



## Original article

# International Baccalaureate Educational Philosophy: Teachers' and School Administrators' Views

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine teachers' and school administrators' views on the International Baccalaureate (IB) educational philosophy. A qualitative case study design was employed. The study group, selected through convenience sampling as a form of purposeful sampling, consisted of teachers and school administrators working in private schools in İstanbul that implement the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), and Diploma Programme (DP). Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and analysed using content analysis. The findings indicate that the IB Programme aims to educate individuals who possess the attributes of the IB learner profile and are characterised as "global citizens" with intercultural awareness and universal values. Participants also reported that IB education adopts a skill-based approach to equip learners with competencies aligned with contemporary needs. Furthermore, teachers were emphasised as key role models who embody the IB educational philosophy and guide students through inquiry-based learning processes. Finally, the findings highlight the critical role of parents as important stakeholders, underscoring the significance of their awareness and adoption of the IB educational philosophy, as well as their cooperation with schools to ensure its effective implementation.

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Education philosophy, International Baccalaureate

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## INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by rapid social, technological, and cultural change, education systems are increasingly expected to prepare individuals who can think critically, adapt to diverse contexts, and engage responsibly with the global community. Contemporary educational approaches therefore place strong emphasis on learner-centered practices, the development of transferable skills, and the cultivation of values that support intercultural understanding and lifelong learning. Within this context, educational philosophies that offer holistic, skill-oriented, and inquiry-based frameworks have gained prominence, as they seek not only to enhance academic achievement but also to foster students' personal, social, and ethical development. One such approach is the International Baccalaureate education philosophy, which aims to respond to these evolving expectations by promoting internationally minded individuals equipped to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

International education was established in the 1860s to meet the educational needs of families and children traveling to different countries. After World War II, the 1949 International Schools Association Conference, the 1951 International Schools Association, the 1955 International Schools Services, and the 1965 European International Schools Council played an important role in shaping the understanding of international education that has survived today (Hill, 2007). In today's world, where international borders lose their importance, the accessibility of information increases, and the concept of distance changes its meaning with technology, the abilities and skills that need to be acquired are common, and individuals have to self-realize themselves (Wright & Buchanan, 2017).

International education is conceptualized from a range of perspectives and theoretical approaches. While Hayden (1997) highlights the multidimensional nature of the concept of international education, Sylvester (2007) emphasizes global citizenship in defining this concept. Similarly, Cambridge and Thompson (2004) argue that the internationalist perspective in international education contributes to the development of positive dispositions toward peace, international understanding, and responsible global citizenship.

In the first half of the twentieth Century, the spread of educational institutions focused on international problems, open-mindedness, and critical thinking of different cultures effectively developed the International Baccalaureate Diploma (Hill, 2015). Unlike traditional education approaches, which are rote-learning, teacher-centered, and based on intelligence, IB aims to create an education approach that is questioning, student-centered, cares about talent development, and focuses on holistic development (IBO, 2023e). Apart from the IBO founders, Robert Leach, John Goormaghtigh, Alec Peterson and Kurt Hahn, John Dewey, A.S. Neil, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner are educators who were influential in the formation of the IB education concept (IBO, 2023c).

Today, the needs brought about by globalization, global environmental problems, internal and external migration, ethical problems, rapidly developing and changing technology, and the reflection of

all these on our lives are seen as a problem. It is the job of education to train human resources who can find solutions to these problems (Cogan & Derricott, 2012). In line with its goals of raising global citizens, the International Baccalaureate has an important role (Wright & Buchanan, 2017) and application area in the world with its founding universal goals and studies (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). The International Baccalaureate Programme covers the development of knowledge and skills and aims to develop responsible global citizenship attitudes (IBO, 2023e). This programme seeks to raise internationally conscious individuals with inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-taker, balanced, and reflective profiles (IBO, 2023a). In this programme, learner profiles are at the center of education and constitute an essential element of the definition of international education (Hill, 2007).

The International Baccalaureate has a curriculum that represents an international education approach and has no regional borders (Doherty, 2009). The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), developed in the late 1960s, maintains its claim to improve international understanding and respect for different cultures with its educational programmes (Oord, 2007). While IB schools worldwide share common values, they can also exhibit very different characteristics. In addition to the host country, school backgrounds, staff, and student centers have local characteristics, which are seen as factors that strengthen international character (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014).

The mission statement articulates the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (Oord, 2007): “The IB develops inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through education that fosters intercultural understanding and respect.” To this end, the organization collaborates with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop internationally recognized, high-quality, and rigorous educational and assessment programmes. These programmes encourage students to become active, compassionate, and open-minded lifelong learners (IBO, 2023b).

The International Baccalaureate has flexible programmes that aim to create global citizens and effective elements that serve pedagogical philosophy (Tate, 2013). The IBO, which was founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland, to provide an international mobility area with the Diploma Programme (DP) for students who would start university, has expanded its mission over time and today offers educational programmes for students of almost all ages. It began as the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in 1994 for students aged 11-16, the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3-11 in 1997 (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004), and the Career-related Certificate Programme (IBO, 2023c).

The IB Programme signifies a unified approach aimed at improving learner attributes, diverse learning methods, rigorous educational processes, an organized structure that fosters interdisciplinary connections, grounding in international perspectives, and the acquisition of proficiency at least two languages (IBO, 2023f). This programme aims to raise versatile individuals with high ethical values

who adopt lifelong learning as a principle, have developed empathy skills, are open-minded, confident in their own identity, and can cooperate with other identities (IBO, 2023d). The programme encourages global participation, action for the benefit of society, and the transformation of ideas into behavior (IBO, 2023e). With the constructivist approach in the IB Programme, it is essential for the student to actively acquire knowledge and operate cognitive processes to put it into practice (Saxton & Hill, 2014).

International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes are structured around five key elements: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action (IBO, 2010). Within this framework, students construct knowledge through inquiry and research, thereby developing their learning through a conceptual approach (IBO, 2023g). For instance, in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), key concepts include form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility, and reflection. These concepts represent broad and enduring principles that transcend time and context (IBO, 2018). The teaching and learning process in IB education is grounded in a cycle of inquiry, action, and reflection. Within this constructivist cycle, diverse ideas, approaches, and perspectives are valued. By engaging with universal issues, students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning process. Central to this approach is the cultivation of curiosity and action through inquiry-based learning, which is considered essential for meaningful learning experiences (IBO, 2023g).

Previous studies have primarily focused on the content of the IB Programme (Ayyıldız & Üzümcü, 2016; Baysen et al., 2017; Bunnell, 2008; Çarşanlı, 2013; Göçmen, 2010; Güler, 2023; Ökmen, 2017; Sezgin, 2015; Şanver, 2016) and on the outcomes of its implementation (Aktaş, 2015; Bayülgen, 2012; Conley, 2014; Demir, 2009; Dickson et al., 2018; Wright & Lee, 2014; Saavedra & Korn, 2020; Tan, 2021; Gültekin, 2016; Hayden & Wong, 1997; Keleş, 2013; Keser et al., 2022; Kocabaş & Akkök, 2007; Sizmur & Cunningham, 2012; Taylor & Porath, 2006; Wright, 2015). In addition, the effects of IB education on teachers (Getchell, 2010; Gürkan, 2020; Twigg, 2010) and the administrative dimensions of IB schools (Calnin et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016) have also been examined. However, the literature reveals a gap in studies that address IB education from a philosophical perspective. In this context, the present study aims to examine teachers' and school administrators' views on the International Baccalaureate educational philosophy.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The research was conducted with a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is based on comprehending social phenomena with original perspectives, evaluating them objectively, and interpreting them by establishing in-depth relationships with the questions (Christensen et al., 2020). Such research includes inductive data analysis and interpretation of data by reaching general themes from specific cases considering the information (Creswell, 2014). While the views of school administrators and teachers were consulted in this research, case study was preferred to

get in-depth details (Yin, 2009), create a natural communication channel, and have a rich source for interpretation (Gliner et al., 2016).

### Participants

The research study group comprises school administrators and teachers working in private schools in Istanbul, where IB PYP, IB MYP, and IB DP Programmes are implemented. Information on the demographic characteristics of the school administrators is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the School Administrators.

| Participant | Position   | Teaching Experience | Administrative Experience | Field of Expertise           |
|-------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| A1          | Principal  | 15                  | 1                         | Preschool teaching           |
| A2          | Principal  | 4                   | 13                        | Preschool teaching           |
| A3          | Principal  | 9                   | 15                        | Preschool teaching           |
| A4          | Principal  | 5                   | 24                        | Pedagogics                   |
| A5          | Principal  | 3                   | 20                        | Preschool teaching           |
| A6          | Vice-Prin. | 15                  | 19                        | Primary school teaching      |
| A7          | Vice-Prin. | 10                  | 18                        | English teaching             |
| A8          | Principal  | 1                   | 18                        | Psy. counseling and guidance |
| A9          | Principal  | 11                  | 13                        | English teaching             |
| A10         | Principal  | 9                   | 21                        | Primary school teaching      |
| A11         | Principal  | 13                  | 20                        | Chemistry                    |
| A12         | Vice-Prin. | 8                   | 9                         | Primary school teaching      |
| A13         | Vice-Prin. | 9                   | 9                         | Chemistry                    |
| A14         | Vice-Prin. | 4                   | 8                         | Psy. counseling and guidance |
| A15         | Vice-Prin. | 3                   | 16                        | Primary school teaching      |

Information on the demographic characteristics of the participants teachers is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of the Teachers.

| Participant | Teaching Experience | Field of Expertise      |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| T1          | 7                   | English teaching        |
| T2          | 2                   | Primary school teaching |
| T3          | 16                  | Primary school teaching |
| T4          | 8                   | Preschool teaching      |
| T5          | 24                  | Chemistry               |
| T6          | 14                  | Preschool Teaching      |
| T7          | 5                   | Preschool Teaching      |
| T8          | 7                   | Primary school teaching |
| T9          | 34                  | Primary school teaching |
| T10         | 40                  | Primary school teaching |
| T11         | 14                  | Primary school teaching |
| T12         | 4                   | Preschool Teaching      |
| T13         | 11                  | Preschool Teaching      |
| T14         | 12                  | Preschool Teaching      |
| T15         | 13                  | Preschool Teaching      |
| T16         | 6                   | Preschool Teaching      |
| T17         | 3                   | Preschool Teaching      |
| T18         | 6                   | Preschool Teaching      |

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews in the current study. Semi-structured questions increase the efficiency of qualitative research by providing comparable and differentiable data (Stake, 1995). Clarifying difficult to understand elements during interviews makes it possible to understand ideas in more detail (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The interview questions of the research were determined first by reviewing the literature and then in line with expert views. A preliminary interview was held with an administrator and two teachers with the prepared questions, and the questions were revised, and the interview form was finalized. The interviews were held in the schools where the participants worked, and a consent form was signed before the interview and recorded with a voice recorder.

The views of the participants were examined using the content analysis method. This method consists of the stages of determining themes, categorizing, coding, tabulating, and presenting (Lichtman, 2014). In content analysis, coding is done by categorizing the data by determining headings (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

### **FINDINGS**

The themes identified through content analysis of the interview data collected from teachers and school administrators are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Themes.

| Themes                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Qualities the IB Educational Philosophy Aims to Instill in Students            |
| 2. Suitability of the IB Educational Philosophy to Contemporary Educational Needs |
| 3. Teaching Methods and Approaches in the IB Educational Philosophy               |
| 4. Aspects that Conflict with Educational Objectives and Require Improvement      |
| 5. The Role of Teachers in the IB Educational Philosophy                          |
| 6. Professional Development Needs of IB Teachers                                  |
| 7. The Role of Parents in the IB Educational Philosophy                           |
| 8. Alignment of the IB Educational Philosophy with National Curriculum Goals      |

#### **Qualities the IB Educational Philosophy Aims to Instill in Students**

Participants' views on the qualities that the IB educational philosophy aims to instill in students are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Qualities the IB Educational Philosophy Aims to Instill in Students

| Codes                                        | Participants                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Global citizens” with universal values      | A1, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T8, T11, T12, T13, T14 |
| Have advanced communication skills           | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, A8, A9, A10, A13, T2, T7, T9, T15, T16                                 |
| Inquirers                                    | A2, A4, A7, A9, A10, A13, A14, A15, T2, T10, T12, T13, T15                                     |
| Have self-management skills                  | A2, A6, A8, A9, A10, A13, T5, T7, T9, T10, T15, T16                                            |
| Caring                                       | A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A8, A9, A14, T4, T6, T13, T16                                              |
| Self-improving and lifelong learner          | A1, A2, A5, A7, A10, A12, A14, A15, T10, T13, T15                                              |
| Respectful                                   | A2, A7, A9, A10, A13, A14, A15, T2, T10, T12, T13                                              |
| Mastering own culture                        | A5, A7, A9, A10, A11, T1, T3, T8, T12                                                          |
| Concerned about world problems               | A2, A3, A9, A13, T1, T7, T12, T16                                                              |
| Expressing oneself in at least two languages | A1, A8, T2, T3, T7, T11, T12                                                                   |

As shown in Table 4, most participants stated that the IB educational philosophy aims to instill in students the qualities of “global citizens” with universal values and strong communication skills. Selected participants’ views on this theme are presented below.

A13: “Essentially, we want students to become global citizens. To achieve this, they need to develop an international perspective and universal thinking. Only in this way can they become individuals who contribute to solutions to global problems. We aim for them to understand problems accurately and to become lifelong learners who are able to find appropriate solutions.”

T4: “In line with the IB educational philosophy, we focus on specific attitudes, learner profile attributes, and skills. We support students in acquiring and developing these characteristics through our educational programmes. Our aim is to foster internationally minded individuals and to ensure that our educational practices are translated into lasting behaviours demonstrated by students.”

#### ***Suitability of the IB Educational Philosophy to Contemporary Educational Needs***

Participants' views on the suitability of the IB educational philosophy to contemporary educational needs are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Suitability of the IB Educational Philosophy to Contemporary Educational Needs

| <b>Codes</b>                                                  | <b>Participants</b>                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To have an approach based on skill development                | A1, A2, A4, A6, A7, A8, A10, A12, A14, A15, T6, T8, T11, T13, T14, T15, T16 |
| To have a universal perspective goal                          | A12, A13, T1, T2, T5, T9, T10                                               |
| To have a goal raised caring people                           | A3, A5, A6, A15, T3, T8, T16                                                |
| To give the consciousness of protecting a multicultural world | A3, A5, A11, T10                                                            |
| To develop problem-solving skills                             | A13, T1, T5, T9                                                             |
| To raise lifelong learners                                    | A5, A8, A9, A12                                                             |

As shown in Table 5, most participants stated that an approach based on skill development suits today's needs. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.

A4: "I think the IB education approach responds to today's needs because we do not teach knowledge directly. We teach the ways to reach knowledge and questioning. We want students to reach knowledge by inquiry, not accepting one offered to them as a real fact. I believe that people who think like this will enlighten our future. For these reasons, IB increases students' adaptation to the world and provides them with all-round development for the future."

T16: "Conventional education systems are generally information-oriented, but today, we see that individuals who use knowledge and intelligence effectively and can make a difference come to the fore. Nowadays, everyone can access information quickly, but the individuals who make a difference always use their social and communication skills and are creative."

### **Teaching Methods and Approaches in the IB Educational Philosophy**

Participants' views on the teaching methods and approaches of the IB are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Teaching Methods and Approaches in the IB Educational Philosophy

| <b>Codes</b>                                                | <b>Participants</b>                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Experiential learning                                       | A1, A2, A3, A5, A13, T2, T3, T4, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T16, T17 |
| Inquiry-based approach                                      | A4, A7, A13, A15, T1, T3, T4, T6, T7, T10, T12, T14, T16               |
| Student-centered teaching                                   | A1, A5, A7, A10, A13, A14, T5, T8, T16                                 |
| Enabling students to take responsibility for their learning | A7, A10, A13, A14, T5, T8, T16                                         |
| Adopting a differentiated learning approach                 | A4, A6, A10, A12, A14                                                  |
| Doing project-based work                                    | A8, A9, A11, T9, T15                                                   |

As shown in Table 6, most participants pointed out the importance of experiential and inquiry-based learning in the teaching methods and approaches in the IB Educational Philosophy. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.



A13: “In my view, experiential learning, collaborative learning processes, empathy-based attitudes, the continuous cultivation of curiosity, and students’ active participation are effective approaches to shaping the learner profile. For instance, teaching social skills through lived experiences in a structured environment can be challenging. However, since our aim is to foster lasting behavioural change through experiential learning, we design classroom activities that provide opportunities for students to engage with social problems. We then focus on transforming attitudes such as respecting different perspectives, delaying personal gratification, compromising, and empathizing into observable behaviours while addressing these issues. By guiding students through targeted questions, we support them in reaching appropriate conclusions. This learning process is considered both effective and sustainable.”

T6: “As a school that adopts experiential learning, we provide opportunities for students to engage with contexts that require real-life application and observation. Students learn not only through theoretical knowledge but also by seeing, experiencing, and interacting directly with materials and situations.”

#### ***Aspects that Conflict with Educational Objectives and Require Improvement***

Participants’ views on aspects that conflict with educational objectives and require improvement are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Aspects that Conflict with Educational Objectives and Require Improvement

| <b>Codes</b>                                                   | <b>Participants</b>                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher qualifications                                         | A1, A2, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A15, T1, T2, T3, T8, T13, T16, T17 |
| Parents' attitudes and behaviors                               | A1, A2, A9, A11, A15, T4, T5, T6, T7, T11, T16, T17                       |
| School administration should be flexible in their expectations | A4, T2, T7, T8, T12, T13, T15                                             |
| Not compatible with the national curriculum                    | A6, A7, A15, T3, T5, T8, T10                                              |
| Spatial facilities and conditions of schools                   | A2, A3, T13, T15                                                          |

As shown in Table 7, most participants stated that teacher qualifications should be improved in the IB. Selected participants’ views on this theme are presented below.

A2: “The biggest problem is that teachers are not open to development. For example, if a teacher has come as trained with an activity-oriented profile, sometimes it can be tough to adopt a different philosophy. They are right, after all. We all have a way of upbringing; we all have models we see. Maybe the education they received was not in a style that emphasized our ideas. For example, the International Baccalaureate was never mentioned in my university education. There was nothing eye-opening about this at all.”

T8: “In terms of practice, it is not sufficient for a school to adopt this philosophy at a theoretical level; teachers must also internalize it. I also consider it essential that parents, as well as teachers, develop awareness of this philosophy. If teachers do not fully understand the philosophy, they cannot effectively educate students in line with its principles. Therefore, appropriate and well-structured teacher education is crucial for overcoming challenges in practice.”

### **The Role of Teachers in the IB Educational Philosophy**

Participants' views on the role of teachers in the IB educational philosophy are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** The Role of Teachers in the IB Educational Philosophy

| <b>Codes</b>                                    | <b>Participants</b>                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Being a lifelong learner                        | A1, A4, A7, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A17, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T10, T11, T14, T15, T16, T18 |
| Being a role model                              | A3, A4, A8, A9, A10, A15, T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17         |
| Having IB learner profile features              | A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A12, A14, T3, T4, T6, T8, T12, T13, T16, T17                              |
| Acting as a guide during the education process  | A1, A2, A3, A8, A9, A10, A11, A13, T1, T8, T15                                                 |
| Having different perspectives                   | A1, A4, A5, T2, T4, T8                                                                         |
| Caring and respectful of individual differences | A9, A11, A12, A14, T1, T16                                                                     |
| Being prepared and planning before class        | A8, A9, A11, A13                                                                               |

As shown in Table 8, most participants pointed out the importance of IB teachers being lifelong learners. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.

A12: “When you look at the classroom environment and atmosphere, a collaborative learning approach should be adopted. One should be able to be a teacher who constantly improves themselves, is innovative, and can offer this curiosity for learning to children. Unfortunately, we can focus on minimal areas in teaching. Our perspectives may become dull as the skills develop over the years, but I believe a good International Baccalaureate teacher has gone beyond this situation. They are people who learn and are curious about the knowledge that can keep them fresh and dynamic in every sense and who can take risks in the application phase.”

T13: “The teachers have a great influence here. Their profile and attitude reflect a lot on the student. By reflecting on the teacher's attitudes and skills, the class adopts them. First, the teacher reflects their knowledge, attitude, and skills to the class. The person who uses the programmes is the teacher who directs, provides flexibility, and transforms it. IB is a good programme, but it is unimportant if the teacher cannot implement it.”

### **Professional Development Needs of IB Teachers**

Participants' views on the professional development needs of IB teachers are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Professional Development Needs of IB Teachers

| <b>Codes</b>                                                                                | <b>Participants</b>                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Seeing different examples of IB practice                                                    | A8, A13, A10, T3, T4, T6, T8, T15, T16, T17, Ö18 |
| Differentiated education                                                                    | A2, A10, A11, T4, T15, Ö16                       |
| Developing a shared understanding of the IB educational philosophy                          | A3, A4, A10, A11, A14, Ö14                       |
| Seeing different practices of inquiry education                                             | A1, T1, T14, T16                                 |
| Being student-centered                                                                      | A1, A8, A10, A11                                 |
| Creating an IB Programme                                                                    | A1, A10, A11                                     |
| Training to change from thinking an activity-oriented approach to a skill-oriented approach | A1, A12, T17                                     |

As shown in Table 9, most participants expressed their need to see different sample applications. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.

A10: “International Baccalaureate training is provided to schools upon request. However, in principle, educational practices can also be shared more broadly. It would be valuable to observe directly how teaching is implemented in different schools. Learning from colleagues should not be limited to those working within the same school. For example, if a teacher from another school asked, ‘You have a topic in your lesson; can we observe it for 15 minutes?’, it would be possible to conduct a live observation. In theory, any school worldwide could adopt such practices, but this approach is not commonly preferred.”

T3: “Teachers should share their good practices more frequently. I am not sure whether, as administrators, we organize specific opportunities for this or structure the timetable accordingly. However, when I walk through the school, I can clearly observe this. From the sounds coming from classrooms, it is evident that meaningful teaching and learning are taking place. At times, we fail to recognise the value of our own work, which is a limitation. I believe that we do not share our practices with each other sufficiently.”

### **The Role of Parents in the IB Educational Philosophy**

Participants' views on the role of parents in the IB educational philosophy are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10.** The Role of Parents in the IB Educational Philosophy

| Codes                                                                             | Participants                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Understanding the IB education philosophy                                         | A3, A4, A6, A11, A13, A15, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16, T17    |
| Collaborating with the school                                                     | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A12, A14, T2, T3, T9, T11, T12, T13, Ö19, T16, T18 |
| Acting as a role model outside of school in line with the IB education philosophy | A1, A11, A13, A14, T1, T4, T6, T8, T11, T12, T14, T17, T18                             |
| Being a resource for the educational programme                                    | A2, A10, A12, A13, T9, T13                                                             |

As shown in Table 10, most participants stated the importance of parents understanding the IB educational philosophy. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.

A12: “Good schools are schools that also educate their parents. I think the parent should be a stakeholder in the programme; it is a structure that supports the programme because these people prefer these schools because they think their children will grow up around this philosophy, and they are parents who are more or less aware of where the world is heading globally. They want their children to be well-rounded. Therefore, International Baccalaureate learner profiles are already versatile and an education model that combines many different skills with high-level thinking skills. Consequently, I see the parents of the school as collaborators for this goal.”

T16: “Definitely, IB wants all stakeholders to know this philosophy well and to have a life that will embrace it. We give messages about these to our parents in promotions, meetings, individual interviews, unit reports, emails, and bulletins. However, putting this into practice or having this awareness is a separate stage. I don't know what is needed to achieve this, but I'm sure it's essential.”

### **Alignment of the IB Educational Philosophy with National Curriculum Goals**

Participants' views on the compatibility of the IB educational philosophy with the goals of the national curriculum are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Alignment of the IB Educational Philosophy with National Curriculum Goals

| Codes                                                                                       | Participants                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No perceived cultural conflict                                                              | A1, A2, A9, A13, A14, A15, T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T9, T10, T11, T12, T14, T15, T16, T17 |
| Compliance with academic expectations                                                       | A3, A7, A9, A12, A13, A15, T7, T9, T10, T12, T15, T16, T17                           |
| Anxiety and pressure related to national central examinations causing academic difficulties | A6, T3, T5, T8, T11, T12, T13                                                        |
| Perceived conflict between educational goals                                                | A5, A10, A11, T4, T5, T6                                                             |

As shown in Table 11, most participants stated that the goals of the IB educational philosophy do not conflict with cultural values. Selected participants' views on this theme are presented below.

A1: “I don't think there is a conflict. National values exist in every country and integrating national and universal values is important. Can it be done? It can be done. In fact, the International Baccalaureate says to know your own country and culture first and then get to know other cultures.”

T11: “We do not have any problems in the cultural dimension. Because the logic of IB PYP is to include the child's life, starting from the immediate environment and moving further away, we try to introduce or internalize our own country's culture to the child and then enable them to get to know the cultures of other countries. I don't think we had much difficulty in this regard.”

## **DISCUSSION**

Conducting educational practices within the framework of a clearly articulated educational philosophy appears to be a practical and effective approach to achieving educational objectives. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and widespread access to information, the ability to critically analyze and appropriately utilize information has become increasingly important. Within this context, International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes have gained global recognition for their emphasis on developing skills and competencies that support learners' self-realization and align with the demands of the twenty-first century. Accordingly, this study examined teachers' and school administrators' views on the IB educational philosophy.

The findings of this study indicate that the core qualities the IB educational philosophy seeks to foster in students prominently include global citizenship and the attributes outlined in the IB learner profile. These concepts are consistently highlighted in the literature as central components of the IB philosophy of education (IBO, 2023a). Supporting this view, Merriam's (2009) study with teachers in the early years programme reported that students educated within the IB framework develop a vision of contributing to a better world and strengthen themselves through values aligned with these aims. Similarly, Demir (2009) found that school administrators and teachers most frequently defined the objectives of IB Programmes as cultivating individuals who are sensitive to global issues and possess strong communication skills. In addition, a comparative study by Kocabaş and Akkök (2007) revealed significant differences in favor of IB students over their peers in traditional high schools with respect to communication and social skills.

In the present study, participants emphasized that teaching methods and instructional approaches within the International Baccalaureate framework are grounded in experiential learning and inquiry-based practices. Consistent with this view, Saxton and Hill (2014) found that IB students engage continuously in research and inquiry, demonstrate strong problem-solving tendencies, and show a willingness to contribute positively to the future. Similarly, Kaya and Yılmaz (2016) reported that students participating in inquiry-based learning developed the ability to think through research activities and were capable of creating inquiry-oriented learning environments. Furthermore, IB schools are described as learning communities in which learning is embedded in everyday practices involving

teachers, students, administrators, parents, and members of the local community (IBO, 2023d). Although the IB learner profile is defined in terms of universally recognized attributes, it is not limited solely to students; rather, it is intended for all educational stakeholders to develop and embody these characteristics (Tate, 2013).

The findings of this study indicate that the effective implementation of the IB educational philosophy depends largely on the roles of teachers and parents as key stakeholders within the learning community. Two interrelated areas requiring further development were identified: the need to enhance teachers' professional competencies and the presence of parental attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with the principles of the IB philosophy. Supporting these findings, Karacaoğlu and Acar (2010) reported that teachers require ongoing professional support during the implementation of reformed curricula. Similarly, Akpınar and Aydın (2010) found that although teachers adopted new instructional roles introduced by educational reforms, they often perceived themselves as insufficiently prepared and expressed a need for additional training. Uçman's (2019) comparative study of IB PYP teachers and teachers implementing the Ministry of National Education curriculum revealed higher levels of work motivation among teachers working within the IB framework. Likewise, Akdoğan (2014) observed that teachers' professional development progressed positively throughout the process of becoming an IB school, with teachers reporting gains in professional learning, collaborative culture, shared goals, and collegial support. However, participants also emphasized the importance of learning from peers and observing diverse instructional practices beyond expert-led training, suggesting that these professional exchanges could be further enriched through the use of technology and distance learning methods.

Walker (2010) characterizes teachers as lifelong learners and identifies them as the most significant sources of support and role models for their students. Consistent with this perspective, the findings of the present study indicate that the roles of being a role model and a guide are central to teachers' identities within the framework of the International Baccalaureate educational philosophy. Similarly, Dobber et al. (2017) emphasized that teachers should function as facilitators and guides within inquiry-based learning environments. In addition, Tutkun and Aksoyalp (2010) described twenty-first-century teachers as professionals who are responsive to the demands of their era and open to innovation and change. Supporting this view, Can (2004) highlighted that contemporary teachers are characterized by continuous professional development, student-centered practices, the ability to convey their vision to learners, and attributes such as encouragement, reliability, self-awareness, and lifelong learning.

Concerning the alignment between the objective of cultivating internationally minded individuals and national educational goals, as well as the potential for conflict between these aims, Hill (2015) argued that the International Baccalaureate learner profile is compatible with Eastern cultures and noted that many components of the IB Programme resonate with diverse cultural traditions. Similarly, Çarşanlı's (2013) comparative analysis of Turkish and Turkish Literature courses within the IB Diploma

Programme demonstrated that these courses complement one another in terms of cultural objectives and learning outcomes. In line with these findings, participants in the present study emphasized that students' understanding of other cultures is strengthened through learning about and appreciating their own cultural heritage. Moreover, participants reported that the implementation of the IB Programme did not give rise to cultural conflicts within their school contexts.

In the present study, participants indicated that inquiry-based education is a long-term process in which students actively construct their own learning pathways. However, they also noted that preparation for centralized examinations necessitates distinct strategies, approaches, and time allocations, and that nationwide examination systems may negatively influence the educational process. Supporting these concerns, Güler and Yaltrık (2011) reported that some schools implementing the IB Programme experience challenges in aligning it with the national curriculum.

The effective implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) educational approach requires recognition and support from parents, as families play a crucial role in reinforcing the philosophy beyond the school context (Çamlıkaya, 2007). School–family collaboration is a fundamental component of high-quality and effective educational practices. Research indicates that individuals who grow up within learning communities where such harmony is achieved—particularly during early childhood—demonstrate more positive developmental outcomes (Yıldız & Durmuşoğlu, 2018). Actively involving parents in educational processes helps them become informed about the educational philosophy, strengthens their trust in the school, and enables them to contribute constructively to their children's development (IBO, 2010).

The International Baccalaureate guidelines outline specific roles for families, including understanding the aims and underlying principles of educational practices, supporting inquiry-based learning, serving as a resource for school activities, respecting students' autonomy, providing feedback on student development, and participating in family engagement initiatives (IBO, 2018). The findings of the present study highlight that the sustainable internalization of the IB educational philosophy by students depends on cooperation among all school stakeholders and on students experiencing consistent values both inside and outside the school environment. Given that parents represent the most diverse stakeholder group and often have limited direct interaction with other members of the school community, achieving a holistic educational approach requires parents to act as role models, embrace a shared educational philosophy, and collaborate closely with the school. In this regard, it is recommended that families receive training on the IB philosophy, be actively involved in school-based educational activities, and be supported in developing a stronger sense of belonging to the school community.

## **CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS**

The findings of this study indicate that the IB philosophy is widely associated with the development of internationally minded individuals who possess intercultural awareness, universal

values, and twenty-first-century skills. Participants emphasized that the inquiry-based, skill-oriented structure of IB Programme supports students' holistic development and encourages active learning, critical thinking, and self-directed inquiry. In this respect, the IB philosophy is perceived not merely as a curriculum framework but as a comprehensive educational approach that shapes teaching practices, learning environments, and stakeholder relationships.

At the same time, the findings reveal several challenges related to the effective implementation and sustainability of the IB philosophy. Teachers' professional competencies, their ability to embody the philosophy in practice, and the alignment between school practices and parental expectations emerged as critical factors. While teachers are expected to act as role models and facilitators of inquiry, they also require continuous professional development to strengthen their pedagogical competencies and deepen their understanding of the philosophy. In addition, tensions between inquiry-based learning processes and centrally administered examination systems were identified as factors that may constrain the full realization of IB principles in practice.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed. First, ongoing and practice-oriented professional development programmes should be designed to support teachers and school administrators in effectively implementing the IB philosophy at different stages of their careers. Second, schools should establish systematic strategies to enhance parent engagement by providing structured opportunities for families to become familiar with and support the educational philosophy beyond the school context. Finally, future research could expand this study by including different school types, educational levels, and stakeholder groups, as well as by employing longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to examine the long-term outcomes of IB education. Such efforts may contribute to a deeper understanding of how the IB philosophy can be sustainably integrated into diverse educational contexts.

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