



Free Will vs Determinism

Done By: Emma Carmichael and Elsie Broersma

Bethel University Psychology Department

INTRODUCTION:

* Free will belongs to the category of phenomena that are actively discussed in scientific discourse but are neither verified nor proven false as people can overcome any obstacle they truly want to. Free will is also studied in philosophy, neuroscience, and psychology (Dotsenko, 2021).

* Determinism is the thesis that every event is the effect of an a past cause (Till, 1992).

* The purpose of this study is to see if priming either free will or determinism will impact a person's preference for either the phrase "Commit suicide" or "Die by suicide". We would predict that participants primed with free will items will prefer the phrase commit suicide while those primed with the determinism items will prefer the phrase "Die by suicide".

* The purpose of this study is to know how free will vs determinism relates to the phrases, "Commit suicide" or "Die by suicide".

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Will participants who are primed with Free Will items prefer the phrase "Commit suicide" while those who are primed with Determinism items phrase "Die by suicide"?

METHODS:

This study was done online using Qualtrics. We used items from a Free Will vs Determinism scale. Participants were randomly assigned with either Free Will items or Determinism Items. Later the participants were asked which phase they preferred, "Commit Suicide" vs "Die by Suicide".

Measures:

Free Will Survey

Determinism Survey

Preference of Prases

Example Question:

People are always at fault for their bad behavior.

Your genes determine your future.

Which phrase do you prefer?
1. Die by suicide
2. Commit suicide

Free Will vs Determinism

A study based on the preference of phrases "Die by Suicide" vs "Commit Suicide"

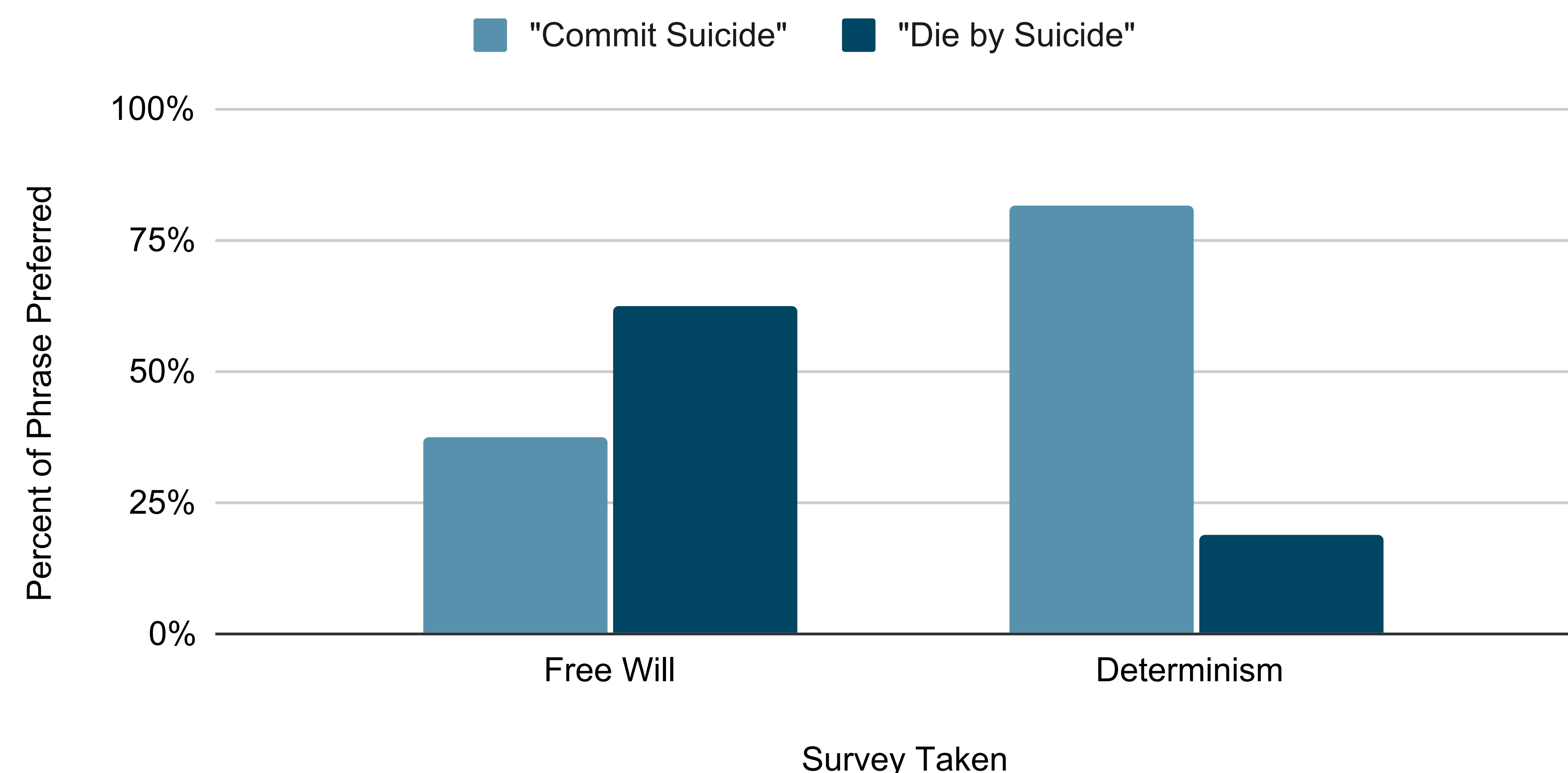
Contingency Tables ▼

Free Will vs. Determinism		Which phrase do you prefer?		
		Die by suicide	Commit suicide	Total
Free Will	Count	10.000	6.000	16.000
	Expected count	6.500	9.500	16.000
	% within row	62.500%	37.500%	100.000%
Deteriminism	Count	3.000	13.000	16.000
	Expected count	6.500	9.500	16.000
	% within row	18.750%	81.250%	100.000%
Total	Count	13.000	19.000	32.000
	Expected count	13.000	19.000	32.000
	% within row	40.625%	59.375%	100.000%

Chi-Squared Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	6.348	1	0.012
N	32		

Free Will vs. Determinism and the Phrase "Commit Suicide" vs. "Die by Suicide"



RESULTS:

Chi Square Data analysis was used to analyze the relationship between which survey was taken and which phrase was preferred. There was a significant relationship. $\chi^2(N=32) = 6.35, p = 0.012$. Our results showed the opposite of what we thought would happen as we thought most people who took the free will survey would prefer the phrase "Commit suicide" over "Die by suicide". But instead people who took the determinism survey preferred the phrase "Commit Suicide".

There is a relationship between which survey the participant takes and which phrase they prefer.

DISCUSSION:

- * Our findings were not what we expected.
- * We believed that participants who took the Free Will survey would predict for to choose the phrase "Commit suicide" and vice versa.
- * Contrary to previous literature (Dotsenko, 2021), we found that 62.5% of participants who took the Free Will survey preferred the phrase "Die by suicide" and 37.5% preferred the phrase "Commit suicide."
- * 18.8% of participants who took the Determinism survey preferred the phrase "Die by suicide" while 81.3% preferred the phrase "Commit suicide."
- * This could be because of the participants not being fully invested in the survey and we had a small sample size.

REFERENCES:

1. Slattery, T. (n.d.). Free Will and Determinism Plus scale (FAD Plus). <https://breakingthefreewillillusion.com/fad-plus/>
2. Till, G. J. (1992). A chaotic approach to free will and determinism. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1148&context=pst>
3. Dotsenko, E. L., & Pchelina, O. V. (2021). Free will as a paradox: empirical evaluation of the construct of everyday consciousness. *PubMed*, 14(2), 137–151. <https://doi.org/10.11621/pir2021.0109>
4. Sauvayre, P. S., & Braucher, D. B. (Eds.). (2021). *The Unconscious: Contemporary Refractions in Psychoanalysis*. Routledge. <https://>