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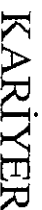
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## FACTORS EXPLAINING THE CHOOSING OF PEDAGOGICAL COPING METHODS BY TEACHERS WITH SOCIO-MORAL DILEMMAS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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### Abstract

The aims of the study were: 1) to identify the elementary school teachers' strategies for coping with socio-moral conflicts and issues which arise in the classroom. 2) to describe the characteristics of teachers who chose to behave according to the different models. Sample: 450 elementary school teachers. Findings: The teachers felt a pedagogical responsibility to deal with socio-moral conflicts in the school. The choice of a strategy model was differential according to the content of the dilemma. The pedagogical norms in the school context, the personal value system of the teacher and the personal background characteristics, explained the choice. Intervention programs of in-service training are important for developing professional morality.

### Introduction

This study deals with some aspects of the "professional morality" of teachers in the course of their work. The aims of the study were: 1) to investigate the alternative coping methods employed by teachers faced with the socio-moral dilemmas which arise in the socialization and learning process in elementary schools in the state religious education system; 2) to define the factors which explain the variance in the choice between a variety of teaching strategies which serve teachers in their work; 3) to make recommendations on developing ways of coping and on training for teachers.

Oser and Althof (1993) refer to two approaches to the professional morality of teachers. One approach focuses on a system of meta-ethical principles for finding the most morally "just" solution. It relates to justice orientation and ideal concepts of "discourse ethics". The second approach focuses on the possibility of arriving at "good" solutions under the realistic circumstances and conditions of the daily conflicts of school life. It relates to a "realistic discourse" orientation which provides a balance in the decision-making process between the moral dimension and the instrumental, functional and technological dimensions of the situation.

Oser and Althof (ibid) indicate that the discussion of a professional dilemma is likely to reveal a situation of disequilibrium between several moral issues. They described five separate types of decision-making in interpersonal conflicts. Their models represent the formal dimension of decision-making, and focus on responsibility for the process and for taking action.

Model 1: Avoiding. In judging the situation, the teacher avoids making a decision or taking responsibility for solving the problem. He does not feel any obligation to act.