

Flipping a **coin** for a **decision** and then doing the **opposite** of what it suggests is associated with more **responsibility** and **accountability**

Responsibility and accountability for decisions when flipping a coin

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INTRO

When struggling with decisions, people sometimes flip a coin. Interestingly, when looking at the coin flip's outcome, they do not necessarily follow the coin's suggestion (coin = **decider**), but realize what they really want (coin = **catalyst**). To date, little is known about how people experience and evaluate this phenomenon.

METHODS

In three studies (total $N = 446$), participants judged another person who makes a decision himself vs. flips a coin for a decision and ...

- simply adheres to the coin suggestion (*decider condition*)
- is happy with the coin suggestion and adheres to the suggestion (*catalyst-yes condition*)
- is unhappy with the coin suggestion and does the opposite (*catalyst-no condition*)

RESULTS

- Study 1: Participants ascribe *higher* responsibility and accountability to a person using the coin as **catalyst** vs. **decider**.
- Study 2: Participants ascribe *higher* responsibility and accountability to a person using the coin as **catalyst and doing the opposite** vs. **adhering to it**.
- Study 3: Flipping a coin vs. making a decision on your own is not seen as leading to negative outcomes or an act of tempting fate.

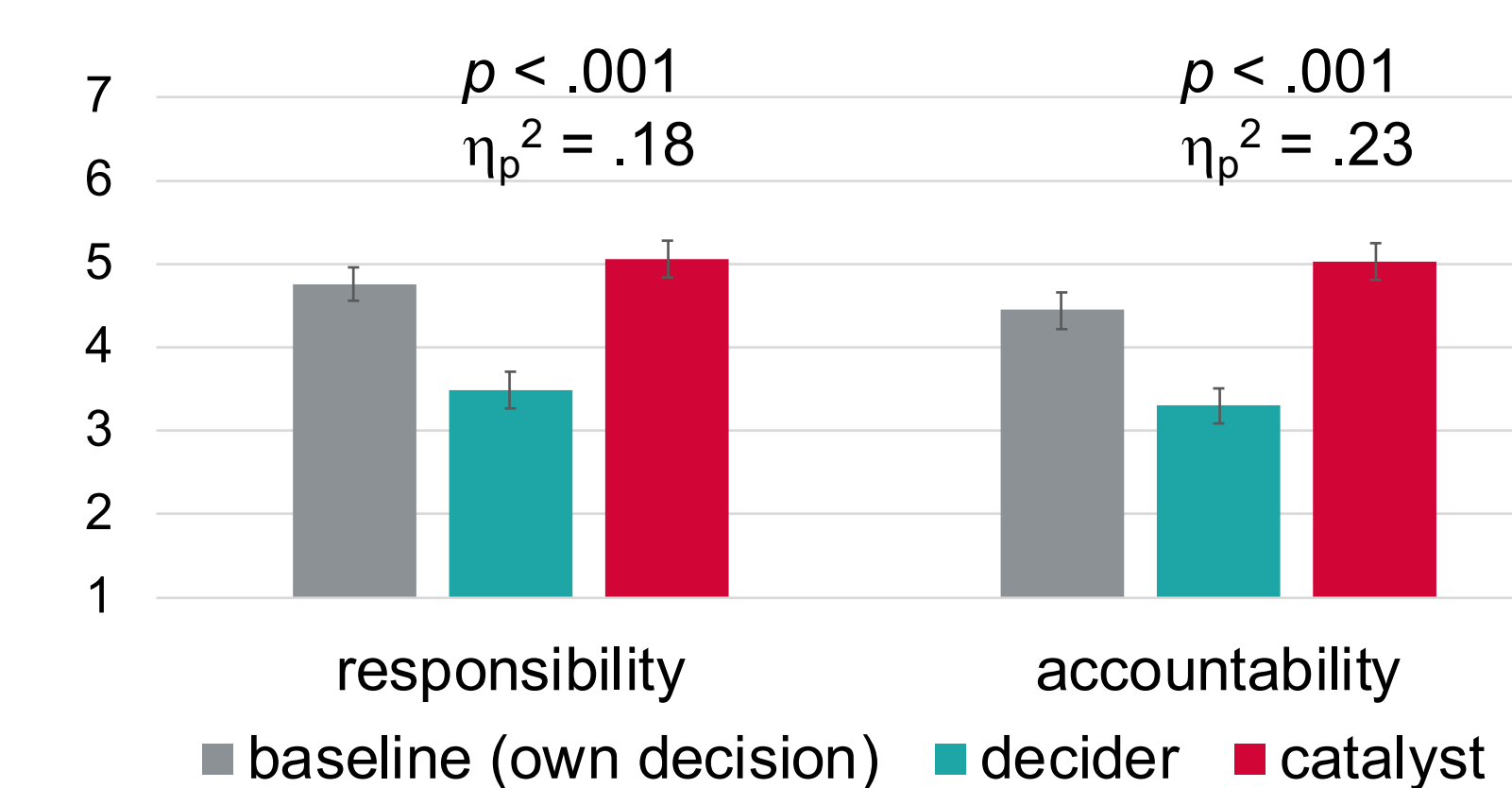
DISCUSSION

- Flipping a coin to decide does not always mean giving up responsibility and accountability for decisions.
- The attributions people make might predict the likelihood of using a coin for own decisions.

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Study 1: Establishing the basic effect

IV: own decision and **decider** vs. own decision and **catalyst**

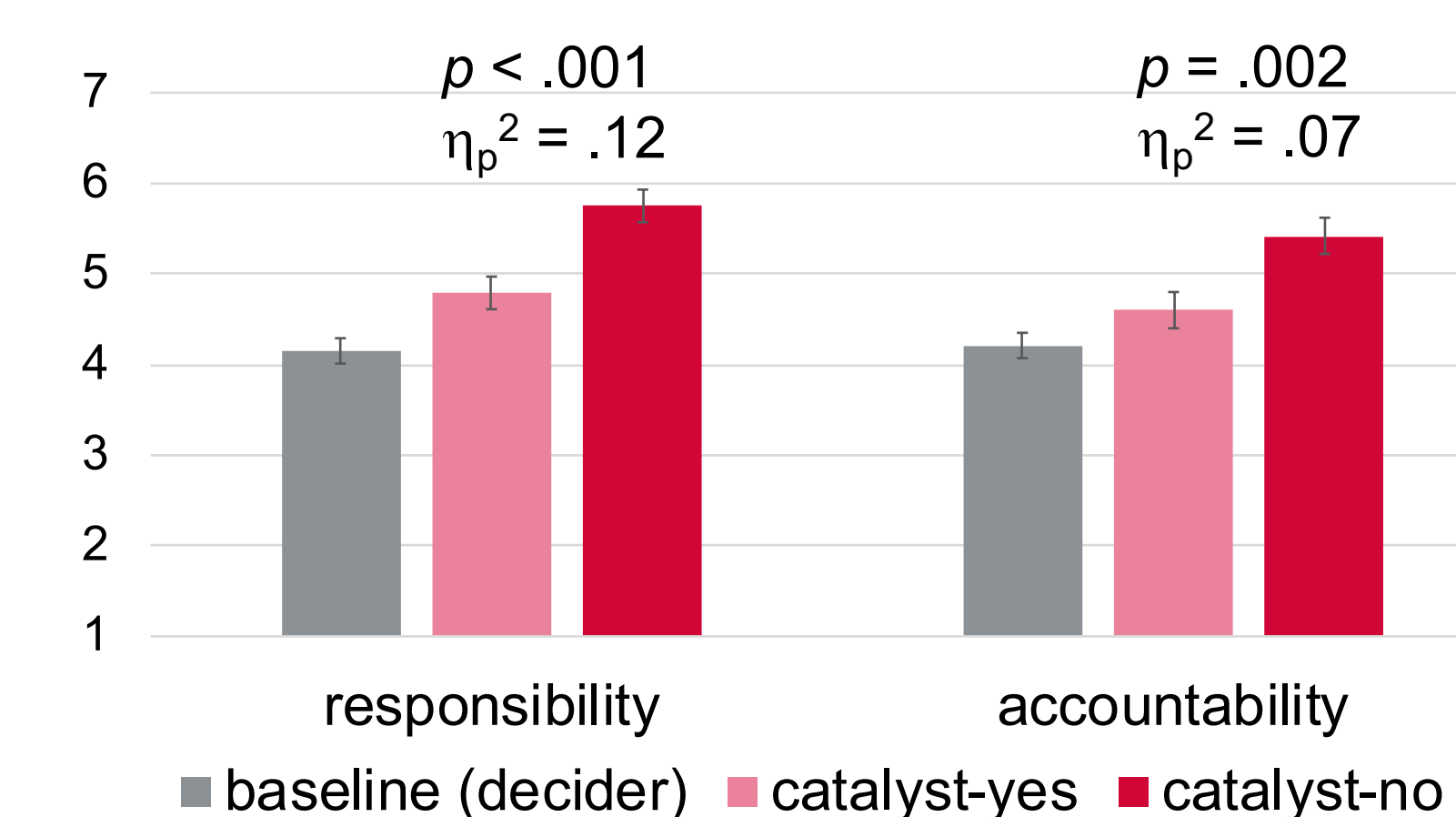


Note: Errors bars represent standard errors.

→ Confound: catalyst = doing the opposite

Study 2: Replication without confound and different baseline

IV: decider and **catalyst-yes** vs. decider and **catalyst-no**



Note: Errors bars represent standard errors.

Study 3: Testing "tempting fate" as possible explanation

IV: own decision vs. **catalyst-yes** vs. **catalyst-no**

DVs: Tempting Fate	own decision	catalyst-yes	catalyst-no
How likely was it that Frank would have a negative experience? (slider from 0-100%)	63.1%	52.5%	50.7%
	$F(2,175) = 6.51, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .069$		
To what extent did Frank tempt fate by flipping a coin? (1 = not at all to 7 = very much)		3.84 (2.16)	3.34 (2.08)
	$t(117) = 1.29, p = .200, d = 0.24$		
To what extent did Frank tempt fate by [not] adhering to the coin's suggestion? (1 = not at all to 7 = very much)		4.03 (2.13)	3.04 (1.93)
	$t(117) = 2.65, p = .009, d = 0.49$		