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Research article

Next-generation mindfulness: A mindfulness matrix to extend the transformative potential of mindfulness for consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual analysis contributes to extending the transformative potential of mindfulness for consumers and society by creating a mindfulness matrix that uncovers new linkages across previously siloed mindfulness literatures and by arguing that next-generation mindfulness research and practice should draw on underexplored synergies between these. The paper makes three key contributions: First, it illustrates how a shift in understanding mainstream mindfulness from a predominate focus on the Self may create new opportunities for individual and collective wellbeing. Second, its mindfulness matrix offers an integrative mapping of relevant literatures to different motivations for engaging in mindfulness, suggesting opportunities for integration between diverse schools of thought. Finally, it argues that to broaden the scope of mindfulness to generate wisdom and transformative capacity in one and all, we need a stronger emphasis on understanding mindfulness as prosocial engagement. This offers new opportunities for research and interventions that promote consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing.

*“No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.”
(John Donne, 1624)*

1. INTRODUCTION

Jon Kabat-Zinn, revered mindfulness scholar and founder of the well-known and extensively researched Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, has made mindfulness meditation accessible to people from all walks of life. MBSR helps individuals manage their personal stress better. Kabat-Zinn also argued that mindfulness is transformative, with the potential to relieve suffering not only for individuals, but also for communities, as well as for our global society (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This closely aligns with how leading Buddhist scholars articulate the transformative potential of mindfulness: “a system of training that leads to insight and the overcoming of suffering” (Bodhi, 2011, 20). That potential includes an altruistic concern for the welfare of all sentient beings (Flanagan, 2011). As the Dalai Lama suggests, “You should not be content with working for your own personal benefit alone” (Dalai Lama, in Rajiv, 2006, 94).

In today’s everyday language a more commonly used word for “suffering” is (painful, unwanted) “stress”, and the reverse of suffering and stress is wellbeing. Therefore, a contemporary, secular definition of the transformative purpose of mindfulness is to better understand and overcome stress, for one and all. Moreover, the aim of this paper is to help expand the transformative potential of mindfulness for individual consumer wellbeing as well as exploring its scope in reducing stress and suffering at a larger scale: for consumer groups, families, work teams, and for society at large.

While the potential of mindfulness to generate transformative change has been discussed in the scientific literature (Bodhi, 2011; Bahl, et al. 2016), we lack a systematic examination of how it can be expanded in contemporary secular settings. A wide variety of scientific mindfulness literatures, or ‘schools of thought’, have emerged over the last 40 years, yet they operate (and grow) in research silos. To date, there have been few efforts to build theory-informed bridges between these siloed mindfulness schools, thus the potential to draw on synergies and generate

new scientific insights remains largely untapped (notable exceptions are Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016; Fraher, Branicki, and Grint, 2017; Levey and Levey, 2019; Kudesia and Lang, 2021; and Tobias Mortlock, Querstret, and Carter, 2022). It would appear timely to do so, for three key reasons.

First, Kabat-Zinn stressed that MBSR is but one of possibly an infinite number of “skilful means” to generate wisdom and healing from suffering in our world today (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, 3). MBSR was designed as a clinical tool (Crane, 2017). Key to its effectiveness with clinical patients has been a strong focus on prolonging “initial contact with the world” (Brown, Ryan, and Creswell, 2007, 212) by consciously focusing attention on perception, in order to delay the onset of potentially distressing thoughts and thus provide a reprieve from their harmful impact on patients’ mental health. This model of mindfulness training served as basis for a series of other so-called ‘first generation’ mindfulness-based programs (MBPs) based on MBSR and closely related programs, designed for secular community settings targeting individual stress reduction (Crane et al., 2017).¹

Today, mindfulness is practiced in an ever-growing range of contexts beyond the clinical and mental health setting in which MBSR was conceived, with the aim of enhancing individuals’ lives beyond lowering stress. Arguably because of its strong evidence base, MBSR is assumed to be the standard way to provide mindfulness training, and many mindfulness interventions today use the 8-week MBSR format and program structure as basis for their adaptations to particular contexts or populations (Creswell, 2017). However, when MBSR is adapted and applied to non-clinical settings it would appear that interventions may not be as transformative as perhaps assumed: Systematic publication bias seems to be linked to overstating the

¹ The authors used the term ‘first generation’ MBPs to differentiate these mindfulness training programs from what they termed ‘second generation’ mindfulness-based interventions that explicitly link mindfulness practices to Buddhist teachings and apply an openly spiritual approach to mindfulness instruction (e.g. Van Gordon, Shonin, and Griffiths, 2015).

effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in the scientific literature, especially over the medium or long-term (Coronado-Montoya et al., 2016); a rigorous longitudinal scientific study of school-based mindfulness training based on MBSR suggests that a ‘one size fits all’ to teaching mindfulness is unsuccessful in raising social-emotional-behavioral functioning among school children (Montero-Marin et al., 2022); employees feel lower work motivation after 15 minutes of mindfulness meditation designed to improve their wellbeing at work (Hafenbrack and Vohs, 2018); no increase in critical thinking performance after 6 weeks use of the Headspace™ App (Noone and Hogan, 2018); and conflicting evidence on the effect of mindfulness on prosocial motivation (Hafenbrack et al., 2020; Hafenbrack, Lapalme, and Solal, 2021).

Second, the interconnected nature of today’s challenges for humanity highlight the need for stepping beyond the focus on self-healing in first-generation secular mindfulness practice. Indeed, self-healing is at the core of MBPs (Crane, 2017) since MBSR has been designed for clinical populations. Specifically, the first MBSR training participants were U.S. American hospital patients suffering chronic physical or mental health conditions for which they had not found relief using other hospital treatment. Hence it made sense for MBSR training to focus on empowering individuals suffering from chronic health problems “to do something for *themselves*” beyond depending on ongoing hospital treatments (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, 13, emphasis in original).

This (highly valid and noble) focus on self-healing may have resulted in perhaps an overly strong focus on the self in mainstream mindfulness today. Indeed, people predominately practice mindfulness in order to feel calmer, more relaxed while motivations such as improving interpersonal relationships are much rarer (Pepping et al., 2016). Added to this are efforts to make mindfulness more accessible to an increasing range of people and groups, leading to concerns among mindfulness scholars that instructing individuals to ‘be with whatever is

arising' or 'be with the breath', may help cultivate unhelpful acceptance of unwise or unethical behavior through mindfulness (Marx, 2015).

While there is considerable scholarly debate among Buddhist scholars over the purpose of mindfulness – with some arguing that practicing mindfulness without paying specific attention to ethical considerations and to one's social responsibility is not "right mindfulness" (Purser and Milillo, 2015, 3), and others strongly refuting this claim by arguing that mindfulness in ancient Indian Buddhism was not about fostering political activism and instead used typically for "mere health benefits" (c.f. Anālayo, 2020, 21) – there seems to be scholarly consensus that mindfulness is 'right' or 'skillful' if it leads to eliminating psychological motivations such as hatred, delusion, or greed as root causes of suffering (Monteiro, Musten, and Compson, 2015). In fact, one of the core intentions of practicing mindfulness is to help people dissolve the delusion that their lives are completely independent of others in this world, and this Ego-driven delusion is often experienced as arrogance or fear (Willmott, 2018). Furthermore, mindfulness practice that is exclusively self-focused may be the result of a misinterpretation of the prosocial aspiration that is at the heart of Eastern contemplative traditions out of which mindfulness science has developed (Lopez, 2010). In sum, the transformative potential of mindfulness consists in understanding and overcoming suffering for oneself as well as for all (Bodhi, 2011).

A prosocial motivation for engaging with mindfulness is highly relevant for today's world of consumption: consumers need to be mindful not only of themselves, but also of their community and the consequences of consumption for the planet (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas, 2011). Economic agents need to consider that actions by individuals in one part of the world can impact others in another part of the world, even when they are unaware of this (Hill and Martin, 2014). Indeed, we need mindfulness to cultivate both inner transformation and social change (Bristow, 2019). To cite the Dalai Lama once more, with regards to mindfulness practice "the correct motivation is the altruistic attitude" (Dalai Lama, in Rajiv, 2006, 168).

Accepted Article

And third, early theorizing in the behavioural and psychological sciences define mindfulness as an information processing style, in particular creating a dichotomy between a focus on consciously *perceiving* in Kabat-Zinn’s pioneering “meditative mindfulness” (Hart, Ivztan, and Hart, 2013, 453) and the stronger focus on *cognition* in other mindfulness scholarship (e.g. Langer’s (1989) socio-cognitive approach to mindfulness, outlined further below). In fact, this distinction is a false dichotomy (Kudesia, 2019). First-generation mindfulness intervention science is based on the assumption that mindfulness can only be understood from the inside out, as a first-person experience of formally exploring one’s inner world, which in turn is intended to generate transformative capacity to feel compassion and wisdom for one and all (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). However, in recent years our scientific understanding of the mechanisms of action involved in mindfulness processes has been refined, which enables us to move on from earlier theorizing and compare different scientific mindfulness processes more directly, as further illustrated below. By way of example, mindfulness in organisations has been studied empirically for over 30 years; it can apply to individuals as well as to entire groups of people, for example workplaces; it can be validly and reliably measured across both individual and collective levels; and scientists have shown that it is induced through meditation and non-meditative – or *in situ* – practices (Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016; *in situ* practices are those mindfulness practices that are specifically situated within the moment-to-moment context in which an individual or group apply mindfulness).

To sum up, this paper does not argue that the mindfulness research and practice needs to become more openly spiritual and move into a “second generation” (as termed by van Gordon, Shonin, and Griffiths, 2015, 591). Instead, the paper’s contribution to theory is to suggest that the next generation of mainstream mindfulness science should move on from a predominate focus on the Self. It also indicates how mainstream mindfulness science can become more integrative and build more theory-informed bridges towards other scientific mindfulness

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literatures, incorporating especially a stronger focus on metacognitive practice, prosocial engagement and collective wellbeing through mindfulness. These theory-based bridges will also be practical: as practical contribution this paper offers a map of relevant secular mindfulness practices, organized by motivation. In so doing, the paper helps extend the transformative potential of mindfulness beyond personal stress reduction for today's consumers, organizations, and society. Next-generation mindfulness may thus not only cultivate individual consumer wellbeing but also benefit others in our communities around the globe by uncovering new and additional "skillful means" to cultivate mindfulness for transformative capacity. Such a shift in focus is also in line with a call for changing our approach to mindfulness towards "blending" more diverse evidence-based mindfulness processes, rather than "bending", or continuing to adapt, "first-generation" MBPs to ever more contexts (Kudesia, 2019, 405).

2. THEORETICAL RATIONALE

2.1 Mindfulness and Meditation

The mindfulness literature is vast and varied (van Dam et al., 2017). To date more than 33 definitions of mindfulness have been published in the scientific literature (Nilsson and Kazemi, 2016). However, many mindfulness researchers and practitioners lean on Kabat-Zinn's (1994) definition of mindfulness as the awareness that arises from paying attention to the present moment, on purpose, and non-judgmentally. This sounds like a definition of meditation. Indeed, in the late 1970s, Jon Kabat-Zinn brought his knowledge of Eastern contemplative traditions to his research into stress-reduction at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Mindfulness is an important aspect of contemplative traditions including Buddhism, and Buddhists practice mindfulness predominately through meditation. The word "meditation" comes from the Latin noun "meditatio" which means "a reflection" or "an act of thinking over." While meditating is often associated with religious practices, it is as such an ideology-free

mental activity, and can be defined operationally as self-regulation of attention (Goleman and Schwartz, 1976).

Much prominent mindfulness research today is focused on meditation, frequently using the breath as anchor to develop awareness of sensations, emotions, thoughts, and physical reactions, including through exercises such as mindful eating or scanning the body (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Williams and Penman, 2011). This is because Kabat-Zinn, in his groundbreaking research, combined meditative practices drawn from Buddhist traditions with clinical science, to help hospital patients manage stress more effectively – and thus called his seminal mindfulness meditation program “Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction”, or MBSR.

Nonetheless, mindfulness is not the same as meditation. “Mindfulness” in health and social sciences is an umbrella term that describes a variety of processes and practices linked to attention, awareness, and acceptance (Creswell, 2017; van Dam et al., 2017). What is more, mindfulness practices include non-meditative socially oriented action (Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016; Kudesia and Lang, 2022). An example of this is consumers in a local neighborhood helping each other address unexpected challenges (such as food and supplies shortages during a COVID-19 lockdown) and thus reducing stress *collectively*. In addition, while people tend to use formal mindfulness meditation practice predominately to help themselves relax more (Pepping, Walters, Davis et al., 2016), mindfulness can arise organically in everyday life (Reina and Kudesia, 2020). Every reader will have experienced *becoming mindful* after noticing something important, for example that they have to drive carefully on an icy road. And yet, the *practice* of meditation is routinely conflated with mindfulness as a *state* or *trait* and thus the outcome of potentially an infinite number of “skillful means” (Kabat-Zinn 2011, 3) to alleviate suffering and stress in our world.

In order to move on from this conflation and help extend the potential of mindfulness to transform the lives of individuals, consumers, and communities, I propose that we need more integration between siloed scientific mindfulness literatures. We especially need to build theory-based bridges between the first-generation MBP intervention literature based on MBSR's focus on meditation and other relevant scientific mindfulness literatures.

2.2 Motivations to engage in mindfulness

In meditation, “what you get is related to what you want”, according to distinguished psychiatry scholar Deane H. Shapiro (Shapiro, 1992, 25), and meditation in clinical contexts has long been used in pursuit of three goals: self-regulation, self-exploration, and self-liberation. These three aims occur sequentially: in the short term, meditation in psychotherapy primarily addresses self-regulation goals while over the longer term, meditation may also facilitate self-exploration and ultimately self-liberation goals (ibid.). In the mindfulness intervention science, these three meditation aims are at the core of intended outcomes for all (first-generation) MBPs. Preminent mindfulness intervention scholar Rebecca Crane explains (2017) that self-regulation in mindfulness practice is about the intent to work more skillfully with negative feelings or experiences; self-exploration is about the intent to relate to oneself and one's experience in wider, more insightful ways; and self-liberation is about the intent to explore oneself and one's relationship with the world by connecting with issues that transcend the self, perhaps including a desire to be of compassionate service.

2.3 Should mindfulness really center around self-help?

MBSR was designed as “participatory medicine”, empowering patients to transform themselves from depending on others curing their ailments to becoming healed in a holistic, agentic way (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, 22). It makes sense for this population to somewhat over-emphasize the relationship with Self in first-generation mindfulness training. Today, people are motivated to practice mindfulness often because they want to feel more calm and relaxed

(Pepping, Walters, Davis et al., 2016). In other words, self-regulation tends to be the main aim of engaging in mindfulness meditation. Related research has found that meditators today tend to be internally motivated, meaning they are concerned with self-discipline or self-enhancement goals while few tend to engage in meditation in service to others and humanity (Sparby and Ott, 2018). It would appear that despite the three-fold aim of MBPs to serve not only self-regulation purposes, but also to cultivate self-exploration and ultimately self-liberation aims, self-regulation seems the key motivator for many to practice mindfulness today. Indeed, this is in line with general public perception of mindfulness, largely associating it with self-help (Choi et al., 2021).

The general public may not be concerned that much mainstream mindfulness scholarship and practice to date emphasizes mindfulness-as-relief over mindfulness-as-engagement; mindfulness-as-relief being concerned with drawing on mindfulness to help reduce suffering while mindfulness-as-engagement is about how mindfulness may help cultivate active involvement in life's challenges (Choi, Gruman, and Leonard, 2021). Mindfulness-as-engagement is more closely aligned with self-exploration and self-liberation motivations. Yet it seems that there is a growing body of scientific evidence suggesting that MBPs today may not be as transformative or unequivocally beneficial as previously assumed, as mentioned at the outset of this paper: There appears to be a systematic publication bias in the majority of scientific mindfulness publications, linked to overstating the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions available today (Coronado-Montoya et al., 2016). Even if the general public were only concerned about instrumental goals, this would matter.

More importantly, leading mindfulness scholars argue, when participating in an MBP sometimes “harm clearly occurs, in other words, people suffer as a result of the meditation practice rather than experience a relief from suffering” (Baer et al., 2019, 11). At least 20 case studies exist in the scientific press that document adverse effects of mindfulness meditation

(van Dam et al., 2017). How come? To be sure, mindfulness meditation is intended to help reduce stress, not increase it.

Polyvagal theory, created by world-renowned social neurobiologist Stephen Porges, may help explain why this adverse effect of mindfulness practice may occur (Porges, 2011). According to Porges, our autonomic nervous system determines our response to stress, yet is virtually completely below our cognitive control: all of us humans develop successively more effective automatic stress response mechanisms as we grow up, starting with freeze, a very basic immobilization response to stress that is available to us as soon as we are young toddlers, changing into fight or flight, a more effective automatic stress response we all start to resort to as children, culminating into social engagement; asking for help, talking, listening to one other. Importantly, we humans automatically experience social engagement with others we trust as stress-reducing, more so than fight or flight and much more so than freeze. However, our autonomic nervous system adapts with experience: we resort to more basic, less effective automatic stress responses when higher-order responses are experienced as ineffective (e.g. by resorting to fight/flight when social engagement is not welcome or proves futile). If individuals have consciously or unconsciously experienced trauma (e.g. emergency workers or trauma victims, but also increasingly members of the general population who may have experienced overwhelming stress at some point in their lives), individuals' autonomic nervous systems have adapted in a way to avoid 'immobilization'. Immobilization is experienced as the body's last-resort freeze stress response, and when someone experiences trauma, freeze is experienced as harmful and life-threatening. Any subsequent experience that is reminiscent of freeze is avoided at all cost. Therefore, practices that simulate immobilization or freeze, such as a prolonged silent sitting meditation practice for example, may be experienced as unpleasant or even cause harm for individuals with an explicit trauma history, or for those exposed to latent trauma. These individuals may also include people living in constantly distressing (social,

work, or community) contexts, for example those marked by ongoing injustice, prejudice, or discrimination, as well as those with overwhelming family or care responsibilities.

Conversely, Porges' (2011) theory also explains why other-orientation (a hallmark of collective mindfulness processes, as outlined below) is an effective antidote to stress – and particularly helpful for people and groups exposed to constant high stress – because trust-based social engagement *automatically* calms us down. Furthermore, social engagement not only benefits others but also improves the actor's own wellbeing (Aknin et al., 2013; Klein, 2017) and is hence a powerful antidote to stress, both by reaching out to others for help when stressed, and by providing empathy and comfort to those feeling stressed (Porges, 2011).

Recall that mindfulness and meditation are not the same. The explanation above suggests that the *practice* of silent sitting meditation, the predominant technique for practicing mindfulness in first-generation MBPs, may not be universally helpful for cultivating a *state* of mindfulness. Therefore, it makes sense for mainstream mindfulness science to move on from this strong focus on the self. Emerging evidence suggests that in workplaces, mindfulness as a social practice may be particularly beneficial to workplace functioning and can serve as an effective social process through which people at work can make sense of their thoughts and the situation at hand (Kudesia and Lang, 2022). Moreover, the application of individual mindfulness skills in a high-stress work context may depend on whether or not individuals find themselves in a collectively mindful team culture (Tobias Mortlock, Querstret, and Carter, 2022). In a nutshell, the capacity to overcome stress and suffering may validly be cultivated from the outside in as well as from the inside out.

2.4 Should mindfulness really be “not what you think”?

Kabat-Zinn emphasized that mindfulness practice is “not what you think” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). This somewhat puzzling statement is based on the assertion that paying attention to perceiving information as sensory input, rather than cognitively engaging with it, cultivates non-judgment

and transformative wisdom, or at least delays the onset of cognitive judgments (Brown, Ryan, and Creswell, 2007). This pre-cognitive quality of mindfulness meditation is deemed salubrious for clinical patients because it can stop – or at least delay the onset of, and thus provide a temporary reprieve from – unhelpful (cognitively induced) stress and mood disturbances (Brown and Ryan, 2003). An emphasis on perceptual information processing, as distinct from processing information cognitively, is arguably why mindfulness scholars in psychological and behavioral medicine have largely dismissed other mindfulness schools of thought such as Langerian mindfulness (outlined below) as being conceptually distinct from MBSR-based mindfulness.

In addition, the consensus among “first-generation” mindfulness scholars has been that mindfulness can only be understood as a first-person experience of formally exploring one’s inner world (Kabat-Zinn, 2011) and through introspection – just noticing the thoughts, feelings, and sensations that arise in the moment (Bishop et al., 2004). As a result, the behavioral science literature has largely dismissed mindfulness constructs that are not focused on cultivating present-centered nonjudgmental awareness as irrelevant for prominent mindfulness reviews (see for example in Bishop et al., 2004; Good et al., 2016; Creswell, 2017). However, this understanding has more recently been updated, indicating that it may neither be possible nor desirable to do away with “thinking” during mindfulness practice, including meditation. Here’s why.

There is a general consensus in behavioral science and clinical psychology today that mindfulness meditation practice consists of two factors: (1) Attention and Awareness (through grounding one’s awareness in present-moment attention) on the one hand; and (2) an attitude of open-minded acceptance or discernment on the other (Bishop et al., 2004; Creswell, 2017; van Dam et al., 2017).

Present-moment awareness is typically achieved through attention regulation, for example by counting one's breaths in silent meditative practice. Acceptance, broadly defined as an attitude of openness, receptivity, and nonjudgment (Brown and Ryan, 2004; Desbordes et al., 2015), is said to be the result of metacognitive capacity, synonymous to *decentering*: the capability to shift perspective "from *within* one's subjective experience *onto* that experience" (Bernstein et al., 2015, 599). In other words, metacognitive capability helps us change our relationship with our own thoughts and emotions, with the situation at hand, and with the world we live in, by mentally stepping back and thus creating mental space between our inner stories and our Self thinking them. Three interrelated psychological processes generate metacognitive capacity: (a) meta-awareness, which means being aware that one is aware, based on the Greek word 'meta' which refers to a shift in perspective; (b) disidentification from one's experience; and (c) reduced reactivity to (especially difficult) thought content (ibid.).

In order for mindfulness meditation to be effective, re-perceiving is pivotal (Shapiro et al., 2006). Re-perceiving is synonymous to the afore-mentioned *decentering*, the process through which metacognitive capacity occurs (Bernstein et al., 2015). Decentering is a type of metacognition, defined as the process of monitoring and adjusting how one processes information (Fernandez-Duque et al., 2000). Metacognitive processes should form an integral part of mindfulness training (Vago and Silversweig, 2012). However, metacognition is not exclusively pre-cognitive: cognition and metacognition interact during metacognitive processes, and may include analytical (cognitive) processes (Jankowski and Holas, 2014).

Leading mindfulness meditation scholar Antoine Lutz and colleagues go further in their argument, emphasizing that mindfulness practice includes cognitive processing and suggesting that Kabat-Zinn's operational definition of mindfulness as present-centered and nonjudgmental is "somewhat problematic" because it implies contradictory instructions for meditators, despite the fact that this definition is universally accepted in the psychological literature (Lutz et al.,

2015, 6). The authors explain that failing to appreciate that a diverse range of analytical tools may be valid for cultivating mindfulness is as old as Buddhism itself; “each Buddhist school or lineage sought to defend its own account of mindfulness, and this usually involved a critique of other approaches as somehow wrongheaded” (Lutz et al., 2015, 7).

Moreover, the idea that mindfulness can be defined according to different information processing styles and that the mark of mindfulness is whether people focus on perceptual information processing or cognition is a false trade-off, according to workplace mindfulness scholar Ravi Kudesia (2019). Kudesia argues that especially in workplaces, being mindful does not always mean processing information in one, fixed style; instead, mindfulness at work means adjusting the way in which we process information to the situation at hand. By way of example, taking time out from work to practice mindfulness for individual stress-reduction may well foster individual wellbeing, at least in the short term. However, in an organizational context, pre-cognitive perception is helpful only when people at work do not need to make decisions or apply what they know to the work situation at hand – this indicates that present-centered nonjudgmental perception is helpful *in the exception of cases* in most workplaces, not as a rule (ibid.). This makes metacognitive capacity development through mindfulness much more important than previously assumed.

In fact, Kudesia (2019) suggests that mindfulness in organizations should be a metacognitive practice. Metacognitive practice is defined as the process by which an individual or group choose from among different types of cognition or action depending on the situation at hand (Kudesia and Lang, 2022). The well-known metaphor of “getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony” (coined by leadership experts Heifetz and Linsky, 2002) can be used to help explain what this looks and feels like in a consumer context: When health or financial challenges appear to become particularly stressful or complex, we can create mental space by visualizing stepping back from what we are currently facing (in other words, “getting off the

dance floor” in the metaphor even if “being on the dance floor” more often looks and sounds like striving or wrestling with difficult tradeoffs or unpleasant choices). “Going to the balcony” means changing perspective by imagining we are looking down on ourselves and our situation from a metaphorical “balcony” such as the balcony in a theatre. The mental distance between us and our choices that this metacognitive practice offers can help us notice new and helpful insights, and help choose the most appropriate mindset and action based on the situation at hand, deliberately rather than on impulse. Kudesia (2019) suggests that individuals, teams, and entire work units should learn how to develop metacognitive capacity through metacognitive practice, adding that this is really what the true transformative potential of mindfulness for organizations is about.

2.5 Should we really continue to “bend” the 8-week program?

There is another – practical – reason for mindfulness intervention research and practice to explore untapped synergies with other mindfulness literatures: its reach today is much bigger than the clinical and mental health settings in which first-generation MBPs were designed over 40 years ago. Mindfulness has firmly arrived in today’s consumer world. On newsstands, you can find mindfulness periodicals for Teens and Seniors alike, including magazines for mindful eating, mindful exercise, and mindful environmentalism. This adds to the urgency of Kudesia’s (2019) call to move away from “bending” mindfulness programs ever more based on the original 8-week course format, and instead explore opportunities for “blending” a more diverse range of valid mindfulness practices.

To illustrate this point, as MBPs have been applied to different contexts beyond clinical and mental health settings, the MBSR-based curricula has often been shortened from its original format involving 8 weekly mindfulness meditation training sessions that are 2.5 hours long plus daily home meditation practice of 45 minutes or more (c.f. Creswell, 2017). This is because it is simply not realistic for schools, workplaces, and other non-clinical settings to free

up so much time for mindfulness training. However, acceptance features in MBSR and its derivatives only in the second half of the eight-week course, and acceptance skills development in standard mindfulness training programs seems to lag behind attention monitoring (Baer, Carmody, and Hunsinger, 2012; Desbordes et al., 2015). This means an attempt to continue “bending” the 8-week training format may be less effective than going back to the drawing board and explore what alternative types of mindfulness practices may be effective early on during a mindfulness intervention in generating not only present-moment attention and awareness but also acceptance. Hafenbrack and Vohs’ (2018) study of employees feeling lower work motivation following a 15-minute mindfulness meditation practice is a case in point; the mindfulness practice in the study evidently did not include an invitation to generate metacognitive capacity and a more insightful relationship with the work ahead.

2.6 Why should consumers be concerned with ethics and “right mindfulness”?

Clearly, consumers are concerned about their own personal wellbeing, and rightly so. Mindfulness, as mentioned above, is based on a system of training that anchors around altruistic concern for the welfare of all sentient beings (Flanagan, 2011). To unpack the link between mindfulness and wellbeing further, let’s examine the link between mindfulness and mental discipline. Mindfulness is a mental discipline. More specifically, it is a two-fold mental discipline that consists of: (1) objectively paying attention to and being aware of one’s experience, and (2) clearly comprehending this experience by interpreting it in a meaningful way, specifically focusing on generating wisdom and compassion (Bodhi, 2011). This second part of mindfulness practice has a strong ethical component. A quote from the Buddha’s original and preserved discourses illustrates this way of being vividly: “right mindfulness... [is] contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world” (cited in Bodhi, 2011, 20).

In this context, it is worth mentioning mindful compassion practice, i.e. proactively experiencing affection for others and a desire to be of compassionate service (Shapiro, 1992), yet compassion practice in mindfulness needs to transcend above self-compassion practice alone. This is because self-compassion without considering wisdom may lead to a false acceptance of unwise or unethical behaviour (e.g. taking a nap rather than engaging in mindfulness practice to transform one's relationship with the situation at hand, or accepting injustice in one's world out of a simplistic 'acceptance' of 'being here, now' (Marx, 2015; Goldstein, 2016).

Here's the 21st century description of what this means: in order to genuinely improve our wellbeing through mindfulness, we need to learn to (1) observe our experience objectively, and (2) develop the mental discipline of choosing thoughts and actions that are wise and ethically sound, not only towards us but also towards others. Succinctly put, mindfulness becomes transformative when it revolves around more than the psyche of one person.

By the same token, mindful consumption (outlined further below) works when it revolves around a mindset of care towards self, the community, and nature, and around behavior that avoids excessive consumption (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas, 2011). How topical – and successful – such a mindset can be is aptly illustrated by the global clothing company Patagonia: the company engages with its customers in an ongoing partnership committed to *repair, share, and recycle* any Patagonia garment purchased.

3. MAPPING MINDFULNESS SCHOOLS TO MINDFULNESS MOTIVATIONS

I draw on a synthesis of scientific mindfulness literatures relevant for consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing and combine it with Shapiro's (1992) three-fold typology of motivations for engaging in meditation to create an integrative matrix mapping mindfulness schools to mindfulness motivations. I have added a new fourth motivation, prosocial engagement, to include a motivation for engaging in mindfulness that reflects a focus on collective wellbeing

and metacognitive practice and that is not yet explicitly included in mainstream mindfulness debates, especially in the first-generation mindfulness intervention literature. Prosocial engagement expresses a deliberate other-orientation in a conscious act of social engagement, and is related to collective mindfulness practices. Figure 1 shows the mindfulness matrix, categorizing relevant mindfulness literatures into four quadrants of motivation, arranged by intention and attention focus.

Figure 1 is organized as follows. The horizontal axis represents a continuum of attention focus, specifically ranging from focusing one's attention on cultivating nonjudgmental present-moment awareness through perceiving sensations, feelings, and thoughts on one hand, to focusing on metacognitive practice, minimizing automatic judgment (of self and of external stimuli) and maximizing alternative interpretations (more on this further below). The vertical axis represents a continuum of intention focus, ranging from cultivating individual wellbeing on the one hand to cultivating collective wellbeing on the other. In each of the four quadrants, key mindfulness literatures relevant to consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing are depicted in relation to attention and intention focus as well as to respective motivation to engage: (I) Personal stress reduction via self-regulation practices; (II) Cognitive flexibility – defined as the capability of adaptively and flexibly responding to particular situations, rather than thinking rigidly or on autopilot (Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson, 1999; Shapiro et al., 2006) – via self-exploration practices; (III) Collective stress management via prosocial engagement; and (IV) Insight and wisdom beyond self via self-liberation practices.

Insert FIGURE 1 about here

In the sections that follow, four types of mindfulness schools of thought and their core processes relevant to consumer wellbeing are discussed alongside perils of siloed practice and opportunities to extend consumer wellbeing through further integration. The aim in this is to

encourage theory-based integration and bricolage in combining different mindfulness approaches for different purposes, to extend the transformative potential of next-generation mindfulness, for one and all.

3.1 MBSR and MBCT: Mindfulness for Personal Stress Reduction

3.1.1 MBSR, the cradle of mindfulness intervention science

Recall that Kabat-Zinn created MBSR to empower hospital patients with chronic physical or mental pain to help themselves rather than depend exclusively on hospital treatment. The predominate aim of MBSR and related programs is thus to help individuals manage self-regulation challenges better, such as dealing effectively with unhelpful negative thoughts, as depicted in quadrant I of the integrative matrix.

Scientific research on MBSR has spawned a burgeoning literature investigating and adapting first-generation MBPs based on the MBSR training protocol (Crane et al., 2017). An extensive body of evidence indicates that taking part in MBSR training improves individuals' wellbeing, both in clinical as well as in non-clinical contexts (e.g. Creswell, 2017; Jamieson and Tukey, 2017).

All MBPs share a common core aim: helping individuals with personal stress reduction, and thus improving individual wellbeing. MBPs include the 8-week Mindful Self-Compassion program (Neff and Germer, 2013), as well as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT).

3.1.2 Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

About twenty years ago, a related mindfulness intervention program based on MBSR was created; mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). MBCT was designed to treat persistent depression (Segal et al., 2001). MBCT mirrors MBSR in format and delivery but has a stronger emphasis on cognitive therapy – hence the name change to “MBCT” (this is also why it is located on the right of MBSR in the integrative map as it is comparatively more focused on cognitive flexibility). MBCT has been shown to be as effective in treating chronic depression

as antidepressant medication (Kuyken et al., 2015). This is a ground-breaking finding, considering that the mindfulness training at the heart of MBCT is ‘merely’ mental exercise. In particular, Kuyken et al.’s (2015) finding demonstrates that such mental activity can significantly, beneficially, and sustainably alter the chemical imbalance in the human brain that causes depression just as well as the chemical substances that antidepressants are made of. The crucial innovation here is that this effect is said to occur without external chemical input liable to causing adverse side effects, as is often the case when taking antidepressants.

MBCT is an important adaptation of MBSR: a recent systematic review and meta-analysis comparing the effectiveness of MBSR with MBCT with nonclinical samples suggests that MBCT consistently produces the largest effect sizes in promoting psychological health and wellbeing (Querstet et al., 2020). The authors speculate that the reason for this apparent “superiority” of MBCT over MBSR may be that MBCT has a stronger cognitive focus on facilitating decentering. This is relevant for mindfulness research in a consumer context because it demonstrates that a shift away from ‘traditional’ first-generation mindfulness practice may extend its effectiveness in generating consumer wellbeing.

3.1.3 Core processes

The basic process underlying the effectiveness of MBSR and MBCT is that mindfulness meditation practice helps individuals become more mindful, which in turn helps them change their relationship with the stress associated with their ailments and thus manage their suffering more wisely and effectively. Meditation is the core practice in MBSR and related mindfulness programs, commonly involving two styles: focused attention (FA) meditation and open monitoring (OM) meditation (Lutz et al., 2008). FA operates through focusing attention on a chosen object, for example the breath, and OM follows on from FA once the mind is reasonably stable and less distracted than before starting the meditation practice. OM operates by replacing ‘effortful’ attention focus on an object with ‘effortless’ moment by moment awareness of

experience. Its predominate aim is to generate more clear reflexive awareness and decreased reactivity to sensations, feelings, and thoughts (ibid.).

3.1.4 Potential perils of ongoing siloed practice

The inner world focus of first-generation MBPs is core to how the general public today understands mindfulness also. More specifically, mindfulness is seen predominately as an instrument of self-help, in particular “a technique to help you relax” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). Moreover, much mainstream mindfulness scholarship and practice emphasizes mindfulness-as-relief over mindfulness-as-engagement (Choi, Gruman, and Leonard, 2021).

As discussed, acceptance is a key moderator in mindfulness training and an essential ingredient for its salubrious effect (Lindsay and Creswell, 2017). In fact, present-moment attention and awareness is only beneficial if a person also engages in conscious (cognitive) acceptance of the situation at hand (ibid.). As a case in point, greater emotional and body awareness, without similarly high experiential acceptance, has been linked with substance abuse (Leigh and Neighbors, 2009; Eisenlohr-Moul et al., 2012). Moreover, Pearson et al. (2015) found that individuals practicing mindfulness who exhibit high scores on awareness-related facets of mindfulness and very low scores on acceptance-related facets displayed very low degrees of emotional health.

Recent research also suggests that acceptance mediates the effect of MBSR on cognitive flexibility (Zou et al., 2020), yet as mentioned above, acceptance skills training may be a less prominent part of MBSR training, at least during its first part (c.f. Baer, Carmody, and Hunsinger, 2012; Desbordes et al., 2015). In fact, a recent Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) examining the active ingredients of MBSR training found that MBSR training that exclusively taught monitoring present-moment attention skills was insufficient in raising participants’ ability to manage stress resiliently, while a well-matched MBSR course that also included

acceptance skills significantly increased stress resilience (Chin et al., 2019). The authors suggest that acceptance skills may be the key active ingredient of MBPs and argue to increase its prominence within mindfulness training to enhance training effectiveness (ibid.).

Today, mindfulness is practiced by schoolchildren as well as corporate leaders and military personnel (van Dam et al., 2017). Training is increasingly offered by enthusiastic volunteers. If these individuals are not sufficiently aware of the mechanisms that make mindfulness meditation ‘work’ or if the MBP is shortened such that there is not enough space to cultivate acceptance skills alongside present-moment awareness, then mindfulness may promise “happiness” and relief, which in turn may prompt people to practice mindfulness in order to avoid the acceptance of discomfort in a short-term, superficial way (Bahl, 2017), rather than understand the true nature of discomfort and suffering, which is an essential aspect of the transformative potential of mindfulness.

3.1.5 Opportunities to extend consumer wellbeing

The rest of this paper is dedicated to outlining opportunities for integrating other relevant mindfulness schools with MBSR/MBCT based research and practice, to extend the scope of mindfulness for consumer and societal wellbeing. Why should MBSR/MBCT scholars and practitioners consider stepping beyond the mindfulness-through-meditation paradigm and explore synergies with other, potentially not meditation-focused mindfulness literatures?

Because the deeper meaning of meditation goes beyond its operational definition as self-regulation of attention (c.f. Goleman and Schwartz, 1976), and because this definition of meditation may not be apt for certain populations such as individuals exposed to (latent) trauma. Essentially, meditative practice can take the meditator into three different directions; (1) the meditator may experience little difference in their habitual pattern of being; (2) meditation may have a paradoxical “holier than thou” effect of enhancing the meditator’s ego and sense of personal achievement; or (3) the act of meditation dissolves the meditator’s sense

of egohood (often experienced as fear or arrogance) and induces greater openness, to others, and towards all sentient beings, even only temporarily (Willmott, 2018). Meditation, thus, is an embodied praxis of consciously realizing and dissolving the delusion of separateness and defensiveness which stands in the way of ethical, open-minded communication and wise prosocial engagement with others in the world (ibid.). As Willmott (2018, 278) argues, “mindfulness is nothing special; it is very ordinary, as natural as breathing, but its effect is to detoxify action.”

This action focus is what should inform the exploration of opportunities to integrate first-generation meditative mindfulness with other relevant literatures. For example, a recent systematic literature review found that mindfulness cultivated through meditation in general undeniably attenuates intergroup bias, with small but significant effect sizes (Oyler et al., 2021). However, Langerian socio-cognitively focused Mindfulness interventions (covered in detail below) have also consistently been shown to reduce intergroup prejudice, for example by instructing study participants to notice 10 different things about their conversation partner, increasing interpersonal closeness, or instructing individuals to notice different nuances between being handicapped vs not handicapped, reducing prejudice towards people with disabilities (for a review, see Khoury, 2018).

The following questions may prompt opportunities to extend consumer wellbeing through further integration with mindfulness practices from the literatures in the other quadrants of the integrative mindfulness matrix:

- When preparing a mindfulness intervention for individuals or consumer groups, might there be any reticence or unwillingness to meditate among intervention participants, potentially related to latent trauma exposure (see section 2.3)? If so, consider switching to non-meditative mindfulness practices focused on developing cognitive flexibility for these

individuals (quadrant II in Fig. 1) or on collective stress management through prosocial engagement (quadrant III), as listed below.

- What is the desired focus of attention in practicing mindfulness; non-judgmental present-moment awareness or metacognitive practice (see section 2.4)? For example, in the case of mindfulness practice to help with substance abuse issues, consider including metacognitive or socio-cognitive practices with strong focus on acceptance, beyond present-moment attention (quadrant II).
- Is there enough space in an MBP for consumer wellbeing to develop not only attention and awareness skills but also acceptance skills (see section 2.5)? If not, consider including metacognitive practices that target acceptance and metacognitive capacity directly, e.g. Langerian mindfulness or mindful consumption techniques listed below (quadrant II or IV).
- Is there an interpersonal, social or collective aspect of generating consumer wellbeing through mindfulness (see section 2.6)? For example, if the particular context includes consumer groups, support communities to promote healthy behaviours or overcome addiction, or people interested in collective action towards a shared cause such as promoting recycling or reducing food waste in a community, consider focusing more on mindfulness practices dedicated to collective wellbeing, as below (quadrant III or IV).

3.2 Langerian Mindfulness and ACT for Cognitive Flexibility

3.2.1 Langerian socio-cognitive approach to mindfulness

Around the same time as Kabat-Zinn started developing MBSR, another scholar, at another eminent university, pioneered a different mindfulness school of thought using different approaches to generating mindfulness: Ellen Langer at Harvard University. Langer defines mindfulness as “openness to novelty” (Langer, 1989), conceptualizing it as an everyday socio-cognitive practice of consciously noticing information in the present situation and how it is automatically (or mindlessly) categorized, in order to become more actively engaged in the

present (Langer, Blank, and Chanowitz, 1978; Langer, 1989). In contrast to MBSR-based mindfulness meditation focusing on nonjudgmental present-moment awareness, Langerian mindfulness aims to minimize automatic judgment and maximize awareness of alternative viewpoints.

The innovation offered by Langerian socio-cognitive approach to mindfulness is that people can practice mindfulness in situ by focusing on context and the person's environment (Langer, 1989). In other words, Langerian "everyday mindfulness" does not involve taking a break from active engagement with the situation at hand in order to direct attention inward and engage in meditative practice focused on the breath or other intrapsychic experience. This mindful process of "actively drawing novel distinctions" (ibid.) is said to promote cognitive flexibility in relation to the situation at hand (Pagnini et al., 2016). This approach to mindfulness is therefore targeting in particular self-exploration aims within individuals (and hence located in the upper right hand quadrant in the integrative matrix).

Langer initially focused her empirical investigations on the debilitating cognitive effect of *mindlessness*, not *mindfulness*. She and her colleagues defined "mindlessness" as not paying careful attention to important aspects of a situation and thus responding to it on autopilot, rather than actually processing relevant information (Langer, Blank, and Chanowitz, 1978). In a landmark study, Langer's researcher team suggested that people tend to be absent-minded in more everyday interactions than social scientists had previously assumed by showing that a majority of individuals mindlessly comply with a request to let someone jump ahead of them in a queue of people waiting to make photocopies if the requester provided any reason, no matter how nonsensical: "May I use the xerox machine, because I have to make copies" resulted with similar compliance as "May I use the xerox machine, because I'm in a rush" (ibid., 637). The researchers argued that in situations that follow conventional patterns, people are neither

rational nor irrational; instead it would appear that “mindlessness is the rule rather than the exception” (ibid., 641).

Langer explored different methods to raise mindfulness, in particular proactively and consciously considering different aspects of objects, stimuli, or situations, before taking action, as well as manipulating the context or environment. In another landmark study, Langer and Rodin (1976) investigated the effect of altering the context in which nursing home residents navigated their choices, by comparing nursing home residents who were given enhanced personal responsibility (for example caring for a plant in their room) to a control group who continued to live in a virtually decision-free environment, in other words on auto-pilot (where for example the plants in their room was cared for by nursing home staff). While the researchers’ initial finding of improved wellbeing as a result of enhanced personal responsibility (ibid.) was subsequently corrected as only marginally significant (Rodin and Langer, 1978), the significantly beneficial effect of reintroducing control into the lives of older adults on their general wellbeing has been reliably confirmed in the literature (Mallers, Claver, and Lares, 2013).

This is because, Langer argues, situations that suggest gradual and insidious loss of (mental) control prompt people to mentally retreat further and further – and conversely, when people feel they have some control over their environment, they actively and consciously engage with it (Langer, 1989). Research on this socio-cognitive approach to mindfulness suggests that conscious attention to the present moment and awareness of the present situation marked by a “heightened state of involvement and wakefulness” is an effective antidote to habitual, automatic information processing (Hart, Ivttzan, and Hart, 2013). Indeed, the benefits of Langerian non-meditative mindfulness practices for reducing anxiety and depression and increasing wellbeing are extensively documented (Alexander et al., 1989; Haigh et al., 2011; Pagnini et al., 2015).

3.2.2 Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Over twenty years ago, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a therapeutic behavior change approach, emerged in the scientific literature, combining mindfulness with acceptance and exploring what is valuable when encountering difficulty, rather than changing cognition and affect itself (Hayes, 2004). In the integrative map in Figure 1, it is located in the upper right hand quadrant alongside Langerian mindfulness, because it draws on mindfulness yet does not predominately focus on formal meditation practice.

The core aim in ACT (pronounced like the verb (to) “act”) is to help individuals develop psychological flexibility, rather than mindfulness per se, in particular by combining mindful acceptance with committing to values-based action (Flaxman, Bond, and Livheim, 2013). Psychological flexibility is a person’s ability to be aware of the present moment and accept arising thoughts and feelings flexibly, that is, to persist or change behavior depending on what action is most personally valuable rather than on impulse (Hayes et al., 2006). There is considerable overlap between psychological and cognitive flexibility, conceptually as well as in relation to behavior change (Whiting et al., 2017). Over the last 20 years, research on ACT has generated an extensive evidence base in improving wellbeing and performance, including in work contexts (Prudenzi et al., 2022; Towey-Swift, Lauvrud, and Whittington, 2022). The mechanisms of action that underlie ACT processes reflect in particular the importance of acceptance for cultivating transformative capacity among course participants – hence the acronym ACT starts with “A” for acceptance.

3.2.3 Core processes

The basic process underlying the effectiveness of Langerian mindfulness consists in helping individuals clarify and change their relationship with themselves and with the situation at hand by proactively seeking alternative interpretations of situations and stimuli, which fosters feeling comfortable with ambiguity and an increased sense of self-acceptance. Langer and

colleagues argue that “one of the most natural methods of reducing self-evaluation and replacing it with acceptance is to assume a mindset of *mindfulness* rather than *mindlessness*” (Langer, 1989; cited in Carson and Langer, 2006, 29, emphasis in original).

By the same token, ACT frameworks generate mindfulness and increased awareness of self-in-context (Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson, 1999), meaning that the individual becomes capable of noticing that their thoughts and feelings occur *in context*, as opposed to being fixed, permanent properties of the person. ACT is a highly pragmatic psychotherapy approach, based on the premise that human suffering unfortunately is part of how humans think, speak and act, and rather than attempting to change this fact of life, ACT relies predominately on using metaphors to help people (a) accept, and (b) commit to values-based action, and in this way liberate themselves from unhelpful mind content (Afari and Stoddard, 2014).

Indeed, the process of changing our relationships with our thoughts, emotions, and the situation at hand is called *decentering* in mainstream mindfulness intervention science (see Bernstein et al., 2015, discussed previously). Langerian mindfulness and ACT therefore directly aim at cultivating metacognitive capacity. By way of illustration, the *fly fishing* metaphor (Whitney, 2013, cited in Afari and Stoddard, 2014, 79) helps individuals decenter from unhelpful thoughts and urges. Take compulsive shopping as an example. The metaphor is as follows: “*Our minds can be like really skilled fly fishers. Our thoughts and feelings are like highly specific flies the mind designs – just the ones we’ll bite on. The mind casts them out on the stream in front of us, and they seem so real that we buy them, bite, and get hooked.*” It is used to stimulate reflection and metacognitive awareness about thoughts, moods, and impulses that might “hook” us which in turn helps us choose action that is in line with our values, thus becoming able to “unhook” from thoughts, feelings, and actions that might derail us, such as purchasing something compulsively that we ultimately don’t want.

Langerian mindfulness makes extensive use of koans or parables, intellectual puzzles, and humor (Carson and Langer, 2006). Take for example the topic, “being enthusiastic about mindfulness”. If you first reflect on what might be helpful about such an attitude (whether you personally hold this attitude or not makes no difference here), for instance, what might be the potential benefits you could enjoy, and so on, followed by a consideration of what may be unhelpful about such an attitude, for example, what information might you dismiss out of hand, and so on, and subsequently note what new perspectives and choices about the topic open up for you when reflecting on the validity of both attitudes, you are essentially becoming more mindful of this topic, and consequently may take decisions and actions that are more wise and effective than deciding on topics related to mindfulness *on autopilot*. The same exercise can be done with virtually any topic for which it is possible to hold contrasting evaluations or judgments. This type of mindful mental practice is conceptually similar to what is called “analytical meditation” in Eastern contemplative traditions, to help individuals discipline their minds and gain new insight (see Rajiv, 2006 for a range of examples).

3.2.4 Potential perils of siloed practice for consumer wellbeing

It is not true that Langerian and related metacognitive practices are entirely intellectual processes and therefore fail to generate a state of embodiment. Embodiment is defined as cognitive processes grounded in an organism’s motor and sensory experiences with bidirectional links between mind and body (Barsalou, 2008). Embodiment and its interaction between body, mind, and the external world is seen as centrally important for defining mindfulness (Stanley, 2013). Langerian mindfulness, when inducing a mindset associated with different physical attributes, such as imagining being a pilot, can consistently cultivate measurable changes in the body, such as better vision, suggesting that such changes in cognitive processes are mirrored in the body (see Khouri et al., 2017, for a review). However, if a practice to notice novelty and categorize events in different ways remains exclusively at an

intellectual level – e.g. thinking of as many uses for a simple object as possible, as in Guilford’s (1967) Alternative Uses Test – then individual consumers and communities are unlikely to benefit from these types of mindfulness practices.

3.2.5 Opportunities for integration with first-generation mindfulness

If individual consumers or consumer groups are particularly motivated to explore their consumer choices and behavior more deeply, then Langerian mindfulness and ACT are particularly appropriate. This is because these approaches to mindfulness focus directly on self-exploration, concerned with understanding one’s mind better, to make sense of and mindfully accept the often conflicting thoughts and emotions many of us experience.

Any consumer context – for example relating to health, family, or financial matters – may be used for Langerian metacognitive reflection intended to help change individuals change their relationship with their thoughts and emotions and provide a sense of perspective. Below are several suggestions for enhancing mindful self-acceptance based on Carson & Langer (2006):

1. Consider yourself as a “work in progress”. Write about what may/may not, be true about who you are and what you are good/bad at. What new possibilities can open up for you?
2. Add humour. Uncover even tiny aspects of the situation that could be considered funny, strange, or outright bizarre. How might this help you accept the situation a little more?
3. Consider alternative understandings of what is “problematic” about you. In how many ways and in how many different contexts might a “negative” aspect of you be beneficial?
4. Reflect on significant events daily. What new perspectives can you see when reviewing what you have observed during the day?
5. Keep a journal of joyful moments. List what you are grateful for and look at this list often.

Consumer wellbeing also involves peaceful coexistence not only with one’s own (often contradictory) thoughts and feelings, but also with other individuals and groups, for example

in local communities. Community groups practicing mindfulness together can integrate into their mindfulness practices simple ACT techniques for individuals, such as decentering practices to help individual de-fuse from their thoughts and feelings – in other words, create mental space between their mind and their present-moment experience. An example of such quick and easy-to-understand practices are adding the words “I’m having the thought that... “ in front of negative judgments (such as “I’m stupid” or “he’s an idiot”), and then repeating the full sentence “I’m having the thought that I’m stupid / he’s an idiot” several times, focusing on what it sounds and feels like in one’s mind, which provides a sense of mental space to almost everyone (Harris, 2009).

In addition, many of the ACT metaphors can be used in group settings, some of which can even be acted out by several participants in front of the group in a fishbowl-style learning activity, to help people uncover different perspectives on difficult topics in a safe, gently humorous setting. For example, the Passengers on the bus metaphor (Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson, 1999) illustrates how personally valuable goal-directed behavior, such as the aim of exercising regularly, often involves wrestling with unhelpful thought content that is liable to derail action in service of moving towards that goal. In the metaphor, the goal of regular exercise is the destination of “the bus”, and unhelpful thought content are “the passengers”; inner voices that suggest heading into a different direction. The ACT facilitator would invite a participant to act out the role of the bus driver, who is instructed to try to stay focused on achieving her aim of exercising regularly, while several other participants – pretending to sit behind the driver on an imaginary bus – speak out different “passenger voices” as the driver attempts to move towards her fitness goal. Typical “passenger voices” include “it’s no use, you won’t look any different in 3 months anyway”, or “last time it didn’t work out either, so why should it work this time?”, or “you need to relax more, not work out! Sit down on the sofa, that feels so good!”. The aim of the exercise is to notice with mindful acceptance how

real and universal such unhelpful voices are, and subsequently also notice that people can – and do – move forward in service of meaningful goals despite the ongoing existence of these unhelpful voices.

Socio-cognitive approaches to mindfulness can also involve written, structured reflection, to generate mental space between the person and their thoughts and feelings. An example of this, based on Shapiro et al. (2006), and applied to financial wellbeing, is as follows, (Tobias Mortlock, in Thomson, 2023):

1. Writing down a few words about your money goals (and what you want money for).
2. Looking over what you've written, write down what stories form in your mind (for example your past experience with money, decisions you took, and so on).
3. Now look over what you've written so far, and consider what good financial choices you could make right now in your life. Circle the one that most resonates with you, and turn that choice into action in your life.

For more ACT metaphors, see Afari and Stoddard (2014) or Harris (2009); for more information on Langerian mindfulness practice, see Langer (1989); and for additional structured mindfulness reflection practices, see Tobias Mortlock (2022).

3.3. Collective mindfulness / Mindful organizing in High-Reliability Organizations (HROs)

While prominent mindfulness debates in behavioral and clinical science have focused on mindfulness as an inner quality (c.f. Bishop et al., 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2005), in management science mindfulness is a concept that stretches beyond the psychological properties of individuals. In similar ways as concepts such as 'performance' or 'wellbeing' can apply to an individual as well as to groups of individuals and even entire organizations or communities, so is workplace mindfulness a multi-level construct. This means that mindfulness in a work context may apply at individual level and emerge through meditative as well as non-meditative

individual practice, and it may also apply at collective levels, with people interacting with each other mindfully and with mindfulness being embedded in interpersonal relations and interactions (Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016).

What is collective mindfulness? In contrast to a focus on individual stress management through MBSR and related mindfulness training programs, collective mindfulness is a social construct, defined as a team's collective capability to become aware of discriminatory detail about emerging issues and to act swiftly in response to these details (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, 1999). In other words, people working together and acting mindfully on a collective scale manage stress collectively: they are able to anticipate, detect, and appropriately respond to unexpected, stressful problems (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 1999; Vogus et al., 2014). Collective mindfulness is also referred to as mindful organizing (MO) because it is enacted through a dynamic process of *organizing mindfully*: people acting and interacting by paying attention, and responding, to each other's needs, concerns, and benefits (Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016).

Collective mindfulness arises out of specific social practices, actions, and communication patterns that liken the “collective mind” of a group of individuals who organize mindfully like a flock of birds flying in unison, with each bird constantly paying attention not only to their own direction, but also to every other member of the flock (Weick and Roberts, 1993). In this way, every member of the flock contributes to the collective effort, and constantly aligns individual action with the overall direction of the collective. This can look and sound messy, and noisy too: if you have ever experienced a gaggle of geese flying overhead, you can imagine how much communication, alignment, and realignment is involved in negotiating a “collective mind” in a group of individuals, a community, or a work team.

A substantial body of scientific evidence indicates that collective mindfulness is a hallmark of High-Reliability Organizations (HROs). HROs are organizations that operate in highly stressful, complex, and volatile environments, for example nuclear submarines, intensive care units, or air traffic control centers. Unexpected challenges frequently make the work life of people operating in an HRO stressful, not least because failure to perform in an HRO often results in loss of limb or life. However, the root cause of an HRO to develop capacity to avoid catastrophic failure and perform in nearly error-free ways despite operating in extreme, stressful conditions, are five interrelated processes of collective mindfulness (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, 1999), outlined further below.

While the concepts of collective mindfulness and MO were originally created in the context of HROs, it has been shown to apply to any group and organization today capable of anticipating and responding to its context and challenges with awareness and refusing to operate on ‘auto pilot’ (Fiol and O’Connor, 2003; Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane, 2016). The insights drawn from collective mindfulness/MO research can also benefit groups outside organizational contexts, such as families, schools, and consumption communities.

That is because many communities and social groups as well as most families today share an important feature with corporations: their members are interdependent and their actions impact one another (whether individual members are aware of, or concerned about, this or not). Indeed, while MO may appear to align closely with good practice in standard management, leading collective mindfulness experts emphasize that teams who organize mindfully “are motivated to work for the benefit of others and are more receptive to others’ perspectives and incorporate those perspectives into their work” (Vogus et al., 2014, 592). This is connected to how Bodhi (2011) described the two-fold definition of the mental discipline that is at the heart of traditional mindfulness practice: objectively relating to one’s experience on the one hand, and a wise, compassionate interpretation of this experience on the other. It also links to the original other-

oriented motivations that form an essential part of wisdom traditions yet that are often overlooked in first-generation mindfulness debates (van Doesum et al., 2013). In other words, the emotional climate that underlies MO is one of interpersonal trust, mutual respect, and a commitment to collaborate with each other, especially when collaborating may be uncomfortable or stressful. This emotional climate needs to be assumed when considering the five collective mindfulness processes below.

3.3.1 Core processes

The following five interrelated processes of collective mindfulness jointly generate MO in any group – and as mentioned previously, MO is valuable to individuals and groups because it means groups become capable of *collectively* anticipating and responding to unexpected stressful events (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2011), rather than leaving individuals to cope with stressful challenges by themselves.

1) “*Sensitivity to Operations*”. Put into everyday language, this means paying attention to day-to-day activities as opposed to the plans and strategies set by the group’s leadership. In a work context, this involves regularly checking that people on the shop floor are focusing their efforts on implementing the strategic priorities set by leadership, or if people’s actions are in fact focused on something else entirely, bypassing rules to make the operation ‘work’ for example. In a family or consumer context, this is about checking if people’s *espoused* theories align with their theories-in-use (Argyris and Schön, 1974). For instance, do parents and their children actually do what they say they do, or are their actions out of sync with their claims; are consumers actually aware of their consumption patterns; and so on. Individuals who care about each other can help one another make ‘invisible’ tendencies or patterns ‘visible’, by pointing out potential discrepancies between espoused and theories-in-use that they notice in themselves and in the other. A great example of a consumer group where members care about each other and are sensitive to “operational” alignment or discrepancies between intent and action is

Weight Watchers or related consumer groups set up to collectively promote healthy eating or drinking habits.

2) “*Preoccupation with Failure*”. The plain English definition of this group process is proactively noticing and openly discussing difficulty, both in terms of problems that have already occurred, and regarding potential problems that may arise in future. Many people in groups and work teams talk about problems, but “preoccupied” here means “fascinated” or “actively engaged” whenever difficulty or problems are being discussed or addressed. This is akin to what management scientists call risk management, yet it is emotionally more challenging than it may appear to openly discuss actions that have gone wrong and to be equally as open about exploring what may go wrong in future. This is because such discussions are prone to include undercurrents of interpersonal judgment and blame as well as feelings of shame. While counterintuitive, being committed to routinely discussing how to *anticipate* and *respond to* difficulty can normalize such practices and foster more open communication especially about uncomfortable topics. In turn, this paves the ground for dealing with difficult issues more effectively. Families and consumer groups in particular may practice sharing what actions (in the past and in the future) may be uncomfortable or stressful, to promote greater awareness, acceptance, and choice around such actions. How effective this group process can be is exemplified by the Alcoholics Anonymous twelve steps program, openly admitting and routinely discussing problems and mistakes made, in order to change one’s relationship with these challenges and to generate more wise and effective choices on an ongoing basis.

3) “*Reluctance to Simplify*”. This term describes a group of people who are collectively committed not to brush difficult or uncomfortable issues under the proverbial carpet. This collective mindfulness process is interrelated to the one above, in that it describes the counterintuitive behavioral norm of welcoming difficult discussions, rather than cutting conversations short when the topic of discussion is complex, challenging, or ambiguous.

Groups who can hold such difficult conversations are capable of fighting the common psychological need for cognitive closure (Kruglanski and Webster, 1996) as a group norm, and instead open up towards different, potentially conflicting viewpoints. When family or community members stay in a difficult dialog (for example discussing a family dilemma or a community issue reflecting multiple stakeholder needs) and thus are reluctant to simplify this difficulty, their collective capacity to find a solution fit for purpose increases. Community consultations are another example of people committed to be *reluctant to simplify*. This is because engagement and voice matters to social groups, sometimes independent of whether their voice ultimately impact the final decision or not (Tyler, DeGoey, and Smith, 1996).

4) “*Commitment to Resilience*”. In everyday language, this is about being prepared to adapt to unexpected pressure collectively by constantly stepping up and stepping in when group members notice that someone risks being overburdened by the challenge at hand. In the HRO context of an air traffic control center, this group process is essentially a behavioral norm of not focusing one’s attention exclusively on completing one’s own tasks but also paying attention to how well fellow team workers are coping with their tasks, and offering to help when noticing that a co-worker not be able to function 100%. HROs plan their resourcing and reward strategies so that individuals are incentivized and rewarded not only for their own performance but also for being committed to the resilient performance of the team overall. This type of ‘team spirit’ is natural in families and communities in which people care about each other, committed not to leave anyone behind. It can be promoted in family, consumer and community settings by rewarding and showcasing prosocial behaviors, thereby shifting norms of behavior towards a commitment to having each other’s back in the face of challenge.

5) “*Deference to Expertise*”. In plain English, this simply means paying attention to who is *in the moment* most qualified to decide on the best course of action in a challenging situation, independent of rank, role, or years of experience (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, 1999). In a

work context, this is about resisting the *automatic* tendency that the oldest, most highly ranked or most experienced person (i.e. the leader) should ‘always know best’. Instead, it may be that a junior team member with specific expertise knows far better how to solve an unexpected problem, for example dealing with social media adversity if the junior team member is more versed in social media than the team leader. This is essentially about empowering people based on their merits. Many parents around the globe have benefited from deferring technology powers to a technology-savvy child, even only to unlock a blocked smart phone. But proactive and consistent empowerment is a key enabler of this mindful group process: any social or community group can practice paying attention to the diverse skills and contributions of its members, and proactively uncover hidden expertise with the aim of anticipating and responding to the challenges of today with more awareness and choice – yet only if the leaders (parents, community organizers, politicians even) *accept* that power shared means power multiplied.

To date, the collective mindfulness scholarship has largely bypassed prominent mindfulness science debates, in similar ways as Langerian mindfulness and ACT. This is arguably because collective mindfulness is rooted in management science, rather than a combination of contemplative and clinical science which served as foundation for MBSR and related MBIs.

In addition, the collective mindfulness literature conflicts with the afore-mentioned assertion that mindfulness, and its transformative capacity to heal stress and suffering, can only be generated through introspection from the inside out (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). This is despite a recognition among behavioral medicine scholars that mindfulness may be cultivated through non-meditative practice (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown and Ryan, 2004).

3.3.2 Potential perils of siloed practice for consumer wellbeing

Since mindful organizing is a collective process that applies at a level of analysis that relates to entire groups or organizations, it is liable to top-down mental processing, in other words, cognitive processing that remains at the level of the cerebral cortex without involving somatic

or other embodied processing mechanisms (Taylor, Goehler, and Galper, 2010). The risk here is that an over-dependence on conceptual analysis, in contrast to embodied mindfulness practice, may significantly reduce metacognitive capacity (Farb, Anderson, and Segal, 2012) – which means the group or organization is not genuinely operating as a mindful organization, even if it runs efficiently.

Collective metacognitive capacity emerges when groups of individuals open up towards each other and exchange different perspectives about how to respond to surprising and/or difficult situations (Kudesia, 2019). However, this open-minded exchange only emerges when people engage in “heedful interrelating”, defined as people acting in prosocial ways that build collective capacity to jointly respond to unexpected challenges (Weick and Roberts, 1993). This includes interpersonal relations that are of such high quality that there is no risk of interpersonal undermining in the face of unexpected stressors (c.f. Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017). Therefore, mindfulness practices targeting MO need to first and foremost focus on developing an emotional interpersonal foundation for heedful interrelating, in any group. This emotional foundation for MO consists of two factors: (1) pro-sociality; attitudes and behaviors intended to benefit others (Batson and Powell, 2003), and (2) the capacity to be emotionally ambivalent, i.e. capable of experiencing positive and negative emotions at the same time, for example feeling hope as well as doubt (Vogus et al., 2014). In other words, groups whose members are collaborative and even-keeled navigate stressful challenges better.

As a consequence, groups intent on cultivating collective wellbeing as well as collective metacognitive capacity need to include a fourth specific purpose for mindfulness practice, beyond self-regulation, self-exploration, and self-liberation (c.f. Shapiro, 1992): prosocial engagement, with the ultimate aim of generating collective stress management skills.

3.3.3 Opportunities for integration with first-generation mindfulness

Today more than ever, no man is an island, to borrow John Donne's famous statement. A focus on prosocial engagement in mindfulness training and practice is therefore particularly relevant for high-stress contexts where (work or social) cultures drive a public perception of mindfulness-as-relief (Choi, Gruman, and Leonard, 2021) as counter-cultural, unacceptable, or simply not possible. For example, in work cultures marked by especially strong dedication and self-sacrifice such as the Armed Forces, people may be reluctant to practice mindfulness "as self-help" because emphasizing one's own needs over those of others may clash with important personal or collective values (Carter and Tobias Mortlock, 2019).

Since collective mindfulness emerges indirectly as a consequence of a particular "heedful" (Weick and Roberts, 1993) and prosocial way of interacting (Vogus et al., 2014), this means concretely that collectively oriented mindfulness practices need to aim at developing a (micro)culture of pro-sociality, open-mindedness, and psychological safety at an interpersonal level (c.f. Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2017). This needs to be tackled as a social endeavor, in other words, this type of mindfulness needs to be practiced as a team sport (Tobias Mortlock, Querstret, and Carter, 2022).

More specifically, people and groups interested in developing the capacity to manage stress collectively need to jointly develop metacognitive capacity through engaging with each other prosocially to become capable of mutually supporting each other during future stressful challenges.

In a community group context, group members may start this process by reflecting together how mindfully they operate as a group currently. Take the example of an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) support group. The following group exercise can be applied to this example (as well as any other consumer group, association, or even a family):

Each group member is invited to rate the group's performance in each of the collective mindfulness processes, by creating a score for the statements below, ranging from "not much", "a moderate amount", to "very much":

1. *"We are 'sensitive to operations': paying attention to whether and how our day-to-day activities reflect our bigger goals."*
2. *"We are 'preoccupied with failure': proactively engaging with each other in discussing potential upcoming challenges and learning from past mistakes."*
3. *"We are 'reluctant to simplify': not shying away from discussing complex, uneasy problems."*
4. *"We are 'committed to resilience': proactively sharing knowledge and explaining how each of us goes about their contribution to the group so that we are prepared for the scenario where one of us may unexpectedly drop out."*
5. *"We 'defer to expertise': exploring whose skills and expertise are most relevant at any one point, never blindly accepting that the most experienced person always knows best."*

The group can subsequently reflect on any insights and group action this activity has prompted, in particular what they can notice in relation to the lower scores given for any of the five collective mindfulness processes, and what actions may change this.

In other consumer or marketing contexts, prosocial engagement practices geared at cultivating collective stress management capacity may include the following, based on Tobias Mortlock, Querstret, and Carter's (2022) empirical evaluation of a mindfulness-as-team-sport pilot intervention:

1. Cultivate a perception shift so that people see themselves as interdependent, rather than independent of each other, in particular when it comes to dealing with future challenges. Consumer marketing campaigners can communicate this through signaling shared

experiences and connection. An example of this is premium sportswear company Athleta, using the slogan “Alone We Are Strong, United We Thrive” (Marquis, 2020). Community support groups may explore together how they might proactively support each other in relation to a joint upcoming challenge.

2. Promote high-quality interpersonal relationships. We all know how good it feels when someone has our back – yet typically, people today feel less socially connected, hence they are more reluctant to reach out to others in the face of stressful challenges. Allocating and protecting time to developing meaningful social connections with those around us can be simple yet effective. Athleta is a good consumer marketing example for this also, the company provided opportunities for connection among its customer base during the pandemic (see Marquis, 2020). Community group members may draw on interpersonal mindfulness practices (Duncan, Coatsworth, and Greenberg, 2009) to foster interpersonal attunement, or use simple techniques to foster interpersonal closeness, for example having people interview each other using questions such as the ones used in Aron et al.’s (1997) interpersonal closeness study, as part of group mindfulness practices.
3. Cultivate doubt about one’s assumptions, in particular about others. We tend to judge others more harshly when we feel stressed, often assuming the worst about them (Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). Jointly uncovering how quickly we tend to judge others when under pressure, for example by reflecting on Chris Argyris’s *Ladder of Inference* (cited in Senge, 1991), or by completing ‘user manuals’ for each other, to help group members find out how individuals tick, and especially to help prepare for moments where someone stops ‘functioning’ in the face of stress – akin to a washing machine that stops working if overloaded (see Lechner and Tobias Mortlock, 2022, for more information). Such collective exercises can help create a behavioral norm of interrupting the impulse to judge

others harshly when they do something unexpected and instead promote a group climate of giving everyone the benefit of the doubt.

These and related collectively oriented communications and activities can pave the way towards establishing the affective foundation for collective stress management in a consumer context.

3.4 Mindful consumption and mindful inquiry to cultivate insight beyond the self

About a decade ago, leading consumer behaviour scholar Jagdish N. Sheth and colleagues coined the term “mindful consumption”, in recognition of the fact that consumption is critical for personal, social, and economic wellbeing yet it may bring about not only positive but also negative outcomes for the consumer, for business, and for society (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas, 2011, 21). In today’s world, sustainability in consumption is an urgent priority for individuals as well as for society at large. Sustainability strategies have traditionally focused on three dimensions; (1) economic; (2) environmental; and (3) social (Jackson, 2011). However, this ignores that the consumer is a key agent in the struggle for sustainable consumption, and consumers’ actions are crucially important in driving both positive and negative consequences for global sustainability. For this reason, Sheth et al. have created mindful consumption as a consumer-centric approach to sustainability and a mindset that reflects a *triple bottom line* business goal approach, by cultivating a caring mindset towards, as well as temperance concerning, (1) the self; (2) the community; and (3) nature itself (2011). Mindful consumption thus supports the purpose of self-liberation.

Bahl et al. (2016) suggest that mindful consumption is an inquiry-based process that helps consumers cultivate both awareness and insight in order to consciously choose their responses to internal stimuli (bodily sensations, emotions, and thoughts) and to external stimuli rather than reacting on autopilot. Mindful consumption can be defined as “the application of mindfulness to inform the choices consumers make” (Milne, Ordenes, and Kaplan, 2020, 4).

In this way, mindful consumption draws on mindfulness to cultivate insight on issues that stretch beyond the self. This is highly relevant for advocates of sustainability in consumer behavior, for example proponents of the circular economy (McDonough and Braungart, 2009), a global movement to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible and to advocate for regenerative agriculture and the use of renewable energy. According to the Circularity Gap Report 2021, the world's consumer societies need to double global circularity to keep the world thriving and liveable, and changing consumer behavior is vital in moving towards this goal (Circularity Gap Reporting Initiative, 2021).

Mindfulness is linked with sustainable consumption (Fischer et al., 2017), for example trait mindfulness is significantly correlated with self-reported pro-environmental behaviors such as recycling products or using public transport instead of driving a car (Barbaro and Pickett, 2016), and mindfulness training for adolescents at school may foster sustainable consumption albeit with minor behavioral effects (Böhme et al., 2018). This is probably because a mindful attitude supports the development of a “sufficiency economy”, drawing on Buddhist principles of following the middle path which in this context relates to the recognition that consuming too much or too little leads to unhappiness, especially when one's expectations are not satisfied through consumption, while temperance leads to a sense of peace, contentment, and satisfaction with life (Pongsakornrungrasit et al., 2013). However, to genuinely help understand and facilitate sustainability, mindfulness needs to be applied not only at the individual level, and mindfulness and sustainability science and practice need to acknowledge that “the micro and macro are mirrored and interrelated” (Wamsler et al., 2018).

3.4.1 Core processes

Mindful consumption can be transformative by contributing to individual consumer wellbeing but also foster societal as well as environmental wellbeing (Bahl et al., 2016). Bahl and colleagues propose that present-moment attention to sensations, thoughts, and feelings coupled

with an attitude of nonjudgmental acceptance and cognitive flexibility can lead to awareness of inner and outer stimuli which in turn cultivates insight and wisdom that weakens an individual's attachment to habitual behaviors and strengthens her capacity to make transformative choices. Mindful inquiry (Bahl, 2017) in particular is a practical approach to becoming aware of automatic and semi-conscious consumption and other individual and social habits and patterns, linked to different 'circles of influence', e.g. in relation to ourselves, to those in our immediate social environment, and connected to the larger social system we operate in.

3.4.2 Potential perils of siloed practice for consumer wellbeing

Practicing mindfulness for self-liberation purposes involves contemplating issues that are 'bigger than self'. Such issues include for example prosociality, defined as attitudes and actions aimed at benefiting others (Batson and Powell, 2003). However, there is a difference between a mindful attitude and a mindful action. By way of example, mindfulness and prosocial outcomes are linked (Donald et al., 2019; Berry et al., 2020; Schindler and Friese, 2021). Specifically, in Berry et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis the authors differentiated between compassionate attitudes and prosocial action when this type of action was associated with costs to the individual engaging in prosocial behavior (for example offering one's home to a refugee or knowledge-sharing at work), and concluded that no reliable effect of mindfulness meditation on prosocial action could be detected. This means that practices to increase mindful consumption should include a consideration of prosocial action as well as of mindful attitudes.

3.4.3 Opportunities for integration with first-generation mindfulness

Individuals interested in strengthening their own mindful consumption attitudes and behaviors can draw on Bahl's (2017) mindful inquiry, reflecting on the following questions in relation to three circles of influence: (a) personal life; (b) people they interact with; and (c) the social, organizational, or societal processes they are involved in:

1. *Does this consumption align with my values and intentions?*
2. *Will this consumption promote wellbeing for me, others, and the environment?*
3. *How can I demonstrate care for myself, my community, and nature?*

Consumer marketing campaigns can promote more conscious consumerism and build prosocial engagement in various ways. For example, the outdoor retailer Patagonia used the slogan “Don’t Buy This Jacket” in a provocative marketing campaign, to inspire new thinking among its customer base (Patagonia, 2022). Clothing retailer Tom Cridland sells “30-Year Sweatshirts” including a guarantee to mend its sweatshirts for three decades as and when they rip, to fight the fast fashion trend and encourage sustainable consumption (Reimers, 2015). This is similar to Patagonia’s above-mentioned *repair, share, and recycle* consumer policy.

Sustainability scientists and activists should heed Wamsler et al.’s (2018) advice and explore how individual and collective mindfulness and wellbeing practices may interrelate and can jointly support sustainability goals. The Mindfulness and Social Change Network, a global community dedicated to exploring how mindfulness may cultivate sustainability and social justice, and the Contemplative Sustainable Futures Program, aiming to create space for extending opportunities for inner transformation and global sustainability, are two examples of organizations that connect individuals and groups with relevant activities and resources, for example social change practices as well as training and workshops to foster sustainability, diversity and inclusion (Mindfulness and Social Change Network n.d.).

The following questions may guide these explorations:

- What is the particular nature of stress that causes suffering among consumers? How may mindfulness practices be adapted to reflect this particular challenge?

- What consumer challenges may warrant a stronger intention focus on individual vs collective wellbeing, and how may mindfulness help address these?
- How may mindfulness help consumers develop specific relevant metacognitive capacity to enhance consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing?

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper is not a critique of MBSR and related first-generation mindfulness science and practice. It does, however, suggest that to genuinely broaden the scope of mindfulness to generate wisdom and transformative capacity in one and all, we need a shift in how mindfulness is understood. To support both individual as well as collective flourishing, mindfulness research and practice needs to embrace mindfulness as a metacognitive practice as well as non-judgmental present-moment awareness. In addition, we need to integrate collective wellbeing as intended outcomes of mindfulness practice and mindfulness interventions besides individual wellbeing and stress reduction. Finally, beyond mindfulness for self-regulation, self-exploration, and self-liberation, we need mindfulness as prosocial engagement to pave the way towards next-generation mindfulness. The mindfulness matrix provided in this paper, integrating key relevant literatures for consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing, is intended to stimulate follow-up research and practice, to better understand how an integrative theory of mindfulness may help extend the transformative potential of mindfulness, for one and all. To lean on early seventeenth century English poet John Donne once more, when it comes to mindfulness, no man should be an island.

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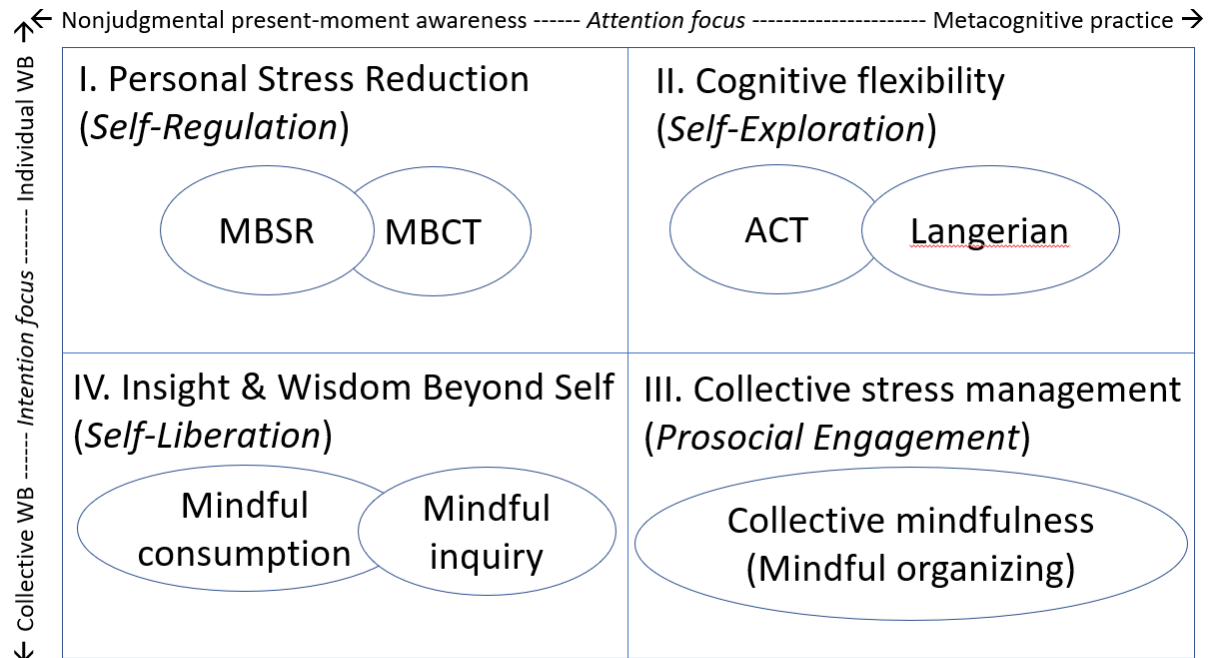
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FIGURE 1

An integrative matrix of key mindfulness literatures relevant for consumer, organizational, and societal wellbeing arranged by motivation: intention and attention focus



WB = Wellbeing.