

Mindfulness Approach and the Moral Dilemma Between Killing Sentient Beings and Human Survival

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<b>KEYWORDS</b> <i>Animal Rights; Mindfulness approach; Moral Dilemma; Buddhism; Mindfulness Consumption; and Ecological Conservation.</i>	<b>ABSTRACT</b> This paper aims to explore several viewpoints on resolving the ethical quandary between the necessity of murdering conscious creatures and the preservation of human life by incorporating ideas from a mindfulness approach. This paper elucidates how the approach of mindfulness, enhanced by these principles, provides distinct viewpoints on harmonizing the rights and welfare of animals with human demands. In the mindfulness approach of Buddhism. The connectivity of all forms of existence are fully recognized and respected by this approach. This reflects the need for sympathy and understanding towards animals, can be critical for ethical decision-making when confronted with the moral dilemma. The paper suggests that the mindfulness approach helps to resolve this ethical challenge and to promote harmonious coexistence between humans and non-human entities. This paper also clarifies our ethical obligations towards the natural environment and animal welfare, using the perspective of mindfulness approach. This approach brings about awareness, empathy, and mindfulness consumption in our daily lives when dealing with the natural environment and animal well-being.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The ethical conflict between the necessity of taking animal lives and the imperative to safeguard human well-being becomes the moral dilemma. This paper analyses this dilemma from the lens of mindfulness perspectives, particularly drawing on Buddhist principles. Mindfulness, with its focus on the interconnectedness of all living beings, offers a distinctive compassionate approach to harmonizing the rights and welfare of animals with human needs.

In the context of Buddhist mindfulness, recognizing the intrinsic value and connectivity of all forms of life is to cultivate compassion and empathy towards animals, which can profoundly influence ethical decision-making when confronted with life-and-death problems of animals. By incorporating mindfulness principles, this paper presents a framework for understanding the ethical challenges inherent in human-animal interactions.

The proposed approach combines ethical considerations with practical applications, so that we can balance human needs with animal rights. This holistic approach mentions awareness, empathy, and mindful consumption as crucial factors for fostering harmonious and peaceful coexistence between humans and non-human entities.

This exploration process brings about the ongoing discussion regarding our ethical responsibilities toward the environment and animal welfare. It supports a compassionate and balanced approach to human-animal relationships, grounded in mindfulness perspectives. By embracing mindfulness principles, we can cultivate deeper awareness and empathy, leading to more ethical and sustainable practices in their interactions with animals.



This paper aims to demonstrate how mindfulness approach can enhance ethical decision-making processes, offering a pathway to resolving the moral tensions between human necessities and the rights of conscious creatures. This approach underscores the importance of adopting a mindful and empathetic stance in our treatment of animals, promoting a more harmonious and ethical coexistence

In addition to introduction, the paper includes five sections. Section 2 review the literature on existing debates on animal rights and gaps of the previous studies. Section 3 deals with critical analysis of moral dilemmas of killing sentient beings. Section 4 concerns with the mindfulness approach's principles to address this moral dilemma. Section 5 mentions practical applications of mindfulness in addressing this dilemma. Section 6 concludes

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *The debate on animal rights*

The primary principle underlying the modern animal rights movement posits that many non-human beings have inherent interests that warrant recognition, respect, and protection. Advocates maintain that these interests endow animals with both moral and legal rights. Singer contends that actions are morally sound to the extent that they maximize pleasure or minimize pain, with sentience being the pivotal factor (Singer 2003). Thus, humans bear a moral duty to alleviate animal suffering akin to their obligation towards fellow humans. Meanwhile, Regan argues that certain animals possess intrinsic moral rights due to their advanced cognitive faculties, akin to those justifying human rights attribution (Regan 2000). These creatures, endowed with inherent value, warrant moral consideration beyond mere utility. Non-human animals are "subjects-of-a-life," thereby deserving of rights. They argue that because human moral rights derive from certain cognitive capacities, and because some non-human animals share these capacities, they too possess comparable moral rights. While only humans function as moral agents, both marginal-case humans (like infants) and some non-humans qualify as "moral patients." "Moral patients" lack the ability to formulate moral principles and therefore cannot be deemed morally right or wrong, despite their actions being beneficial or harmful. Only moral agents are capable of moral action. Regan and Singer contend that animals, as "subjects-of-a-life," possess intrinsic value and cannot be treated merely as means to an end, aligning them with the abolitionist perspective. However, their theory applies only to animals considered subjects-of-a-life, typically normal mammals aged at least one year. They define these individuals as possessing beliefs, desires, perception, memory, emotions, preferences, and welfare interests, as well as the ability to pursue goals and a continuous psychophysical identity over time.

Critics of animal rights often justify human superiority based on unique cognitive abilities, moral reasoning, and consciousness, thus endorsing human dominion over animals for various purposes. In the light of utilitarianism, prioritizing overall happiness, frequently leads to favoring human interests over those of animals, with opponents arguing for the justification of animal use for human benefit like food or medical research to maximize utility.

Further, animals are sometimes regarded as possessions, giving owners the authority to use them exclusively for human needs and pleasure, while disregarding the animals' natural rights. Advocates frequently cite the natural hierarchy in which animals' prey on one another to rationalize human exploitation as a seamless extension of this system. Opponents of animal rights argue that it is not feasible to give animals the same rights as people. They emphasize the crucial role of employing animals, particularly in medical research, to further human advancement.

Prioritizing human interests over animal interests is likened to speciesism, akin to racism or sexism, with advocates arguing for humans' natural inclination to prioritize their species over others. Furthermore, industries reliant on animal use oppose animal rights on economic grounds, fearing the potential costs and logistical challenges posed by regulations, which could result in economic losses. (Kempers 2023)

Recently, the issue of animal rights has long been a subject of moral concern, but recent efforts to institutionalize these rights have brought them to the forefront. Five key issues regarding the legal recognition of animal rights. Firstly, it needs to ensure the nascent stage of juridification for recognized animal rights are emerging from both animal welfare and human rights laws. Second, the theoretical foundation for legal animal rights within existing jurisprudence has been in the on-going process. Thus, as courts derive legal animal rights from various legal domains, including constitutional and human rights law, the groundwork is laid for a new generation of legal rights-legal animal rights, both simple and fundamental (Stucki 2020). The argument is that extending human rights to non-human animals is justified for both principled and ethical, prudential considerations. According to principled reasoning, justice requires fundamental rights for animals to remedy their suffering. Rights would thus function as a normative resource to combat common experiences of injustice and overcome current conditions of violence. The prudential argument, on the other hand, contends that animal rights benefit humans; rights should be extended to animals for practical reasons. It demonstrates how human, and animal rights are inextricably linked, allowing for a synergistic approach. The reasons are identified to understand human and animal rights as interdependent as follows: 1) the fact that the underlying social injustice can only be addressed jointly and 2) the environmental nexus between human and animal rights. This argument remains a bit speculative, as the beneficial nature of animal rights for humans will have to manifest in the future. (Stucki 2020)



Given that the notion of human rights for animals is conceptually acceptable on naturalistic grounds, extending human rights to animals is justified both for philosophical or ethical grounds (as a matter of animal justice) and for prudential or instrumental reasons (to better protect human rights). In short, animal rights benefit both humans and animals. (Stucki 2020)

However, critics of animal rights suggest that non-human animals are unable to engage in a social compact and hence cannot have rights. Associated with the utilitarian tradition, animals may be used as resources so long as there is no unnecessary suffering. Animals may have some moral standing, but any interests they have may be overridden in cases of comparatively greater gains to aggregate welfare made possible by their use, though what counts as "necessary" suffering, or a legitimate sacrifice of interests can vary considerably. This argument fails to distinguish between moral creatures (the target audience) and nature. Traditional morality relies on this distinction and cannot be challenged by arguments that reject it. (Singer 2003)

Further, animal experimentation necessitates a robust and reasoned moral framework. Objective decision-making and rigorous evaluation of protocols by researchers and ethics committees pose inherent challenges. It underscores the significance of reduction, replacement, and refinement strategies in moral decision-making and protocol assessment of animal experimentation to enhance animal experimentation practices. (Liguori et al. 2017)

Frey argued that animals lack interest altogether. He posited that interests are contingent upon desire, which, in turn, requires belief. Since animals lack beliefs—according to Frey—belief necessitates the ability to hold second-order beliefs, which he argues requires language—they consequently lack interests. Frey illustrated this point by highlighting the requirement of language for expressing beliefs, stating that attributing beliefs to creatures without language, including human infants, is unwarranted. He contends that without language, creatures lack the capacity for holding declarative sentences, thus precluding the attribution of beliefs to them. (Frey 1989)

It is argued that rights holders must possess the ability to differentiate between their personal interests and ethical principles. According to Cohen & Regan, individuals vested with rights must grasp the rules of duty that apply universally, including to themselves. They should be capable of acknowledging potential conflicts between their self-interest and principles of justice (Cohen and Regan 2001). Cohen emphasizes that only within a community where beings can exercise self-restraint in moral deliberations can the notion of rights be appropriately invoked. Cohen opposes Singer's assertion that individuals lacking the capacity for moral judgement, such as those with brain damage, should be denied rights. He argues that the criterion for moral judgement should not be assessed on an individual basis but rather on the collective capacity of the species. Cohen advocates for a broader evaluation of the species' ability to exercise moral judgement, rejecting Singer's narrow focus on individual cases.

In sum, the discussion on animal rights remains active, with the animal rights movement steadily gaining momentum. However, the practices of animal killings to fulfil human needs still create the moral dilemma to the movement of animal rights. Ongoing dialogue and proactive perspectives on animal rights are critical for clarifying this dilemma further.

## ***2.2 The gaps of the previous studies***

The current extensive discourse on the ethical principles underlying animal rights also require further discussion. First, the integration of mindfulness approach, especially from Buddhist traditions can help to understand the interconnectedness and compassion, which remains underrepresented. Incorporating this perspective could significantly help to clarify ethical decision-making by promoting deeper empathy and moral responsibility towards all sentient beings. Secondly, the lack of practical frameworks integrates mindfulness principles into everyday ethical practices and policies, which needs practical consideration by mindfulness approach, bridging this gap and facilitate the adoption of more compassionate practices in human-animal interactions.

Third, the current literature usually refers to either utilitarian or deontological perspectives, with limited exploration of how these can be harmonized with mindfulness-based ethical considerations. A more nuanced and balanced approach to animal rights should be further analysed to recognize both the intrinsic value of animals and the practical benefits of promoting their welfare.

Finally, while the legal recognition of animal rights has been gaining momentum, mindfulness approach can become the foundation for shaping this legal framework. This could help to examine how laws can reflect a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all beings and support more compassionate and equitable treatment of animals.

Addressing these gaps could help to understand a more integrated and empathetic understanding of animal rights, informed by both ethical theory and mindfulness approach. Such an approach could provide a more compassionate coexistence between humans and non-human beings, advancing both ethical and practical dimensions of animal welfare

## **3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS: THE MORAL DILEMMA BETWEEN KILLING SENTIENT BEINGS AND HUMAN SURVIVAL**

The unveiling of the New York Declaration on Animal Consciousness took place on April 19, 2024, during the "Emerging Science of Animal Consciousness" symposium hosted at New York University, which is a great scientific breakthrough for humanity, expanding our understanding of the world around us, especially with reference to sentient species. Killing is deemed morally unacceptable. Killing is unethical since it utilizes a person as a means end, so failing to recognize a person's



fundamental value (dignity) as a rational being. Furthermore, if such an act became a worldwide law, it would result in a society full of disorder. Insecurity, distrust, and a lack of social cooperation. While utilitarianism suggests that ethics are divided into two realms: morality of respect and morality of interest. Morality limits an individual's actions towards others based on their maturity and equal moral standing. He contends that murdering is wrong since a person's value is derived from their self-awareness, identity, and continuity over time. The morality of interest considers whether an action is ethical or bad based on how it affects the happiness, welfare, or relative benefits of others over time (McMahan 2002). The reasons for justifying killing ignore moral considerations and provide incorrect arguments on why it is bad.

According to Ebert, the intrinsic value of awareness (or subjectivity's dignity) explains why killing is wrong with phenomenal consciousness (Ebert 2016). As philosophical principles become more broadly distributed in society, they can shape people's worldviews. However, to sustain the survival of humans, we tend to violate our own moral standards by killing other species with phenomenal consciousness (Nguyen and Vuong 2024).

There are various motivations behind human-induced animal mortality such as wild procurement for sustenance, safeguarding human health and welfare, management of invasive or overly abundant species, utilization for research, educational, or experimental purposes. For instance, mercy killings, driven by compassion, occur frequently, such as euthanizing aged or ailing pets to relieve their suffering. Similarly, injured wildlife often undergoes euthanasia to prevent prolonged agony (Allen et al. 2019). In ecological terms, these actions reflect human expressions of interspecific predation, interference and exploitative competition, self-defense, optimal foraging strategies, and territorial behaviors, all aimed at improving food acquisition prospects or safeguarding and enhancing life. Further, humans engage in the intentional killing of animals to address various situations. For instance, they hunt and eliminate wild animals for sustenance or to mitigate threats to human safety, reflecting ancient practices of self-defense. Likewise, the widespread extermination of exotic or overpopulated species serves multiple ecological purposes. (van Eeden et al. 2020)

Therefore, the moral dilemma surrounding the killing of sentient beings versus human needs and survival faces a complex ethical challenge. However, while the increasing support for animal rights has been gaining momentum, as ethical norms evolve, the predominant economic justification often is based on human needs and survival. This ongoing tension between ethical advancement and pragmatic necessity needs to be addressed by a more balanced approach in the broader context of human existence.

#### **4. MINDFULNESS APPROACH AND ITS PERSPECTIVES ON THE MORAL DILEMMA**

Mindfulness approach originates from the Buddhist tradition. Mindfulness is the act of consciously and attentively observing and acknowledging the current moment while maintaining a non-judgmental and receptive mindset. The main goal is to encourage good and enlightened values and actions toward oneself, other people, animals and the surrounding environment. Academic interest in mindfulness in connection to sustainable consumption and development has increased recently. The idea behind mindfulness is that it can enhance people's alignment of their thoughts, feelings, and actions with the social and environmental components of the world. Increased mindfulness makes one more likely to consume intentionally and to form an internal rather than outward sense of self-worth. A person with increased awareness would be able to make good decisions based on their better awareness of their buying demands. (Fischer et al. 2017)

With its nuanced perspective, mindfulness approach casts doubt on the notion that people are superior to animals. The basic concept of mindfulness is realizing that every conscious thing is interdependent on every other. This approach backs the view that people are not intrinsically superior to animals but rather essential components of a complex ecosystem in which every component counts. Regardless of their moral compass or cognitive ability, all living things are to be highly valued and comprehended from this angle. The egalitarian approach of mindfulness challenges the hierarchical framework that classifies people and animals. This statement refutes the notion that any species may control or exploit another as all living things are intrinsically valuable. Instead, it promotes peace and respect for all living things on the other hand. Moreover, the idea of mindfulness highlights how deliberate application of ethical thought is necessary in conscious interactions. This encourages people to think about the results of their deeds and to feel sympathy and empathy for all living things, including the rights and wellbeing of the animals.

Animals are able to feel all the same emotions that people do, including happiness and sadness. The growing awareness emphasizes how vitally animals must be treated with the utmost respect and compassion. Fundamentally, mindfulness provides a thorough framework for reevaluating our relationships with animals and making the case for their rights and welfare. It acts as a catalyst for us to think more broadly and sympathetically and to overcome our prejudices. The approach of mindfulness questions the belief that rights are exclusive to moral actors and argues that rights should also be granted to animals. Moral agency should be extended to all sentient beings capable of feeling emotions, including happiness and pain. This would challenge the narrow viewpoint of moral agents. Mindfulness approach prioritizes the cultivation of compassion for animals, the establishment of ethical responsibilities for non-human species, and the advancement of animal welfare and harm reduction. This statement emphasizes the significance of our conduct towards animals regarding the well-being of the ecosystem and the well-being of humans, as it recognizes the mutual reliance of all living organisms.





This perspective advocates for an ethical, sustainable approach to animal treatment, and environmental conservation. Creating true peace involves halting violence at various levels: within oneself, within the family unit, within the community, and on a global scale. This endeavor encompasses the principles of mindfulness approach, which emphasize self-awareness, compassion, and non-violence. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can recognize and address the root causes of violence within themselves and extend this awareness to their interactions with others. Through promoting understanding, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution, the ripple effect of peace can extend from the individual to the family, community, and ultimately to the natural world, fostering a harmonious and compassionate society towards animal and natural worlds. (Hanh 2004)

In mindfulness approach, ethical thought, our psychological afflictions such as greed, anger, and ignorance are identified as the underlying causes of killing. Hence, anger should be transformed into love or non-anger, greed into generosity or non-greed, and ignorance into wisdom and understanding. This represents the enlightening aspect of the nonkilling ethic. The cycle of killing cannot be broken through further violence. (Chowdhury 2010)

At present, the world is faced with the depletion of fossil fuels, rampant overconsumption, and unsustainable population growth. Thich Nhat Hanh offered mindfulness principles, which refers to cultivating inner peace and empower us to harness collective wisdom and technology in restoring the Earth's equilibrium. Through this synthesis of mindfulness approach and practicality, he supports a harmonious coexistence with nature, urging us to tread a path of mindful stewardship for the well-being of future generations (Hanh and Weisman 2008). The mindfulness approach and practices include meditation, in which individuals develop a compassionate understanding of the interdependence between humans and the environment for sustainability and ecological balance. Moreover, mindfulness approach is designed to encourage ethic principles such as non-harming (ahimsa) and compassion, taking compassionate action to protect ecosystems, endangered species, and biodiversity. Mindfulness awares a sense of gratitude for the gifts of nature, fostering a desire to reciprocate by caring for the environment. Thus, mindfulness approach is considered as a powerful catalyst for environmental awareness, conservation, and protection.

Mindfulness can further strengthen the partnership among religious traditions and science. The ethical, moral, environmental, ecological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions inherent in Buddhist traditions and various psychological theories are consistent in this approach. Mindfulness approach reflects present-moment awareness, acceptance, and non-judgmental observation of thoughts, emotions, and sensations to exclude negative actions towards nature. cultivating compassion, kindness, and empathy towards oneself and others. Rooted in It helps to guide us to live authentically and ethically, promoting harmony with oneself and the world.

The approach of mindfulness intrinsically encompasses natural conservation and environmental protection, as it places emphasis on interconnectivity and reverence for all forms of life. Mindfulness promotes individuals to cultivate a heightened sense of awareness in the present moment and establish a profound bond with the natural world, enabling them to acknowledge the inherent worth of the environment. Practitioners develop an understanding and admiration for the aesthetics and importance of nature, which in turn fosters a heightened sense of duty towards its conservation. Mindfulness encourages people, given their situation, to carefully consider the consequences of their decisions and to develop empathy for all parties involved. An application of mindfulness concepts could be as follows: Following the principles of mindfulness approach and calling for a change in society values from eco-deficit to eco-surplus cultural values is consistent with the concepts of ethical responsibility, connection, and compassion (Cuon et al. 2023, Cuong et al. 2024).

## **5. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF MINDFULNESS APPROACH IN ADDRESSING THE MORAL DILEMMA**

People who practice mindfulness grow to have a great respect for all living things and become more aware of the impact their actions have on the environment. Away from eco-deficit behaviors like encouraging more beef consumption and consuming goods made from endangered animals, one must understand the ecological consequences of these actions and their detrimental effects on the ecosystem and biodiversity. Mindfulness helps people to make decisions that reduce harm and promote sustainability by helping them to feel empathy for the suffering of animals and the degradation of the environment. Taking environmentally friendly actions, such as reducing meat intake, giving up meat for social and cultural reasons, and endorsing animal conservation initiatives, is how to create an ecological surplus of cultural values. Since even small deeds can have a big overall effect, mindfulness motivates people to approach these changes with purposeful attention and impartiality.

Mindfulness practices can help people develop a deeper understanding of the interconnection of all living things and the need to protect the Earth for future generations by being included in programs that promote ecological ideals. The move to eco-surplus cultural ideals means understanding well-being holistically, including the strength and vitality of the natural world in addition to personal success and affluence.

It is imperative to alleviate all forms of pain, regardless of the individual's identity. However, in actual scenarios, numerous Buddhists perceive it as unusual to engage in discussions about suffering without considering a sentient individual who is experiencing it. Buddhists should demonstrate compassion towards animals and abstain from causing them damage or death, because of the intrinsic virtue of compassion. Nevertheless, this argument could also suggest that Buddhists ought to refrain



from causing injury or taking the lives of animals to foster compassion inside themselves, a concept that some Buddhists consider to be egocentric.

Buddhists should abstain from harming or killing animals because it is morally wrong and could adversely affect their karma, potentially leading to an unfavorable rebirth. Buddhist perspectives on abstaining from meat-eating stem from diverse traditions. Theravada tradition emphasizes non-harming, the right Livelihood, and detachment, which promotes harmonious human-animal relationships. These themes intersect with contemporary Western arguments favoring vegetarianism, including animal welfare, personal and environmental health, world hunger, and ethical development. This paper surveys these intersections and presents two studies based on survey data. The first study examines institutional food choice practices at Western Buddhist centers, while the second investigates individual food practices among Western Buddhists, including rationales for their choices. In both surveys, Buddhist principles intersect with Western arguments, resulting in varied dietary decisions. As interest in Buddhism grows in the West, Buddhist moral considerations regarding food, enriched by mindfulness approach, could significantly impact western dietary choices, fostering greater awareness and ethical consumption habits (Kaza 2005).

Traditional conservation often overlooks individual non-human animal interests in favor of human concerns or biodiversity priorities. Promoting animal dignity and equitable moral consideration. Justice-focused principles, including geo-centrism and harm evaluation, are recommended. We address limitations of justice and compassion, advocating for their simultaneous application and the integration of an ethics-of-care for comprehensive conservation ethics (Santiago-Avila and Lynn 2020). To prevent individual and societal killing, we must reflect on non-violence and the non-killing ethic. Practicing non-violence can prevent violence and killing. In this respect, the ethic of non-killing practices, has the capacity to abolish killing. (Chowdhury 2010)

Mindfulness encourages finding balance and harmony in all aspects of life. In the context of the dilemma, individuals may strive to find sustainable solutions that prioritize both human survival and the well-being of other species. The mindfulness approach emphasizes interconnectedness, compassion, and empathy. By fostering a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and animals, individuals can cultivate a sense of empathy and respect for all living beings. By clarifying the similarities and shared experiences between humans and animals, we can have a deeper understanding of the inherent value of all life forms. Furthermore, mindfulness approach motivates ethical behaviors rooted in Buddhist principles of compassion and non-harming. As we have empathy towards sentient animals, we can build up our actions of environmental sustainability and supporting animal welfare. This shift towards humane values is concerned with the welfare of all beings and the preservation of the natural world. Furthermore, the compassionate ethics of mindfulness approach bring about advancing animal rights and ecological conservation efforts. (Heister 2022)

The concept of "truth belongs to the strong" exemplifies a mindset rooted in ego and power dynamics, which is antithetical to the values of mindfulness. Mindfulness encourages humility, openness, and a willingness to consider diverse perspectives, rather than clinging to rigid beliefs or exerting dominance over others. Moreover, the assertion that "humans will always be at the top of the food chain" reflects a hierarchical view of the world that undermines efforts towards compassion and ethical stewardship. Mindfulness challenges such anthropocentric attitudes by promoting a more inclusive and egalitarian worldview that acknowledges the intrinsic value of all beings.

The conclusion, advocating for the minimization of immoral behaviors until the moral dilemma is fully resolved, resonates with mindfulness principles. Mindfulness emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct in all aspects of life, even in the face of unresolved challenges or complexities. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can develop the awareness, empathy, and ethical discernment necessary to navigate moral dilemmas and contribute to positive change in the world. Thus, while the resolution of moral dilemmas may be ongoing, mindfulness offers a practical framework for promoting moral behavior and fostering a more compassionate and sustainable society.

The concept of inter-being, originating from Thich Nhat Hanh, underscores the interconnectedness of individual and collective consciousness, as well as the multitude of interdependent factors influencing consciousness transformation crucial for an ecological revolution. This holistic perspective fosters a profound understanding of how actions reverberate throughout the ecosystem, encouraging responsible stewardship of the planet. Through the lens of inter-being, individuals are inspired to cultivate compassion, empathy, and reverence for all life forms, thereby nurturing a harmonious coexistence with nature and promoting environmental justice for present and future generations. (Lim 2019)

The mindfulness approach comes from the diamond sutra, whose teachings on emptiness enable us to release attachment to a distinct sense of self, fostering a deeper understanding of life and transforming suffering into peace and love. We emphasize the significance of meditation, contemplative chanting, and engaging with Buddhist teachings as means to uncover our true essence. These practices guide us beyond materialistic and capitalistic constraints, unveiling a higher dimension of existence where we can connect with our cosmic selves in ultimate reality. By aligning with our authentic selves, we cultivate the capacity for social transformation amidst crises, underscoring the relevance of mindfulness in addressing issues like animal rights and ecological concerns (Lin and Khoo 2022).

When we cultivate goodwill in their daily lives, we can expect positive actions and outcomes, with the adage "one good turn deserves another." Conversely, harboring ill will have adverse consequences, reflecting the essence of Buddhist moral



approach. Buddhism also focuses on human agency, empowering individuals to shape their ethics as the law of karma. Through practices like precepts, meditation, and wisdom cultivation, Buddhism can transform craving, hatred, and delusion—the roots of human suffering into happiness and harmonious connection to the nature (Wang 2020). Buddhist ethics in the mindfulness approach serve as a pathway to avoid killing sentient beings and human survival, facilitating the exploration of one's inherent nature. Moreover, Buddhist principles of compassion and equality suggest relevance of contemporary educational discourse, including peace, ecological awareness, and educational equity. Integrating mindfulness approach enriches this ethical framework, supporting holistic well-being and interconnectedness with the world, fostering a compassionate and sustainable approach to personal growth and societal harmony in addressing the moral dilemma of killing sentient beings and human survival.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In sum, mindfulness approach provides a relevant perspective on addressing the moral dilemma surrounding the treatment of animals and the broader ecological crisis. Rooted in Buddhist traditions, mindfulness approach tends to motivate individuals to cultivate awareness, compassion, and ethical responsibility towards all sentient beings, challenging hierarchical views that put human dominance over other species. By fostering a clear and deep understanding of interconnectedness between nature and humans, mindfulness provides ethical conduct to minimize harm and promote sustainable practices.

The application of mindfulness principles in daily life helps individuals to make conscientious choices for the well-being of animals and the environment. This approach does not only advocate ethical treatment of animals but also emphasizes the importance of ecological stewardship and the preservation of biodiversity. Through practices such as meditation and mindful consumption, we build up empathy and a sense of interconnectedness with all living beings, thereby contributing to a more compassionate and sustainable society.

With regard to the moral dilemmas, mindfulness approach is a practical framework for promoting ethical behavior and fostering a harmonious relationship with nature. Thus, mindfulness approach is considered as a beacon of hope, guiding us towards a more compassionate and sustainable coexistence with all forms of life on Earth.

Based on the insights from mindfulness approach, the paper suggests four policy recommendations. First, we can promote mindfulness education programs in schools and community centres to enhance awareness about ethical consumption, animal welfare, and environmental stewardship such as meditation and reflection on interconnectedness, aiming to cultivate empathy and responsible decision-making among students and the broader community. Second, the paper also proposes that businesses and individuals should adopt sustainable and ethical practices. For instance, tax incentives for companies can reduce their carbon footprint, support for farmers practicing humane animal care, and funding for research into sustainable technologies and practices. Third, we should strengthen current regulations and introduce new policies prioritizing animal welfare and environmental conservation includes stricter enforcement against animal cruelty, regulations governing intensive farming methods, and requirements for businesses to disclose their environmental impacts. Collaboration with international organizations can provide consistent standards globally. Fourth, the mindfulness consumption is also critical for the adoption of plant-based diets and eco-friendly alternatives through public health campaigns, subsidies for plant-based food initiatives, and investment in sustainable agriculture research. These efforts contribute to reducing the demand for animal products and mitigating the negative environmental impacts.

These policy recommendations employ mindfulness approach to advocate for ethical conduct, sustainability, and compassionate treatment of animals, fostering a harmonious coexistence between humanity and the natural world.

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