Review 1

It is not clear whether the authors have investigated all the variations of Transformer.

When considering the scope of the paper, which is pedagogical and focused on process transparency, the short answer is yes. This is because we adopted the architecture proposed by Vaswani et al. (arXiv, 2017), which lies at the heart of all Transformer architectures; all others add components to this basic framework. However, in response to the reviewer's request for focus, we have narrowed the scope of our contribution, beginning with the title and abstract, and revising several points in the text. These and all other changes are highlighted in blue.

It is not clear what is the fundamental novelty of the proposal.

This contribution does not represent another improvement to the basic framework, but rather a better understanding of the core mechanisms of fundamental processes within the core structure. To the best of our knowledge, transformers have not previously been described in complete pseudocode, nor have their memory requirements been detailed for each individual parameter to be learnt. Furthermore, even the simplest vanilla time series forecasting architectures available for download include some optimized details, whereas our code is simply the most basic implementation of the architecture proposed in Vaswani et al. (arXiv, 2017). We believe that our contribution is valuable to the research community because it provides an unquestionable baseline against which to validate the results of more elaborate additions. We have tried to make these points clearer in the edited manuscript.

It is not clear whether the authors have made sufficient comparisons with all the variations of Transformer.

In addition to the specifications set out in the above response, we now also provide a computational comparison against the results obtained using two advanced time series forecasting architectures. While it is clear that these are not 'all the variations', they nevertheless allow us to assess the difference in quality between the results obtained using our minimalist code and those at the forefront of the field.

Review 2

The manuscript is primarily pedagogical, aiming at interpretability and transparency. While this is valuable, it does not propose fundamentally new architectures or theoretical insights.

You got correctly the primary objective of the paper, which is about reproducibility, transparency and interpretability. Our contribution does not represent another improvement to the basic framework, but rather a better understanding of the core mechanisms of fundamental processes within the core structure. To the best of our knowledge, transformers have not previously been described in complete pseudocode, nor have their memory requirements been detailed for each individual parameter to be learnt. Furthermore, even the simplest vanilla time series forecasting architectures available for download include some optimized details, whereas our code is simply the most basic implementation of the architecture proposed in Vaswani et al. (arXiv, 2017). We believe that our contribution is valuable to the research community because it provides an unquestionable baseline against which to validate the results of more elaborate additions. We have tried to make these points clearer in the edited manuscript.

Finally, we note that the contributions are in line with the journal's aims and scope, stating: 'The aim of Algorithms is to encourage scientists to publish their experimental and theoretical results'. Our contribution is primarily experimental, with theoretical value as indicated above.

Compared with recent transformer adaptations (Informer, Autoformer, FEDformer, PatchTST), the novelty is limited.

In addition to the discussion set out in the above response, we now also provide a computational comparison against the results obtained using two advanced time series forecasting architectures. This allows us to evaluate the difference in quality between the results obtained using our minimalist code and those at the forefront of the field.

Mathematics in the article is largely a restatement of known transformer operations.

It is our intention to use exactly the mathematics proposed in Vaswani et al. (Arxiv, 2017). We now mention this more explicitly in the text.

The “minimalist” approach does not introduce new theoretical insights.

See the answers above. We hope that the current version of the text makes our position clearer.

1. The title is too generic; the authors must have to modify the title to be specifically linked with the proposed contribution.

We updated the title.

1. The abstract repeatedly uses the pronoun “we” (i.e., “we describe,” “we implement,” “we validate”). I recommend rephrasing these sentences in the passive voice or by referring directly to the work. The same goes for the conclusion, too.

We updated both abstract and conclusions as requested.

1. Clearly articulate the study’s contributions and novelty, supported by key findings/quantitative results for abstract enhancement.

We included more explicit sentences stating the contributions, which are aligned with the above answers. We also significantly expanded the quantitative results that support our claims.

1. Evaluation is limited to univariate series; multivariate testing would provide stronger validation. Could the minimalist approach be extended to multivariate data, which is more realistic in forecasting applications?

We mentioned this possibility in the conclusions.

1. A block diagram of the overall architecture should be included. Adding a visual representation of the transformer-based model will improve clarity and help readers better understand the workflow and component interactions.

We added the diagram as a further figure.

1. Hyperparameter tuning procedures are not sufficiently detailed. Results may depend strongly on initialization, learning rate, and sequence length choices. How robust is the model to missing data, noise, or seasonality beyond simple normalization?

We included a description of how we optimized the hyperparameters. This was achieved using the Optuna package for the transformer and the enhanced grid search built into the autoregressive models. The resilience against unwieldy real-world time series was – and is - exactly one of the objectives of Makridakis contests among which we chose to use the M3 data, and guarantees to be able to cope with seasonal and noisy data as are commonly found in business forecasting. We added a comment to this effect in the text.

1. Statistical validation (Mann-Whitney U-test) is appropriate, but the depth of interpretation is minimal.

We added a further comment besides simply commenting on the significance or not of the tests.

1. Performance differences across domains are reported but not deeply analyzed (e.g., why finance performed better than demographics).

We included a tentative interpretation of the reasons of the observed results.

1. Scalability test is not included for the proposed scheme (e.g., long-horizon forecasts on very large datasets).

We added results obtained on longer, real-world series generated by IoT sensors. We also included a comment stating that In the context of univariate time series forecasting, extending the historical window too far back risks incorporating data generated under structural regimes no longer in effect, while extending the forecast horizon too far ahead is of limited utility, as predictive accuracy inevitably decays with temporal distance. Therefore, longer series exist, but they are of limited interest for our discussion.

1. Discuss the trade-offs between interpretability and accuracy more explicitly.

F - Non sa di cosa parla

1. Include an ablation study showing how much accuracy is lost at each simplification step compared to a standard transformer.

F - Tocca farlo, credo sia semplice

1. It is recommended to enhance Figures 2, 3, 4 & 5 and their font sizes, as these are not properly readable.

F - ok

1. Computational efficiency (training time, memory footprint, scalability) is not analyzed. Since the model is advertised as “minimalist,” these aspects should be emphasized.

F - ok

1. Strengthen the discussion on computational efficiency (training time, parameter count vs. accuracy).

VF - Aggiungo una frase

1. Benchmarking is limited to Random Forest, which is a relatively weak baseline. Comparisons with ARIMA/ETS and recent transformer variants would provide a more meaningful context.

V - ok

1. A few areas for improvement are needed for English. Some sentences are overly long and could be made more concise (e.g., in the Introduction and Methodology). Some redundancy in stating that the architecture is “minimalist” and “transparent” multiple times.

We checked the text, aiming to reduce each sentence to a maximum of two lines and ensuring that no sentence exceeded three lines.

Review 3

1) The parameters adopted in the different experiments are introduced at page 4 “…in the case of the running example we used the following argument values: n = 7, m = 4, k = 2, dk = dv = 2, p = 16” but they are not described. Perhaps a table explaining them and later on a short motivation for their selection in the different cases could help the readers understand how they should select them.  
We now specify in the text that the transformer configuration was obtained by means of the Optuna hyperparameter setting package, except for the autoregressive model which used the built-in pmdarima optimizer.

2) Perhaps adding convolutional neural networks with attention could be interesting to the study. [1]

[1] Temporal Convolutional Attention Neural Networks for Time Series Forecasting Yang Lin, Irena Koprinska, Mashud Rana Code: https://github.com/YangLIN1997/TCAN-IJCNN2021

We also included a computational comparison against the suggested contribution.