

Opinions of Teachers Working in Special Education Schools on the Individualized Education Program Team

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the views of teachers working in special education schools on the functioning of the Individualized Education Program Development Unit. The study group of the research consists of 15 volunteer teachers working in special education schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the city center of Konya in the 2020-2021 academic year. These special education schools are schools for three disability groups: mental, hearing, and visual impairments. Schools with individuals with intellectual disabilities are of two types moderate, severe, and mild. A descriptive survey model was used to collect data in order to determine teachers' opinions. The data of the research were collected through semi-structured interviews. In addition, a demographic information form was prepared in order to obtain general information about the teachers. According to the results of the research, it was seen that Individualized Education Program Development Units were not established in schools, and when they were created, they did not function for their purpose.

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals may differ in terms of their characteristics and competencies for various reasons, which necessitates arrangements to ensure that individuals can benefit from education and training practices at the highest level. One of the arrangements made to ensure that individuals can benefit from education services adequately is special education services. Special education is defined as the education and training process carried out by expert personnel suitable for the characteristics of the individuals, by using special materials, equipment, methods, and techniques in appropriate environments, in order to ensure the independence of the individual and the highest level of participation in the society, for individuals who cannot benefit from normal education practices at the desired level (Diken, 2019). The primary purpose of special education is to provide individuals with special education needs with equal opportunities and to provide education services to their peers (Akçamete, 1997; Sarı, 2002). It is possible for individuals with special education needs to acquire the skills expected from them and to ensure their full participation in social life, if their individual characteristics and needs are defined and they are placed in the most appropriate educational environment and programs (Cavkaytar, 2000; Kargın, 2007; Özyürek, 2014; Sarı, 2002). The placement of these individuals in the most appropriate educational environment and program is closely related to the educational diagnosis and evaluation processes (Kargın, 2007).

The procedures related to the educational evaluation and diagnosis of individuals are carried out by the special education evaluation board established in the Counselling and Research Center (CRC). Individuals who are identified to need special education as a result of educational evaluation and diagnosis are directed to a suitable education environment and special education service (MEB, 2018). At the end of the educational evaluation process, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed for students who are decided to benefit from special education services. An important practice in making education services suitable for the individual is the preparation of Individualized Education Plans (IEP).

As a result of the completion of the educational identification and evaluation processes, individuals who require special education are placed in the most appropriate educational environment. By planning the education and training services in accordance with the specific characteristics and competencies, it is possible for the individual

to benefit from the education services carried out in the education environment they are placed, which requires defining the competencies and needs of the individual and developing the appropriate training plans because meeting the needs of individuals who need special education and developing their competencies can be achieved with IEP (Fiscus & Mandell, 2002). However, effective educational services require the preparation of appropriate teaching plans for what the individuals can do about their skills (Avcıoğlu et al., 2013). Research shows that individuals can acquire the skills and behaviors expected from them if education is individualized (Diler, 2000; Gürsel, 1987; Yıkmış, 1990).

Necessary legal regulations regarding the preparation of IEP in Turkey have been made. IEP practices have been compulsory since 1997 with the Decree Law No. 573. Following this decree, the Special Education Services Regulation came into effect in 2000, and the definition of IEP was included in the 62nd article of the regulation, and afterwards, IEP preparation and implementation studies were included in the regulations published in 2006, 2012 and 2018. The Special Education Services Regulation (2018) defines individualized education program as the “special education program that includes supportive education services to be given to individuals with special education needs and is prepared to achieve the targeted goals in line with their developmental characteristics, educational needs, and performances, based on the program followed by individuals with special education needs” (MEB, 2018).

Preparing an IEP in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the individual is only possible with teamwork. Teamwork provides guidance on how to overcome the lack of knowledge and skills, provides the family and school personnel with an equal right to speak about the problems encountered in education, the solutions to these problems and the decisions to be taken, and enables them to evaluate the developments (Tekin-İftar, 1996).

In educational environments, it is necessary to work in teams and in cooperation to meet the educational needs of children with special needs in an appropriate way. In this context, some teamwork models that can be used regarding teamwork in IEP development can be listed as multidisciplinary team model, interdisciplinary team model, and transdisciplinary team model (Gürgür & Rakap, 2021).

The development of the IEP by a team requires the experts in the team to have knowledge about IEP preparation, individuals with special needs, their characteristics and education (Vuran et al., 2017). The first mention

of such a practice in Turkey was as the establishment and functioning of the Individualized Education Program Development Unit (IEPDU) in the 63rd article of the special education services regulation published in 2000. In accordance with the Special Education Services Regulation (2018), IEPDU is to be formed under the presidency of the school principal or a deputy principal to be appointed to prepare IEP at school for students with special education needs, consists of the counsel teacher, the classroom teacher of the student, the branch teachers who teach the student, the student's parents, and the student (MEB, 2018). All team members play a critical and active role in the development and implementation of the IEP (Rosas & Winterman, 2012).

Since IEP is a contract between service recipients and service providers, it is not a program prepared by a single person, but a program that requires the active participation of all individuals responsible for the education of the disabled individual and that all participants adopt the determined goals (Kargin, 2007). IEPDU has responsibilities starting with the placement decision of the student, covering all aspects of education, and it must continue uninterrupted at every stage. Among these responsibilities are; coordination, making suggestions and cooperating in studies related to IEP, making changes and arrangements in IEP, scheduling the lessons in the support education room, determining the students who are suitable for education through full-time inclusion/integration, determining the methods and techniques to be used and teaching materials, determining the students who need to be assisted during the exams, organizing the one-to-one education practices of the students, deciding on repeating the class when necessary, deciding on the placement of the individuals who are delayed in starting school in a level and class appropriate for their educational performance (MEB, 2018).

The related literature includes some studies on IEP and IEPDU. İlik (2019) reported that the majority of teachers of gifted students stated that it is necessary to prepare IEP, but they do not use IEPs in practice, and they needed training in this regard. Çıkılı and coauthors (2020) stated that teachers working in the field of special education have a lack of knowledge about IEP preparation, and that there are difficulties in sharing information and responsibilities with team members during the IEP preparation process. Akarsu and Atbaşı (2021) found that there was no unity of practice among teachers in practice schools about preparing IEP, and they lacked knowledge about developing IEP content. Ayanoğlu and Gür Erdoğan (2019) revealed that IEPDUs were estab-

lished in the vast majority of schools, and the work of these units partially achieved their purpose, but IEPs prepared/applied for students with special needs were partially beneficial due to some problems. In the study conducted by Avcıoğlu (2011), it was found that the learning experiences of the classroom teachers of the mentally handicapped were different, they rarely met with the families while developing the IEP, they did not benefit enough from the opinions of the families and the students, and they had problems in developing and applying the IEP. Özan (2019) reported that communication and cooperation among IEP team members was limited, school administrators and teachers did not have the necessary knowledge and skills about the IEP process, families did not actively participate in the process, and special education support services provided to teachers and students were not sufficient. Yılmaz and Batu (2016) stated that primary school teachers had general knowledge about IEP, their responsibilities were fulfilled, the necessary support was provided from the guidance service and school administration, but the classroom sizes were not arranged for students with special needs, there were problems in educational evaluation, diagnosis and placement, and related parties were not informed adequately.

Yazıcıoğlu (2019) found that IEPDUs were formed at schools, but they did not work in accordance with its purpose, the units were mostly carried out under the responsibility of guidance teachers, and team members did not act in cooperation. Kuru Habiboğlu (2018) reported that the heads of IEPDUs did not help teachers in some schools in the implementation of IEPs, while some did in other schools, counselors provided necessary assistance to classroom teachers in the application of IEPs, parents were able to state their own and their children's needs regarding IEP and their achievements, and parents participated in in- and out-of-school activities to support their children. Yener (2019) stated that there was not enough cooperation between the inclusion students and the experts working in the state institutions, the experts working in the support education institution, and between the state institution and the experts working in the support education institutions. Vuran et al. (2017) aimed to describe the processes and results of the study conducted by mentally handicapped teacher candidates to develop IEP in cooperation and gaining the skills to work with a team. They found that besides the development of the IEP preparation skills of the team members, the participants' ability to work with the team also improved. Toprak (2018) reported that those families

should be involved in the IEP preparation process, but there should be some prerequisites for this, the teachers and the assistant principal could communicate with the family to obtain and provide more information during the IEP preparation process, yet team members lacked legal knowledge.

When we look at the studies conducted in the field, we see that IEP is handled with all its dimensions in general, and IEPGB is studied as a sub-purpose. Although there have been studies in which IEPGB has been extensively examined, taking into account the mainstreaming and general education environments, it has not been found in the field of special education. This research will make a different contribution to the field as it directly deals with IEPGB in special education schools as a subject. In addition, it is thought that the views of branch and vocational teachers working in special education schools based on wider observation will be more meaningful than the opinions of non-field teachers in general education environments. Considering that the proficiency of special education teachers in IEP is more, as a result of more teacher interaction in special education schools, teachers' observation outputs on IEPGB will make a different contribution to the field.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the opinions of teachers working in special education schools on the functioning of the Individualized Education Program Development Unit. In this direction, answers were sought to the following research questions: a) What are the teachers' thoughts on IEPDUs? b) When and for what purposes do IEPDUs convene? c) What kind of decisions are taken in IEPDUs? d) Do IEPDUs provide cooperation in studies related to the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the IEPs? e) Do IEPDUs make changes and adjustments to the student's IEPs when necessary? f) Do IEPDUs make suggestions to the school administration and teachers about the environment and materials? g) Do IEPDUs determine the methods and techniques and teaching materials to be used in teaching and evaluation? h) How are the decisions taken in IEPDUs monitored? i) What kind of functions do the families have in IEPDU meetings? j) Are there any factors that adversely affect the functioning of IEPDUs? If so, what are they?

METHOD

Research Model

The present research is a qualitative study conducted to determine the opinions of teachers working in special

education schools about the functioning of IEPDUs. Qualitative research is conducted by following a qualitative process to reveal perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic way in their natural environment by using data collection methods such as observation, interview, and document analysis (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). A descriptive survey model was adopted to collect data to determine teachers' opinions. Survey model tries to describe a past or present situation and to define an event, individual or object in its own conditions and in its natural state (Karasar, 2020).

Study Group

The study group of the present research consists of 15 volunteer teachers working in special education schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in the city center of Konya in the 2020-2021 academic year. The participants consist of teachers, special education teachers, branch teachers, guidance teachers and administrators. The teachers willing to participate were included in the research after explaining the working process to the teachers and asking whether they would participate or not. Demographic information about teachers is presented in Table 1.

As presented in Table 1, most of the teachers participating in the research (60%) are male teachers. In terms of age, 2 teachers are 51 years old or older, the rest are all between the ages of 31-50, and the majority (73.3%) in terms of total length of service in teaching are 16 years and above so they are experienced teachers. As for length of service in special education, 4 teachers are new, 6 teachers have worked between 6-10 years, and 5 teachers have worked more than 16 years, and in terms of training on IEP, more than half (53%) of the participants have been trained in IAP development, three teachers have received partial training, but 4 teachers have not received any training at all.

Data Collection Tool

For the interview, an interview form consisting of semi-structured questions was created by the researcher. The interview form consists of two parts, the first which questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants and the second consists of interview questions. While developing the semi-structured interview form, first, the studies in the literature were reviews and then the draft interview form was prepared. In the second stage, a total of twelve questions were developed in the light of the information obtained from the literature reflecting the content of the study. In the third stage, to

Table 1. Demographic information about teachers

	Features	f	%
Gender	Male	9	60
	Female	6	40
Age	20-30 years	0	0
	31-40 years	9	60
	41-50 years	4	26.6
	51 years and over	2	13.3
Length of service as a teacher	0-5 years	0	0
	6-10 years	2	13.3
	11-15 years	2	13.3
	16 years and over	11	73.3
Length of service in special education	0-5 years	4	26.6
	6-10 years	6	40
	11-15 years	0	0
	16 years and over	5	33.3
Position at school	Special Education Teacher	6	40
	Guidance and Counselling	3	20
	Branch Teacher	3	20
	Administrative	3	20
Training on IEP development	Yes	8	53.3
	Partial	3	20
	No	4	26.6

ensure the internal validity of the interview form, expert opinion was received, and necessary revisions were made, one item was removed, and the interview form included eleven items. In the fourth stage, a semi-structured interview form was applied to two teachers for the pilot study, and the final version of the interview form was created making some revisions in the expressions in line with the teachers' opinions.

Data Collection

The purpose of the interview was explained to the participants and the interview started. It was stated that the interview was on a voluntary basis, the data obtained would not be used besides research purposes, if requested, the interview could be withdrawn, and the records could be examined at the end of the interview. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, and they were video or audio recorded with the permission of the teachers. The interviews lasted an average of 13.18 minutes with each participant.

Data Analysis

The opinions of the participants about IEPDU obtained with the interviews were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is a form of analysis in which the data obtained are explained and interpreted according to the themes determined in line with the research questions identified previously (Şimşek&Yıldırım, 2016). After completing the interviews, the researcher transcribed the recordings. A separate interview form was used for each participant in the transcription of the records. The audio and video recordings taken during the interview were transferred to a word document without any changes. To ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, 30% of these transcripts were compared with the records by the field expert. Demographic information from the participants and information about the research questions were tabulated in MS Excel, and an analysis form was created to present the demographic information more clearly. The collected data were transferred to this analysis form. The data obtained during the analysis were used comparatively for the findings.

FINDINGS

This part of the study presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected with the opinions of 15 participants in the study group.

As presented in Table 2, most of the participants (86.6%) stated that IEPDU is necessary. While four of the participants stated that IEPDU is necessary, they also stated that this unit is not active or functional. In addition, four participants (T1, T6, T8, T15) said, “*IEPDU is beneficial for newcomers to the branch and field.*” and T8 said “*I would like the IEP that I prepared myself to be approved from another perspective. I think that I should convey the information about my student to the administrators, parents, guidance and branch teachers.*”. Both statements expressed these participants’ views on the usefulness and necessity of IEPDU.

As presented Table 3, three of the participants stated that they met at the beginning of the academic year, three of them gathered in case of need, and one of them stated they met once a month. Six of the participants stated that they did not have IEPDU meetings. One of the participants (T1) said, “*A meeting is held, but I don’t know if this is an IEPDU meeting.*”

As presented in Table 4, four of the participants stated that the IEPDU was gathered to define the IEP format, and two of them stated that it was gathered for the purpose of solving a problem observed in the student.

Among the participants, T7 stated that they met to decide that students who could not receive group education should receive one-to-one education, T9 said they met to identify the students who will be placed and their coordinator teachers, and T15 said they met to re-evaluate the student whose placement was thought to have been wrong. One of the participants, T14, stated that a short meeting was held only for signatures.

As presented in Table 5, five of the participants stated that in IEPDU, decisions made were mostly about IEP development, three of them said that decisions aimed at solving learning problems or problematic behavior, two of them reported that decisions were about directing them to GRC, and one of them said decisions made were about placing students in a grade level. However, four participants stated that no decisions were taken because the IEPDU was not convened, and three participants stated that they did not know what decisions were made.

As presented in Table 6, seven of the participants stated that IEPDU did not cooperate in the studies related to the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the IEP, three participants stated that IEPDU did not cooperate, and three participants (T1, T10, T13) said they did not cooperate because they did not have IEPDU. have expressed. One participant (T6) said, “*It cooperates, but is it done as a unit or is it done individually? I have no idea about that.*”

Table 2. Opinions on IEPDU

Themes	f	%	Code
IEPDU is a necessary unit.	13	86.6	T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15
IEPDU is not active or functional.	4	26.6	T1, T2, T3, T5

Table 3. When IEPDUs convene

Themes	f	%	Code
At the beginning of the academic year	3	20	T2, T3, T9
When needed	3	20	T8, T11, T15
Once a month	1	6.6	T7
Never	6	40	T4, T5, T6, T10, T13, T14

Table 4. Purpose of IEPDU Meetings

Themes	f	%	Code
Defining the IEP development format	4	26.6	T2, T7, T9, T15
Solving problematic behaviors observed among students	2	13.3	T8, T11

Table 5. Decisions made by IEPDUs

Themes	f	%	Code
Decisions on IEP development	5	33.3	T2, T3, T7, T9, T12
Solving a learning problem or problematic behavior	3	20	T7, T8, T11
Decisions to redirect to GRC*	2	13.3	T8, T15
Decisions for placing in a class	1	6.6	T15
I don't know what decisions are made.	3	20	T1, T4, T8
No decisions are taken as it is not convened.	4	26.6	T5, T10, T13, T14

*Guidance Research Center

Table 6. Cooperation of IEPDU in studies related to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IEP

Themes	f	%	Code
There is cooperation.	3	20	T7, T9, T15
There is no cooperation.	10	66.6	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T10, T12, T13, T14

Table 7. Whether IEPDU makes changes and adjustments to the student's IEP

Themes	f	%	Code
It makes changes and adjustments.	5	33.3	T7, T9, T11, T12, T15
It does not make changes and adjustments.	7	46.6	T3, T4, T5, T6, T10, T13, T14
Each classroom teacher makes changes and adjustments for their student.	3	20	T1, T2, T8

Table 8. Whether IEPDU makes recommendations on the environment and materials

Themes	f	%	Code
Recommendations are made.	3	20	T7, T11, T15
No recommendations are made.	8	53.3	T2, T3, T5, T6, T8, T10, T13, T14
No meetings.	2	13.3	T10, T13

Table 9. Whether IEPDU defines the methods, techniques, and teaching materials to be used in teaching and assessment

Themes	f	%	Code
Yes, it does.	3	20	T11, T12, T15
No, it does not.	7	46.6	T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T10, T13
Teachers do it.	5	33.3	T2, T7, T8, T9, T14

As presented in Table 7, five of the participants stated that IEPDU made changes and adjustments to the student's IEP when needed, five of the participants stated that IEPDU did not make any changes and adjustments, and three participants stated that the changes and adjustments in the IEP were made by the teachers. Two participants (T10, T13) stated that IEPDU did not make any changes or arrangements because it never met. One participant (T9) expressed their opinion on the importance

of making changes in the IEP saying, "*It is absolutely necessary to make a change at the beginning of the second semester, especially since they do not know the 9th grade students well enough.*"

As presented in Table 8, six of the participants stated that IEPDU did not make any recommendations to the school administration and teachers about the environment and materials, while three participants said recommendations are made. Two participants (T10, T13)

Table 10. Whether decisions taken in IEPDU are monitored

Themes	f	%	Code
They are monitored at the end of the first semester or at the beginning of the second semester.	3	20	T9, T15, T13
Follow-up is done in the month following the meeting.	2	13.3	T7, T11
They are monitored whenever there is a meeting.	1	6.6	T8
They are monitored by the administration.	2	13.3	T5, T14
They are monitored by the teachers, not by the unit.	2	13.3	T2, T3
I don't know because there is no IEPDU.	5	33.3	T1, T4, T6, T10, T13

Table 11. Function of the families at IEPDU meetings

Themes	f	%	Code
The families have no function in meetings.	11	73.2	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8, T9, T10, T13, T14, T15
I have no idea.	1	6.6	T6
Approving the IEP and stating any opinion they have to the IEPDU.	1	6.6	T7

Table 12. Reasons that negatively affect the functioning of IEPDU

Themes	f	%	Code
Head's failure to organize	9	60	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T10, T12, T13, T14
Workload	4	26.6	T3, T6, T8, T10
Crowded Classes	2	13.3	T3, T5
Lack of knowledge	6	40	T3, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12
Members failing to fulfill their responsibilities	4	26.6	T4, T5, T13, T14
Lack of cooperation	1	6.6	T9

stated that IEPDU did not make any recommendations because it never met. Two participants (T1, T4) said that they did not know whether there was an IEPDU or not.

As presented in Table 9, three of the participants stated that IEPDU defined the methods, techniques, and teaching materials to be used in teaching and evaluation, four participants said IEPDU did not, three participants (T1, T10, T13) said there was no IEPDU, and five participants stated that the teachers themselves did it.

As presented in Table 10, three of the participants stated that the monitoring was done at the meetings held at the end of the first semester or at the beginning of the second semester, two of the participants stated that it was done the following month after the IEPDU meetings, one participant stated that it was done in any meeting, two participants stated that it was done by the administration, and two participants stated that it was done by the teachers, not by the unit.

As presented in Table 11, seven of the participants said that the families did not have a function in the

IEPDU meetings, four participants (T1, T4, T5, T13) said that the families did not have a function because the IEPDU was not active, one participant (T6) had no idea about it, and one participant (T7) stated that the families had a function of approving the IEP and, if they have an opinion, they state it to the IEPDU.

As presented in Table 12, most of the participants (60%) stated that the reason that negatively affects the functioning of IEPDU is "the head of the unit's failure to organize". 40% of the participants said it was "lack of knowledge", and it was "workload" for 26.6%, "members not fulfilling their responsibilities" for 26.6%, "crowded classes" for 13.3%, and "lack of cooperation" for 6.6% of the participants.

PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE IEPDUS

"The branch teacher does not know the problems of some students, but the class teacher does. If such a meeting were held,

I would get to know the students and their parents.” (T1)

“A pilot class can be selected at the school for the application, maybe it can be more prevalent if positive feedback is received.” (T3)

“Even if they encourage the unit to work, even if they just put us together, we can produce great practice.” (T4)

“If the IEPDU functioned actively, we could have more information about methods, techniques and materials.” (T6)

“There may be students who do not fit in our school. IEPDU should have the authority to evaluate and change this decision.” (T7)

“Parents communicate with the guidance teachers more; it would be better if the guidance teachers were more active in this regard and organized it.” (T10)

“There needs to be a continuity in the issue of IEP. For example, the 9th grade students and their parent are new to schools. Why should that result in a waste of time? It would be better if there was a transfer of knowledge between schools, which I think is very important.” (T11)

“I think it would be very beneficial even if only what the regulations suggest was implemented. Because the system was well-established.” (T14)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present research studied the views of teachers, who work at special education schools, regarding the functioning of IEPDU. According to the findings obtained from the research; the majority of the participants think that IEPDU is a necessary unit for schools, yet the unit is not active or functional at schools. This finding shows congruence with the findings reported by Yazıcıoğlu (2019) research that IEPDUs were formed at schools but did not work in accordance with their purpose.

Only a low percentage of 20% of the participants state that IEPDUs work in cooperation. A large percentage state that there is no IEPDU at school, or does not cooperate, if there is one. These statements of the participants are in agreement with the findings reported by several other studies (Avcıoğlu, 2011; Özcan, 2019; Yener, 2019; Yazıcıoğlu, 2019; Çıkkılı et al., 2020) that IEPDUs members did not cooperate, or information and responsibilities were not shared among the members, and they lacked a good quality communication.

Most of the participants (73.3%) stated that the family did not have a function within the IEPDUs. These statements of the participants are in line with the results of the research (Avcıoğlu, 2011; Özcan, 2019), which found that the teachers had very limited communication

with the families during the preparation process and the families did not participate actively in the process. However, this finding is not in agreement with the finding reported by Kuru Habiboğlu (2018) that families participated in in- and out-of-school activities to support attainments.

The majority of the participants (60%) stated that the reason that negatively affects the functioning of IEPDU is the head of the unit's failure to organize. Other reasons reported by the participants were lack of knowledge (40%), workload (26.6%) and members' failure to fulfill their responsibilities (26.6%). These findings agree with the findings reported by Yazıcıoğlu (2019) that the school administration did not fulfill its legal responsibilities in the operation of the unit, there was no cooperation among the members, the number of special education students was high, and the finding reported by Kuru Habiboğlu (2018) that the head of IEPDU did not provide teachers with support on IEP in some schools.

The development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IEP, ensuring coordination in related studies, and working in cooperation with other boards and units at school are listed among the duties of IEPDU in the Special Education Services Regulation of the Ministry of National Education (2018). According to the research findings, it was stated that IEPDUs convened to determine the format of IEP development and decisions were made about IEP. However, only 33.3% of the participants stated that IEPDU made changes and adjustments to the IEP of the student, 20% of them stated that IEPDUs made recommendations regarding the environment and material, 20% of the participants stated that IEPDUs determined the methods and techniques and teaching materials to be used in teaching and evaluation, half of the participants stated that the decisions taken in the IEPDU were monitored, but the other half stated that the unit did not get together for meetings or no follow-up work was carried out.

Consequently, either an IEPDU has not been established at schools or even if one has been legally established, it is not functionally active. While most of the teachers and administrators express opinions related to the usefulness and necessity of the unit, they state that the majority of the duties clearly stated in the regulation are not carried out in accordance with their purpose. As suggested by one of the participants, what needs to be done is specified in detail in the regulations and performing the specified tasks will be sufficient for the unit to achieve its purpose. According to the interviews and research findings, the task of IEPDU is generally perceived

as the development and implementation of the IEP. Therefore, it is considered as if the duties of the IEPDU have been fulfilled and there is no need for the unit to gather when a teacher develops and applies the IEP individually. However, the duties of IEPDU are not limited to IEP, but include special education services that require many planning and implementations in the contexts of families, teachers, and administration. According to their statements, non-field teachers believe that apart from the written duties, IEPDU has a benefit in providing information and experience on special education to non-field teachers. When the units are active and functional, it will be possible for members who lack knowledge on this sub-

ject to adapt to the field with less difficulty. Although the teachers might think that the unit can meet whenever it is necessary, it would be beneficial for the unit to be operational if the unit's meeting schedule is clearly stated in the legislation.

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None.

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