment the utilitarian objectives of businesses. Energy efficiency initiatives, for instance, can enhance profitability by curtailing energy costs and simultaneously alleviating environmental impacts. Social responsibility endeavours can amplify brand value, solidifying customer loyalty. Elevated employee satisfaction and engagement can foster heightened productivity and competitiveness (Moore, 2010).

Consequently, businesses are tasked with maintaining a delicate equilibrium between sustainability and utilitarianism. The incorporation of sustainability principles can assist businesses in achieving their profit and benefit creation objectives, thereby fortifying their prospects for enduring success. When considered in tandem, sustainability and utilitarianism empower businesses to contribute value to society and themselves.

In this research, the objective is to elucidate the benefits that commercial entities strive to accrue by implementing sustainability practices. Adopting a conceptual analysis framework, this research will probe into the anticipated benefits underpinning sustainability adoption.

2. Literature review

In this part of our study, the concepts of utilitarianism and sustainability are defined using literature sources, and a framework is established pertinent to our research topic.

2.1. Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism, one of the fundamental ethical approaches, asks, "What kind of action should one take for a good and happy life?" It starts with the question and takes the benefit as the measure that determines the value of the actions (Good, 2011). According to utilitarianism, an action is not good or bad in itself; good or evil depends on the consequences of the action. If an action is beneficial in the end, that action is considered good (Trevino & Nelson, 2014). That is, an action is acceptable if it is beneficial in the end, even if it has some negative aspects. For example, not telling the truth not to demotivate an employee or improve a patient's psychology is acceptable when the resulting benefit outweighs the harm. However, this result-focused utilitarian approach has been criticized for tolerating or encouraging unethical actions and attitudes (Aslan, 2013).

Utilitarianism can also be defined as a moral theory based on increasing happiness and reducing unhappiness. According to utilitarianism, an act is incorrect because situations such as lying

or telling the truth have conflicting moral rules. Lying often has negative consequences, and empirical studies that justify lying go against the moral rule (West, 2003).

Utilitarianism has been the most powerful and pervasive approach to economic development since the marginalist revolution. Utilitarianism was developed in the 18th century and began to be fully expressed in the 19th century. Regardless of the Christian Church or any other religion, it was built entirely based on secular and rational thought. Considering and relying on the legal system, it was founded on one consistent and rational principle: the principle of utility. For this reason, it can be thought that utilitarianism is used in the constitution, civil rules, criminal law, and all kinds of economic and social decision policies. Economics has promoted some essential aspects of utilitarianism since the 18th century. In particular, welfare economics, and therefore almost every public policy proposal, is formulated by economists by being influenced by utilitarianism (Faccarello & Kurz, 2018).

The importance of emotions in the process became apparent when Bentham first put forward the theory of utilitarianism. Bentham looked at utilitarianism as the sum of positive and negative emotions and devoted a significant part of his scholarly treatise on utilitarianism to discussing determinants and the nature of emotions. Later, when neoclassical economists developed a new approach based on utility, utilitarianism became more realistic by trying to move away from emotional content. This process has resulted in the developing of approaches such as ordinal utility and preference theory (Loewenstein, 2000).

2.1.1. Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism

Bentham, Mill, and Sidgwick have introduced meaningful rationality rules. They argue that people should maximize their utility. They state that positive benefits give pleasure, while negative ones cause pain (Salovey, Peter & Mayer, 1990).

The principle of rationality is an essential principle that neoclassical economics borrows from classical economics. According to this principle, people act rationally in their pain and pleasure, measure the utility of different goods, and adjust their future needs. This perspective, in a way, stems from Bentham's utilitarian philosophy (Küçükkalay, 2010).

Jeremy Bentham was influenced by Hobbes' explanations of human nature and community utility. Bentham claims that people are driven by pleasure and pain: People seek pleasure and avoid pain. According to him, actions are approved when they contribute to happiness or pleasure and reject when they cause unhappiness or pain. For Bentham, happiness is part of enjoying. However, Bentham states that utility expresses human motivation and the criterion of right and wrong (Jacko, 2020).

Although Bentham made the mistake of specifying a precise measurement method, he did offer some implied ideas known as "hedonic computation". Bentham says that the utility estimation is based on the components of an individual's happiness in pleasure and pain, which are further divided into 6 dimensions. These dimensions are: 1. Intensity of pleasure and pain, 2. Continuity, 3. Probability of occurrence, 4. Proximity or distance, 5. Efficiency, 6. Purity. According to Bentham, the value of all pleasures and pains is added up, and they are in balance. If the balance is on the pleasure side, considered behaviour increases individual happiness; however, if the balance is on the side of pain, the thought behaviour increases individual pain (Bentham, 2013).

In a more contemporary interpretation, Bentham's utility is cardinal and considered a unique measurement theory, emphasizing that transformations should be harmonized between people, facilitating interpersonal comparability and aggregation (Hirschauer, Lehberger, & Musshoff, 2015). However, Bentham's utilitarian view was eventually rejected in favour of formal definitions of utility for reasons such as structural explanations of rationality and rational choice theory. The most important reason for this abandonment is the assumption that Bentham's utility is immeasurable (Salovey, Peter & Mayer, 1990).

2.1.2. John Stuart Mill and utilitarianism

Perfectionist intuitions influenced John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism and also responded to criticism of Bentham's theory. Mill realizes that not all pleasures are of equal value among other understandings and expresses this in a famous passage (Faccarello & Kurz, 2018). "It is better for a pig to be satisfied than a man to be dissatisfied; it is better for a fool to be satisfied than an unsatisfied Socrates. If pigs and fools think otherwise, it is simply from their own point of view" (Brink, 1992).

Mill's utilitarianism distinguishes between high moral and aesthetic considerations and animal pleasures. The proof of Mill's ranking principle is based on the fact that a person who has experienced both types of pleasure knows which is more valuable. The details of distinguishing the

different sources of pleasure have led some writers to reject Mill's view. To distinguish between two different types of pleasure, we need to assume some value other than utility, such as that some particular behaviours are inherently good rather than their actual consequences (Faccarello & Kurz, 2018).

Mill claims that there is a great deal of inner good. This is inconsistent with the simple hedonist claim that the inner good is a homogeneous mental or emotional state. Likewise, it is incompatible with preference hedonism because preference hedonism claims that there is only one inner good, pleasure; that is, the hedonist of choice thinks that all pleasures are homogeneous and mental states are pleasures that arise due to their functional role. Therefore, the claim that there are many intrinsic goods, at least in preference hedonism, is misleading. However, preference hedonists may think that perhaps qualitatively different preferences and tastes have different qualities or feelings. If so, good and pleasure are complex concepts and involve different elements (Brink, 1992).

Mill revised Bentham's quantitative pleasure and pain analysis, adding a qualitative dimension. Mill's attempt differs from the style of Bentham's writing. Bentham created polemics by attacking moral ideas and appealing to moral sentiments. Mill, on the other hand, also refuses to appeal to any moral sentiments. However, it must be said that Mill is a reformer like Bentham. Mill revised Bentham's views by softening and broadening them but never abandoned him (West, 2003).

2.2. Contemporary utilitarianism

Bentham and Mill, who advocate preference-based utilitarianism, accept that what is suitable for people is not the absence of pleasure and pain but the happiness resulting from the satisfaction of wants, needs, and desires. In this context, people are happy when they get what they want and fulfil their desires; that is when they realize their individual preferences. Realizing as many of the wishes of the most significant number of people as possible makes it possible to achieve the greatest happiness (Mazor, 2014). It is emphasized that the views defended under the name of preference-based utilitarianism, by defining the benefit with a concept other than pleasure and pain, ensure that the benefit is based on an objective criterion and that it is more appropriate to consider the human in a multidimensional way (Abboud, 2006).

Defending one of the contemporary interpretations of utilitarianism, Singer is considered among the most influential utilitarian philosophers, and his views are called preference-based utilitarianism (Hessler, 2000). It is seen that the utilitarian views advocated by Singer are frequently included in contemporary ethical debates, especially in the field of applied ethics, and have been subjected to many criticisms (Heper, 2012).

In ethical theory, while determining utility as the criterion of right action, it is based on classical utilitarianism; however, when interpreting utility, it is based on people's preferences as a concept that includes people's wishes, needs and desires instead of pleasure and pain (Dent, 1982).

3.1. Sustainability

Sustainability, a term expressing continuity in economic and environmental contexts, continues to evolve in response to current developments while maintaining its relevance. This broad concept, encompassing aspects from organism survival to business activity continuity, holds significant importance within the realm of business and economic sciences, particularly regarding the maintenance of business viability and profitability (Günel, Ufacık & Aşkun, 2020).

Due to factors such as growth targets, company structure alterations, and consumer expectation shifts, the concept of sustainability has broadened to include social and environmental dimensions (Simpson & Radford, 2012). The expanding scope of sustainability centres around three pillars: economic development, social development, and environmental protection (Kuşat, 2012). Various definitions of sustainability, gleaned from the literature, are presented in Table 1 to illuminate these aspects.

Table 1: Definitions of sustainability

Author Name	Definition
Soubbotina and Sheram, 2000	Sustainability is the ability to have similar conditions regarding the potential to meet the rights and needs of different parties.
Manderson, 2006	In general terms, sustainability is the ability to continue to exist.
Wolff, 2008	Sustainability is a dynamic and flexible synergy across different sciences and subjects for integrating, transforming and developing science, education, arts and practices.
Yanik and Turker, 2012	Sustainability is an efficient allocation of resources over time and a fair distribution of resources and opportunities both among the present generation and between the present and future generations.
Saltaji, 2013	Sustainability means leaving natural resources for future generations, using and protecting natural resources minimally, not harming other users while using natural resources, and ensuring environmental and economic harmony.
Kayahan, 2014	Sustainability is the consideration of the social and environmental impacts of business activities as well as their economic dimensions.
Kahle and Gurel-Atay, 2015	Sustainability can be defined as maintaining the continuity of production indefinitely by replacing resources replaced by resources of equal or more excellent value without disrupting or endangering natural biotic systems.
Estupiñán and Alvarez, 2016	Sustainability is both an analytical theory and a normative or ethical framework.
Chapin, Torn and Tateno, 2017	Sustainability is ecology and the ability of ecological systems to maintain their functions, processes and productivity in the future.
Etzion, 2018	Sustainability is all the goals that organizations such as companies, non-profits, and government agencies try to achieve, such as survival, financial gain, and social impact.
Raabe, Tasan and Olivetti, 2019	Sustainability means reducing the environmental footprint of manufacturing and manufacturing.
Gedik, 2020	Sustainability is economic development based on using resources without depletion, which can be modified or renewed by considering the environmental consequences of economic activities.
Van Wynsberghe, 2021	Sustainability is studied within the scope of environmental issues, policies related to environmental management, and social concerns about industrial and agricultural production and economic concerns.
Ozili, 2022	Practice that guides the efficient use of today's resources to ensure that resources are available and sufficient to meet the needs of the present and the needs of future generations.
Chandrakant and Rajesh, 2023	Sustainability is examined in three dimensions: environmental, social and economic, based on protecting the resources of the future today. In this context, sustainability can be achieved by continuously improving the value-added process in the organizational process. Thus, it is clear that sustainable performance is a combination of environmental, social and economic factors.

Source: Compiled by the author.

Drawing from these definitions, sustainability implies that organizations, while addressing current needs, should maintain profitability and fulfil their roles without exhausting resources needed by future generations. The intention is to utilize resources responsibly and sufficiently to meet stakeholder needs.

Sustainability, recognized by international organizations, is typically discussed in three dimensions within the literature: environmental, economic, and social. This threefold classification was initially proposed by Elkington and mirrored in the Brundtland Report's definition of sustainability (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019). These classifications will form the basis for a more detailed discussion of sustainability in the following sections.

3.2. Environmental sustainability

The three dimensions of sustainability, or the triple snow house (Elkington, 1998), were first defined at the international level in the report *Our Common Future*, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sponsored by the United Nations, in 1987 (Koçak and Balci, 2010).

The overall report consists of environmental problems that threaten the world and what needs to be done at the national and international levels to solve these problems. In addition, in the report, environmental sustainability has been defined as the development that meets the needs of

the present and takes place without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Telfer, 2012). The reason for this is that any negative environmental impact can permanently threaten all living things' lives (Koçak and Balci, 2010).

The concept of sustainability and the natural environment protection was later defined at the European Union (EU) level with the Maastricht Agreement in 1992 comprehensively over four main articles (European Union, 2021). These items are presented in the table below:

Table 2: Articles of the Maastricht Agreement.

No.	Explanation
1	To improve and protect environmental quality
2	Protect human health
3	Ensuring the careful and rational use of natural resources
4	To address and evaluate all regional or global environmental problems internationally.

Source: EU Treaty, 1992,

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html#0001000001>, (Accessed 14.12.2022)

In the table above, it is seen that the environmental sustainability items defined by the UN are pretty general and superficial. Different definitions have been made in the literature. The research defines environmental sustainability as minimizing waste and harmful emissions in enterprises' facility planning and production processes, making efficient use of natural resources, and ensuring their transferability to future generations (Mazurkiewicz, 2004). In addition, environmental sustainability has been defined as not destroying the chance for future generations to benefit from these resources while consuming existing resources (Çakar, 2007). Dyllick and Hockerts define environmental sustainability as the environmental impacts of companies' activities and divide them into natural resources (fossil fuels, biodiversity, soil quality) and natural capital (climate stabilization, water treatment, soil improvement, plant and animal reproduction). In the study of Vezzoli and Manzini, environmental sustainability is expressed as the systematic conditions created at the planetary or regional level without disturbing the activities of humans, the cycle of nature and the balance existing within the planet, and without diminishing the natural diversity that we have to share with future generations (Vezzoli et al., 2018). In the study of Birer and Dikmen, it is seen that the definition of environmental sustainability includes the protection of the natural environment and the historical and cultural environment as well as providing the best living conditions (Birer, Dikmen, & Yiğit, 2010).

The environmental sustainability items discussed in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (Dow Jones, 2021), an international index, and the GRI Reporting Standards within the UN were examined. These items are presented in the table below:

Table 3: Dow Jones Sustainability Index-GRI List of Environmental Sustainability Items

No.	Dow Jones Sustainability	GRI
1	Biodiversity	Biodiversity
2	Business risks and opportunities	Products and services, Materials
3	Electricity generation	Energy
4	Environmental policy and management systems	Environmental grievance mechanisms
5	Environmental reporting	Emissions/Waste water and waste
6	Transmission and distribution	Environmental assessment of suppliers
7	Water-related risks	Water
8	Access to drugs or harmful products	Access to drugs or harmful products
9	Operational ecoefficiency	General
10	Developing and retaining talent	-
11	Climate strategy	-

Source: Dow Jones Sustainability Index, <http://www.sustainability-indices.com/sustainability-assessment/corporate-sustainability.jsp> (Accessed 30.05.2023), Global Reporting Initiative, <https://www.globalreporting.org/information/g4/Pages/default.aspx>, (Accessed 30.05.2023)

As can be seen from the table, in the scope of environmental sustainability, besides traditional approaches such as waste management and consumption of natural resources such as water and electricity, there are expectations such as energy production, utilization of environmental opportunities and implementing projects on a larger scale. These expectations form the framework of environmental sustainability (Mumcu, A. Y., & Ufacık, O. E., 2016).

Environmental sustainability is addressed within a framework established by international organizations and indices. This framework starts with minimizing the damage caused by enterprises to the environment and nature through energy consumption, clean water and waste management,

biodiversity protection, and carbon emission, and includes activities to protect and enrich existing natural resources. In addition, it is observed that the definition of environmental sustainability is expanding daily, and accordingly, the responsibility of the enterprises is increasing.

3.3. Economic sustainability

When economic sustainability is examined in the context of Social and International development, it is seen that regulatory principles come to the fore to protect the limited resources necessary to meet the needs of future generations. This process aims to satisfy human needs without disrupting the integrity, stability, and beauty of natural biotic systems (Shaker, 2015).

Economic sustainability means companies have sufficient cash flow to provide liquidity while providing an average or above return for their shareholders (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017). In addition, economic sustainability includes properly managing intangible capital such as inventions, knowledge, customers, and tangible capital. It also requires identifying various strategies to use available resources best. Thus, it is ensured that these resources are used both efficiently and with long-term benefits (Pandit, 2012). Economic sustainability also refers to the increase in wealth. When evaluating economic sustainability, it is concluded that income and profit are determinative using criteria such as GDP and GNP (Anand and Sen, 2017).

3.4. Social sustainability

Social sustainability represents the most critical dimension of sustainability in transformation and renewal projects. This concept concerns how societies act by considering the physical boundaries of the place they are in to achieve the goals they have set for themselves, their respect for future generations, and their relations with each other. It also includes today's highlights, such as participation, social capital, economy, environment and quality of life (Colantonio, Dison, Couch, Fraser and Percy, 2008).

There are many studies and definitions in the literature on social sustainability. According to Littig and Griebl, social sustainability includes focusing on social justice and stakeholders at all levels by improving the quality of human life (Littig and Grießler, 2005). On the other hand, Partridge defines social sustainability as the fulfilment of people's social and cultural needs in an environmentally sustainable and healthy way (Partridge, 2005). Dyllick and Hockerts define social sustainability as studies that aim to increase human capital and develop social capital in the environment in which businesses operate. They also argue that social capital should be managed to understand stakeholders' expectations. Finally, Colantonio and Dixon define social sustainability as demographic change, education and skills, occupational health and safety, housing and environmental health, belonging and culture, participation, empowerment and access, social capital, social cohesion, well-being, happiness and quality of life. They have created a framework covering the titles (Colantonio et al., 2008).

4. Environmental ethics

Environmental ethics emerges as a sub-branch of ethics and deals with the ethical responsibilities of people towards the natural environment. This field of study aims to answer questions about values, such as whether the assets in nature have a value beyond meeting human needs, if there is a value gradation between these assets or wholes, and what people should be responsible towards these assets (Tepe, 1999).

Various approaches have been developed in the field of environmental ethics. The expected points of these approaches are that they emphasize the moral dimension of the human-nature relationship and argue that people should develop a sense of responsibility towards natural beings and nature (Keleş, Metin, & Sancak, 2005). In addition, unlike traditional ethics, environmental ethics includes those that exist today and those that will exist in the future in the field of moral interest (Çobanoğlu N, 2012).

When reviewing the content of environmental ethics, one finds that the term "environment" is primarily used to encompass natural elements such as animals, plants, and habitats (Ünder, 1996). In other words, environmental ethics addresses the ethical dimensions of our relationships with the natural environment but only encompasses a portion of the broader concept of 'environment.'

5. Result and discussion

The relationship between utilitarianism and sustainability constitutes a domain of philosophical and ethical deliberation. Reflecting on the discussions presented in this section, it becomes apparent that utilitarianism and sustainability have predominantly been examined in isolation, rendering their correlation somewhat restricted. Nevertheless, it is posited that there exist junctures at which utilitarianism and environmental concerns can be subjected to comparative scrutiny. Based on the findings of this research.

Utilitarianism is an approach that focuses on the consequences of actions and aims to provide the most benefit. In this context, when it is associated with the concept of environmental sustainability, it is stated that current activities should be carried out to prevent the deterioration and pollution of resources from transferring the environment and natural resources to future generations. In other words, environmental protection and sustainability can be considered essential goals within utilitarianism.

Bentham's utilitarian theory emphasizes that people's desire to maximize utility can positively affect environmental sustainability. For example, it has been stated that sacrifices such as protecting the environment and leaving a clean environment by thinking about future generations contribute to individual and social benefits (Wijayanti et al., 2023). In this case, environmental sustainability studies can be supported in line with the principle of utilitarianism, and it can be aimed at leaving a better environment for future generations.

John Stuart Mill's classification of pleasures highlights the connection between utilitarianism and sustainability. According to Mill, creating and preserving a clean environment can yield greater happiness and pleasure than economic or technological benefits (Stack, 2023). From this perspective, individuals and societies might derive more happiness from residing in a clean environment than from economic gains.

However, it is crucial to note that utilitarianism is not without its critiques. Practical difficulties, such as measurement issues and the challenge of quantifying 'good,' complicate the utilitarian approach. The comparison and measurement of pleasure, happiness, and benefits may give rise to uncertainties and evaluative difficulties. Additionally, the inherent result-orientation of utilitarianism, which reduces moral distinctions to context-specific evaluations, invites criticism. The criticisms faced by utilitarianism are as old and challenging as history, although Utilitarian reasoning is particularly practical in guiding the economy, public policy, and state intervention (Ağbuğa, 2016).

One of these criticisms is called "measuring problems". Utilitarianism involves a process of measurement and evaluation based on the principle of "maximizing the general good" and "the greatest good for the most people". However, problems arise when we try to quantify something qualitatively. If utilitarianism deals with things like pleasure, happiness, and desire, these things are somewhat difficult to compare: Are all pleasures and desires the same in quality? Are all tastes equal? For example, is the pleasure I get from breathing fresh air equal to the pleasure I get from smoking? If they are not equal, how do we measure them? (Masor, 2014). Another objection is that because of the difficulty of quantifying the "good", something measurable should be substituted for the good. For example, how do we measure and evaluate health problems to be socially healthy? Mortality rates? Is it life expectancy? Health expenditures per capita? These elements can give us an idea but are not enough to describe the full picture. Another criticism is that utilitarianism constantly evaluates right and wrong by reducing them to context. No action is right or wrong on its own. An action can be considered ethically good, even if the consequences are generally bad. For example, when someone is wronged, it may turn out to be good for that person. Critics argue that ethical rules should not be violated even if the result is not bad.

The basic philosophy of utilitarianism is that the characterization of actions as "good" or "right" is determined by the benefit they provide as a result of that action (Bergström, L., 1971). When we consider this situation within the framework of environmental sustainability, we can say that transferring the environment and natural resources to future generations is to prevent the deterioration and pollution of these resources during our current activities.

Within the utilitarian paradigm, wherein outcomes hold substantial importance, maximizing benefits emerges as a critical element. The long-term realization of this benefit fundamentalizes the approach (Lin, Y., Li, Y., & Hou, X., 2015). However, the indeterminacy surrounding the definition of 'benefit' opens the floor for diverse interpretations. In this scenario, an inclination towards an environmental ethics approach becomes evident, underpinned by the belief that the most utilitarian outcome corresponds with the longest-lasting impact. Thus, in this context, the principle of judiciously utilizing today's resources without jeopardizing prospects can be endorsed within the utilitarian framework.

The utilitarian principles articulated by Bentham, which involve individuals striving to maximize their benefits and derive pleasure from positive contributions, can be perceived as

positively influencing environmental sustainability. Consider, for instance, significant responsibilities humans willingly undertake, despite no obligatory pressure, such as procreation, nurturing, and educating future generations. These responsibilities are often sources of deep-seated emotional gratification and individual happiness. Similarly, sacrifices made to preserve an ecological environment for our progeny can be seen as contributing significantly to long-term happiness. This alignment of personal joy with actions of ecological preservation can be characterized as environmental sustainability.

When considering the nature of emotions in Bentham's utilitarianism, we can see that we can create both individual and social benefits by protecting our environment and nature. Of course, economic and economic limitations appear as significant obstacles in this regard. Environmental sustainability studies, such as reducing enterprises' environmental waste and using new technologies for efficient raw material use, create new and high costs. However, environmental sustainability awareness is increasing worldwide every day, and businesses are turning to these studies for various purposes, such as marketing, fear of public opinion, or an idealistic approach.

Also, John Stuart with Mill's classification of pleasures and the view that each pleasure will bring more or less happiness than the other, it is both individually and socially accepted and desired to live in a clean and ecological environment by sacrificing products or technologies that provide economic benefits, and to leave a clean environment for future generations. We can see that there is an approach. Mill's approach to the classification of pleasures concludes that creating and preserving a clean environment will provide more pleasure than economic or technological benefit. Even businesses carry out environmental sustainability studies by making economic sacrifices and trying to meet the expectations and needs of society in this direction. The shortcomings and inadequacies of these studies are indisputable, but this intention must be increased day by day, even for different purposes, in recent years.

6. Conclusion and suggestion

This research offers a valuable conceptual examination of the correlation between sustainability and utilitarianism in business. However, it bears certain limitations that must be considered to understand the findings comprehensively. First, the literature scope is bound by the timeline up to the publication of this study; hence, recent advancements in the field are omitted. Second, the lack of empirical evidence or case studies limits the applicability of the theoretical findings to real-world scenarios. Third, the study doesn't address industry-specific implications of implementing sustainability and utilitarianism principles, meaning different sectors might encounter unique challenges or opportunities that aren't explored here. Fourth, cultural and geographical differences, which could significantly influence the application and impact of these principles, are not considered. Fifth, the study refrains from predicting the future trajectory of the relationship between sustainability and utilitarianism, which limits its prospective analysis. Lastly, the research might be subjected to interpretational biases owing to its reliance on conceptual analysis, potentially impacting the findings' objectivity. These limitations inform the interpretation of this study and offer avenues for future research.

To address the limitations identified in this study, future research should meticulously examine the latest advancements in the field, particularly those that diverge from the existing literature's critical and general perspectives. This will ensure that the research remains relevant and up-to-date. Additionally, researchers should empirically test the theoretical assumptions outlined in the literature to address the limitations of theoretical work and strengthen the connection and validation between theoretical and empirical studies. Incorporating regional cultural differences into research either as a component or as the primary focus of the study is crucial to account for the societal variations inherent in utilitarianism theory and their potential impact on investigations into the relationship between utilitarianism and sustainability. Furthermore, researchers should acknowledge that the relationship between utilitarianism and sustainability may vary across different time periods, viewing this not as a limitation but rather as an opportunity for development and comparative analysis across different eras. By implementing these recommendations, future research can overcome the limitations of this study and provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the relationship between utilitarianism and sustainability.

This study also offers a framework illustrating how businesses might integrate the principles of sustainability and utilitarianism, setting a foundation for further exploration of this theme. It has delineated avenues where additional research could yield fruitful insights, thereby illuminating the path forward for future academic endeavours.

Firstly, a more nuanced understanding could be gained by conducting sector-specific research. By examining how businesses across different sectors operationalize the principles of sustainability and utilitarianism, we can ascertain the impact of sectoral characteristics on the adoption and

manifestation of these concepts. Secondly, an area that calls for increased scrutiny is measuring and evaluating the ramifications of sustainability and utilitarianism principles on business performance. Such research could serve as a motivator for businesses contemplating incorporating these principles. Thirdly, research probing the influence of cultural variations on the application of sustainability and utilitarianism principles could offer crucial insights. This will enable a comprehensive understanding of the global applicability of these principles and guide businesses in tailoring their strategies based on cultural contexts. Fourthly, the role of governmental policies and regulations in fostering or impeding the implementation of sustainability and utilitarianism principles demands examination. Such studies could inform policy-making processes, aiding in forming regulations that facilitate the adoption of these principles. Lastly, the relationship between sustainability, utilitarianism, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility warrants further investigation. Delving deeper into this relationship could enhance our understanding of how businesses can leverage these principles to enhance their ethical standing and societal contributions. Engaging in these proposed lines of inquiry can expand our knowledge and strengthen the ties between sustainability, utilitarianism, and business practices.

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