# Free Will And Determinism

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## Introduction

Choosing what option to base our actions on can be very difficult. Both the options of free will and determinism exist and are used by people who commit to these beliefs. Free will is the ability to choose an alternative based on our analysis of outcomes. The process gives the person the opportunity to decide on the available options by his own choice and use any measure to evaluate these outcomes. In contrast, the concept of determinism argues that choices people make are affected by antecedent causes. In this process, choices are not made by free will but are governed by how such a decision was made in history and what outcomes are linked to it. This concept takes help from the factor of rationality and uses it to make decisions. The determinism concept involves external forces to affect our choices, and the person is no longer held responsible for their actions. This contrasting view about both psychological positions has its positives and negatives, and arguments by various studies support both. This paper will discuss two studies based on each concept and will provide a critical analysis of the author's arguments that are linked to morality.

## Discussion

The first study we have chosen is about free will and the moral aspects of holding others responsible and punishing other members of society. This research compiles five studies to analyze the involvement of free will in various decisions. The author's discussion about the concept of free will and how it is linked with morality is based on their combined analysis of 5 studies. According to their analysis, the people who accept free will as an option in making decisions are not guilty of their actions (Clark et al., 501). They hold firm beliefs about their concepts and why they consider free will as an option. The free will beliefs, if affected by the prior knowledge of the issue, give responsibility to the person. Certain factors enforce these beliefs.

The relation of free will with morality shifts the burden of decisions to free will. The person is responsible for actions, and their moral or immoral nature is transferred to the person. It means that if a person chooses an action based on the available options, he is responsible for whether it is moral or immoral. Free will allows a person to be punished for his own actions, as the effects are the property of the person if he chooses them by free will. The person is held responsible for his actions and will be subject to punishment if he is found guilty.

The motivated free belief suggests that a person will be held responsible only if there are no driving forces to motivate them to these actions. These decisions are not always based on rational factors and may result in adverse outcomes. However, deciding which actions are linked by motivation is decided by the person himself. This factor also argues that desires and behaviours were both controllable by the actor and his intention for any decision, as well as his actions, make him responsible for any consequences (Clark et al., 502).

The moral responsibility of any person determines his position in society. If he is given free will to participate in a social activity, he may choose any option like attending positively, participating negatively and against the social change, or not acting at all. Free will, in such cases, may hurt someone's feelings. It can also be against the combined decision of the society and may result in uncooperative activities. It gives the idea that free will is dependent on the situation, and the person can choose to decide which path to follow.

The second study discusses that determinism is necessary to explain moral responsibility. This study focuses on three parts, but only the second part argues about moral responsibility and determinism. This study argues that if a person makes a decision based on determinism, he should not be responsible for the moral value of the choice or the consequences.

Determinism gives personal safety from the negative consequences of the outcome. As the person's own will was not involved in the process of decision-making, he is relieved from the accusation of the act (Vincent, p. 2). The person is then not punishable for his decisions as his free will was not involved in the process. This argument is given in the courts if a person is proven not to have the intent of an action. The author provides examples of Western judicial systems which do not hold the suspect accountable for lacking intent (Vincent, pp. 3).

The second argument given by the author in support of determinism is the relation of decisions with other events and conditions. It provides arguments that actions are affected by the agent's character and laws of nature. This argument is backed by the support of Professor Peter van Inwagen, who argues that whatever is set to happen in the future is already decided by fate, and this fate is inevitable and cannot be changed (Vincent, p. 3). This argument is similar to the concept of "Butterfly Effect." This concept explains every outcome in the universe as a result of a cause. And no effect takes place without some action that makes it happen (Blake).

The argument in this study about morality in determinism frees us, the actors, of the blame for our actions. According to this study, if a man is not in control of what will happen next, how can he be made responsible for his actions? This argument is directed against the process of the judiciary to the extent that agreeing to this would shatter the existence of every human-made law.

The author also argues that human actions are not just based on determinism; rather, the factor of conditioning and disposition also plays a part in decision-making (Vincent, p. 7). According to this argument, a child born into a family of terrorists should not be accountable if he becomes a terrorist as the wrong people conditioned him.

The arguments provided in the first study are more realistic and agreeable. The arguments about freedom regarding morality make a person responsible for his actions and their moral nature. Vincent's argument, in this case, is that several factors affect decisions and contribute to the decision-making process. Vincent's argument is weak as it removes everyone's burden of responsibility. This argument has a false basis because human beings are born with decision power, and it is only because of this ability that they will be judged in the afterlife. Relieving a person of his burden is, therefore, unnatural.

The dependency of human actions on conditioning, disposition, laws of nature, and fate is also against the fact that human beings are responsible for their actions no matter what other factors are involved in them. Using disposition and conditioning as an argument to justify that a person is innocent is against the administrative laws, and the whole structure of the judiciary is based on it.

# Conclusion

It is true that not all human actions are free-will choices or deterministic actions, and justifying that only one of them is correct is difficult. Both studies provide a strong argument in favour of their philosophical concept of morality and punishment. However, based on the argumentation and factual basis, the first study is more acceptable. The author of this study provides more agreeable arguments, and the reader can easily understand their validity. The arguments are more factual, and they are justified by real-life examples.

# Works Cited

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