**Decision-making Strategies in Workplace Social Conflict Situations: The Ethical Decision Making in Hypothetical Social Conflict Situations in Business and Teaching**

**Social Psychology**

**Title**
Decision-making Strategies in Workplace Social Conflict Situations: The Ethical Decision Making in Hypothetical Social Conflict Situations in Business and Teaching

**Author**
Penttala-Långbacka, Kaija

**Affiliation**
Department of Social Psychology

**Language**
The thesis is in Finnish language.

**Abstract**
The main purpose of this study is to examine business managers’ and teachers’ professional morality by evaluating their decision-making strategies in hypothetical social conflict situations. Additionally, the values of these professionals and the relationship to the decision-making strategies were examined. The replies of business managers have been compared to those of teachers. Similarly, comparisons have been done between the replies of female and male participants.


The empirical data consists of questionnaires of 66 business managers and 83 teachers concerning decision making strategies in hypothetical workplace moral dilemmas, values and background information. Additionally, questions concerning the internal communication and co-operation in their present working environment and their organizational commitment were included. Subjects were also randomly assigned to four conditions in which social consensus (low-high) and personal proximity (close-distant) were manipulated as different variables. This part of the research project is based on analysis, t-tests, regression analysis and factor analysis.

According to the results, the gender was the most significant predictor in selection of decision making strategies in solving hypothetical moral dilemmas. Female respondents used statistically significantly more often discursive decision making strategies in three of five dilemmas. Business managers’ and teachers’ decision making strategies differed statistically significantly only in one dilemma. Teachers used more often discursive strategies than business managers. Social consensus and personal proximity did not have significant connections to decision making strategies. In value preferences, business managers and teachers had more differences. The major differences between these professional groups were in valuating achievement, universalism, tradition, and stimulation. The values of universalism and tradition were more important for the teachers than for the business managers. The most prominent value type in both professional groups was social harmony. Differences between female and male participants were found in three value types; the female participants valued more values of social harmony than male participants and the male participants the values of tradition and conformity. The relationship between values and decision making strategies was also studied. Participants who valued values of achievement, power and hedonism did use less discursive decision making strategies. Also internal communication and co-operation in the working environment had significant connection to the decision making strategies. Participants who had evaluated the internal communication and co-operation in their working environment to be low used less discursive strategies.

**Keywords**
professional morality - conflict resolution
decision making strategies

**Additional Information**
The thesis is in Finnish language.