



## **Social Studies Trainee Teachers' Perceptions of their Community in Terms of Various Components of Sustainability: A Case Study from Kutahya City, Turkey.**

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### **Abstract**

The current study aims to determine social studies trainee teachers' perceptions of their own community in terms of sustainability. The answers for present study question are sought through a questionnaire conducted with Turkish trainee teachers in May 2013. The sample of the research is composed of 176 social studies trainee teachers at Dumlupinar University, Faculty of Education in Turkey. When designing the questionnaire, the eight key components which has identified by UK Government of sustainable communities and items of each components have been used as similar to the questionnaire of Alkis (2012). In order to evaluate the data SPSS programme was used. Independent samples T-test scores indicated that there was not a significant difference between males and females related to trainees' perceptions of their community in terms of sustainability. Other results are presented in detail in the study.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Sustainable Community, Social Studies Teacher Trainees, Education for Sustainable Development, Turkey.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communities today are facing increasingly complex issues and rapid changes that challenge their future direction. Growing population diversity, economic hardship and social inequity, conflicting development desires, and passionate environmental concerns all pose a challenge for local leaders and community developers in their attempt to make sound, widely supported decisions. Conflicting views of what community residents want and expect of their community makes it difficult to understand and identify residents' desires and arrive at a community consensus for the future. Reaching community consensus and articulating a shared community vision is not easy. Even smaller, rural communities are becoming increasingly diverse in age, income status, race, ethnicity and culture (Moss & Grunkemeyer, 2010). Powell (2012) emphasized that communities are the primary focus of responsibility for creating a sustainable world. Besides, The slogan 'think globally, act locally' summarises the contemporary debate about sustainable communities. It goes to the core of concerns about democratic participation in a global society. As cited by Lawson & Kearns (2010), community engagement is seen as an important element in a process intended to develop 'sustainable communities'.

In spite of the widespread consensus of the importance of "sustainable communities" as an overarching policy goal, how it is achieved on the ground remains unclear. Although "sustainable communities" is a contested concept, there is agreement that it broadly captures the notion of a "community" adhering to principles of sustainable development with an emphasis on the "human" or "social" dimension of sustainability (Cited in Newton & Franklin, 2011). Defining sustainable communities and their characteristics is challenging, as no communities or societies in human history could stay sustainable forever. The notion of sustainable communities is relative and there is no definition that is relevant for all times and places (Cited in Ercan, 2011). Despite the all difficulties, it is clear that there are several definitions of sustainable communities.

By definition, sustainable communities are places planned and built to support sustainable living with focus on economic sustainability and environmental sustainability. Sustainable communities expect sustainable urban infrastructure and/or sustainable municipal infrastructure. Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future (Cited in McDonald, Malys & Maliene, 2009). As cited by Maliene et.al. (2012), sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity. In other words (sustainablecommunities.gov, 2013), sustainable communities are places that have a variety of housing and transportation choices, with destinations close to home. As a result, they tend to have lower transportation costs, reduce air pollution and stormwater runoff, decrease infrastructure costs, preserve historic properties and sensitive lands, save people time in traffic, be more economically resilient and meet market demand for different types of housing at different price points. Rural, suburban, and urban communities can all use sustainable communities' strategies and techniques to invest in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods, but these strategies will look different in each place depending on the community's character, context, and needs.

Due to the ongoing global urbanization, cities as spaces for living, economy, culture and nature increasingly become a focal point for the concept of sustainability (Cited in Odermatt & Brundiers, 2007). However, the reality in cities is not as attractive and promising as the drivers that cause urban growth. Cities are equally the place of economic growth and of increasing socio-economic disparities. They are places of social and cultural diversity as well as of disintegration processes. Cities reflect technological progress as well as the ecological impacts of an unbalanced development. Thus, the concept of sustainable development ought to be applied with special reference to cities (Odermatt & Brundiers, 2007). It is clear that there cannot be 'global parameters' for development of, or performance appraisal of sustainable human settlements, as all human settlements reflect significantly different characteristics originating from the functions, behaviour, aspirations, culture and life style of the society that inhabits the settlements. More important among these parameters are physical features and geopolitical location, socio-cultural values, human and physical resources, level and potential for economic development, level of skill, education and scientific/technological aptitude, ethical, political,

legal and governance system, transportation, communication, agricultural and industrial infrastructure, etc. All these parameters vary with the latitude and longitudes and are rarely common at the micro level. Attempting a global solution to the problem of sustainable human settlement will therefore be difficult (Deb, 1998).

Many cities, towns, and other localities find ways to bring citizens together to define a community's course and to develop strategies to make it more sustainable. The following part presents information on approaches and techniques used successfully in communities to involve citizens (sustainable, 2013):

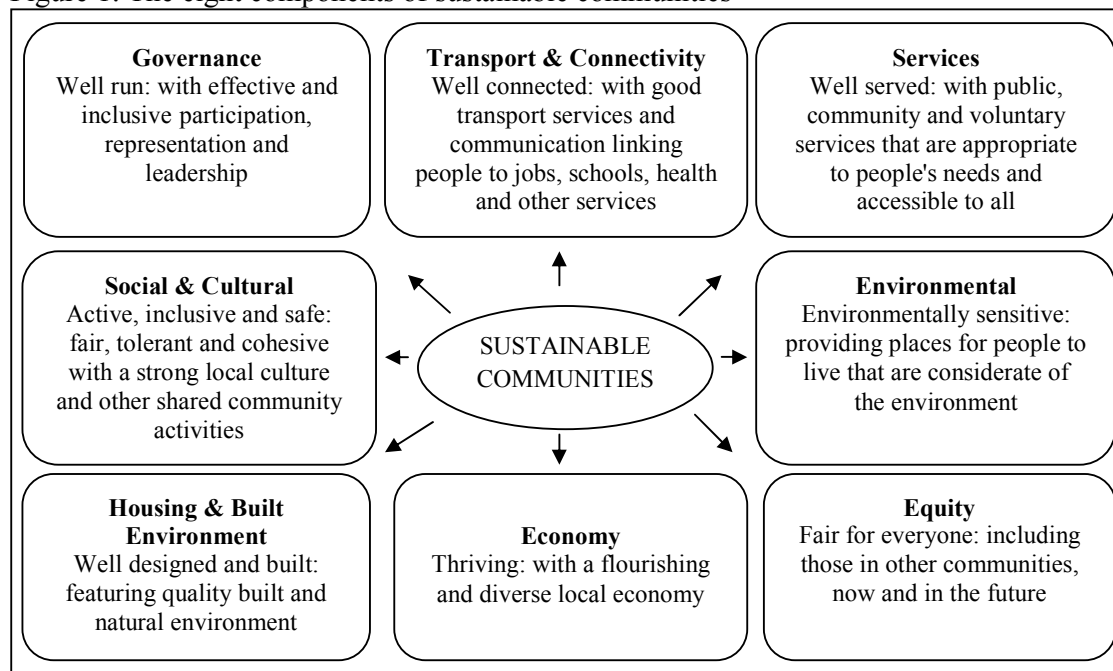
- A community must develop a vision in order to address sustainability.
- Innovative and constructive partnerships between different sectors and interests often provide significant progress toward creating sustainability. Partnerships may evolve from successful visioning, inventory, or indicator projects, or they may form around specific issues or areas of concern.
- Preparation of a community resource inventory and the identification of local indicators are important in order to measure progress toward sustainability
- Communities with the greatest and most diverse citizen participation are often resilient and strong. Engaging citizens to address common issues is essential for educated decision-making.
- Justice and equity are fundamental in a civilized society. Examples of injustice are a lack of adequate housing, poor sanitation, an inadequate supply of pure water, and environmental degradation related to industrial pollution.
- Alternative dispute resolution is a tool for resolving conflicts within a community, and mediation is used in the workplace and in institutions to help individuals find common ground and peaceful solutions to problems.
- Every community has a history, and events planned around it are both educational and cultural. These activities provide local character and strengthen community ties.

Besides, UK Government has identified eighth key components of sustainable communities, as shown in Figure 1 (Cited in Communities and Local Government, 2011; McDonald, Malys & Maliene, 2009; adopted from the Egan review and EU Bristol Accord). This emphasized that sustainable communities must be offered several opportunities for basic needs and sustainable lifestyles for their residents.

Sustainable Development (SD) is a future-oriented concept of peace between humans and nature and justice between all generations, nations, cultures and regions of the world. In addition to social, environmental and economic concerns, the concept of sustainable development also includes global responsibility and political participation (Lucerne Declaration, 2007). The decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) aims to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning so that sustainable development can be understood by everyone and participation in its attainment can take place at every level of society (Bird, Lutz & Warwick, 2008). When development takes place in communities, whether physical or social, it is the result of the action of the communities through the various channels of action available to them. It is considered a process of social action in which members of the community organize themselves for action by defining their individual and collective or common needs and work out the means of meeting the needs. This situation promotes innovativeness and other psychological condition that is fundamental to self-improvement. The people are expected to be able to apply the knowledge and skills to the measures at their disposal to advance their own development and sustain as well, the initiated growth process. The improvement or development of the community is anchored on the involvement or active participation of the people in the planned process of change or growth. The community members in the partnering and

participatory efforts must be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating community development programmes initiated in order to ensure full commitment to the programmes (Ebun & Francis, 2012).

Figure 1: The eight components of sustainable communities



As known, education is an essential medium for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current trends of economic development are not sustainable and that public awareness, education, and training are keys to moving society toward sustainability (McKeown et al., 2002). Since children are educated under the guidance of teachers, teachers need to gain the necessary tools and skills for coping with the demands of the ‘unsustainable world’. Then, today, as in any other countries, Turkish teacher education have to face the challenges of our times in terms of SD. However, although there has been a growing interest and, in turn, body of knowledge being created on SD from the view of different disciplines, it is not a well-known issue and concept in Turkish context (Alkis & Ozturk, 2007). Related to sustainable development, in the new Elementary Education Program that was activated in 2004, a special effort is aimed at educating children who are supportive of the environment, respect societal values, adopt economic improvement that is sustainable, and consider regional economic differences with a focus on production. In Turkey, the courses that contribute to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the elementary grade levels are mostly in science and technology and in social studies (Alkis, 2008). Nevertheless, the study of Petersen & Alkis (2009) indicated that most topics related to sustainable development at the elementary level of education are related to environmental issues. The topics that receive the most detailed attention in lessons tend to be environmental issues rather than the issues related to economic and social aspects of sustainable development.

In this respect, as emphasized by Alkis & Ozturk (2007), ESD should not be omitted or skipped over quickly because the issue of SD has a vital importance in the lives of all people. Such education will widen the students’ views and understanding of the world encouraging them having a direct contact with environmental, social and economic developments which will affect their lives dramatically. This is to teach them to take responsibility and control of their own lives and the society they are in, to give the knowledge of what it means to live along with others, and the wisdom to see the choices they make as individuals and professional will eventually have an impact on the whole community. In this respect, a key concern for the programmes of teacher education should be to enhance the student teachers’ understanding of SD and about how best to support their future pupils learning of SD and thus help them in achieving a sustainable life. Similarly, As Boehn (2007) stressed, because numerous members of academia and the political realm are convinced that swift action is required, the focus of future-oriented teacher training must be directed to the topic of sustainable development.

To achieve a more sustainable world, “learning” is seen as being key (Sterling 2001). Underlying discourses of ESD, there seems to be an assumption that if we teach children and young people the right skills and knowledge they will live sustainably. Yet, there has been insufficient attention paid to the way in which children’s ESD learning influences sustainable developments in communities. Indeed, there are a growing number of critics who question the extent to which ESD learning “spills over” into communities (Cited in Smith & Burns, 2013). So, education is fundamental to achieve sustainability and to create a more sustainable future. All subject teachers can contribute to education for sustainability (Gadotti, 2008). Especially, social studies courses consists of three dimensions of SD which are environment, economy and society, it is a unique field to teach sustainability issues to students at elementary level. Thus, students can gain the basic recognition of sustainability, sustainable life styles and the steps for sustainable communities. The purpose of this article is therefore to reveal perceptions of teacher trainees' about their community because of their role as actors of change in creating sustainable communities. Based on these, the present study aims to determine social studies trainee teachers’ perceptions of their own community in terms of sustainability. Naturally, perceptions of community in terms of sustainability related to where to live. In this study, research group live in Kutahya city in Turkey.

## METHOD

The answers for present study question are sought through a questionnaire conducted with Turkish social studies trainee teachers in May 2013. The sample of the research is composed of 176 trainee teachers at Dumlupinar University, Faculty of Education in Turkey. Within the targeted group 50% of respondents were female and 50% were male. When designing the questionnaire, the eight key components which has identified by UK Government of sustainable communities and items of each components have been used as similiar to the questionnaire of Alkis (2012). The purpose of the questionnaire was to raise an understanding about trainee teachers’ perceptions of their community in terms of sustainability. They have been asked to choose “agree, partially agree, disagree or no idea” with each of 40 statements in questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of eight sections, each section assessing a particular aspect of the research as will be stated below. In order to evaluate the data the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used.

## RESULTS

First of all, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Tests were applied to determine if the data distributed are statistically normal or not. The analysis revealed that the distribution of the data is normal ( $P > 0.05$ ) and parametric tests were used in the following. So One-Way Anova test was used because of the distribution of data was normal. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference as it can be seen from Table 1.

Table 1: Anova Test Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6409.541	3	2136.514	8.766	0.000**
Within Groups	41919.641	172	243.719		
Total	48329.182	175			

\*\* $P < 0.05$  there is statistically significant difference

Table 2: Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons Results

Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Std.Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	15,53241*	3,52301	,000	6,3926	24,6722
	3	7,10185	3,88839	,264	-2,9859	17,1896
	4	16,41942*	3,95141	,000	6,1682	26,6707
2	1	-15,53241*	3,52301	,000	-24,6722	-6,3926
	3	-8,43056*	3,07863	,034	-16,4175	-,4436
	4	0,88701	3,15784	,992	-7,3055	9,0795
3	1	-7,10185	3,88839	,264	-17,1896	2,9859
	2	8,43056*	3,07863	,034	,4436	16,4175
	4	9,31757*	3,56089	,047	,0795	18,5557
4	1	-16,41942*	3,95141	,000	-26,6707	-6,1682
	2	-0,88701	3,15784	,992	-9,0795	7,3055
	3	-9,31757*	3,56089	,047	-18,5557	-,0795

\*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

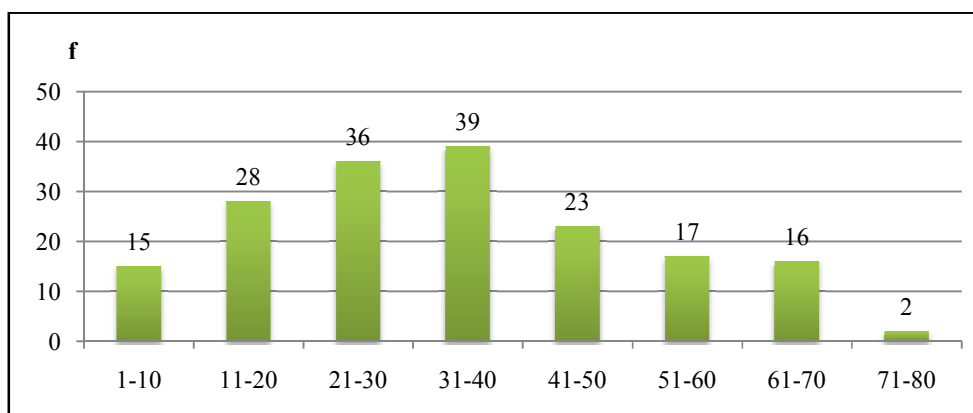
Variance analysis result showed that there was a statistically significant difference, therefore, it was used Tukey test to find the differences in detail. It is seen from Table 2 that the result of first grades is higher than second and fourth grades and there is a statistically significant difference. The result of second grades is lower than first and third grades and there is a statistically significant difference. In addition, the result of third grades is higher than the second and fourth grades and there is a statistically significant difference. The result of fourth grades is lower than first and third grades and there is also a statistically significant difference. Based on these, it is clear that first grades had the highest average and fourth grades had the lowest average.

As seen from Table 3, independent samples *t*-test scores indicate that there was not a significant difference between males and females ( $p > 0.581$ ) related to trainee teachers' perceptions of their community in terms of sustainability.

Table 3: Independent samples *t*-test for trainee teachers' perceptions of their community

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	S.S.	t	P
Girl	88	31,7386	17,46425	-,552	0.581
Boy	88	33,1250	15,79671		

$P > 0.05$  there is no statistically significant difference (Sig. 2-tailed)



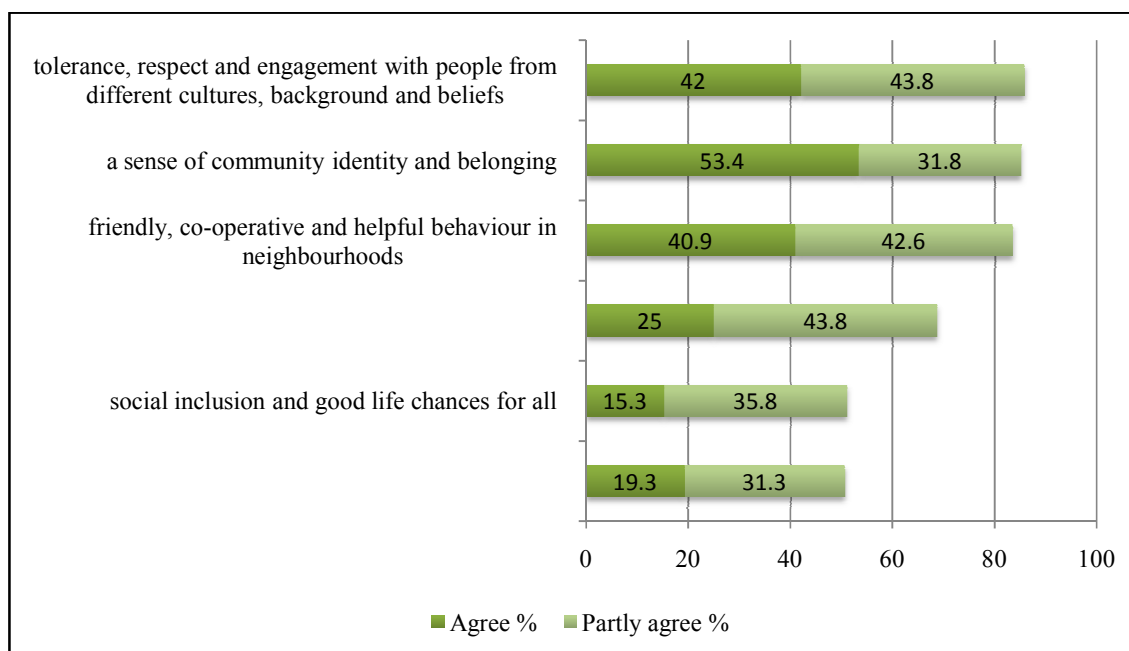
Graph 1: General Results of Teacher Trainees' Perception of their Community

Table 3 and Graph 1 show the general results of teacher trainees' perception of their community in terms of sustainability. The average score of all teacher trainees is 29.6. Because of the maximum score can be 80 in the questionnaire, this average score shows that social studies teacher trainees' perception of their community in terms of sustainability is under the mean point (40). In the following part, trainee teachers asked to choose “agree, partially agree, disagree or no idea” with each statements related to each category.

**Category 1 - Active, inclusive and safe:** It is seen from the Table 4 and Graph 2 related to active, inclusive and safe category, most of the trainees believe their community offer "tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs" by 85.8%; "a sense of community identity and belonging" by 85.2%; "friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighborhoods" by 83.5%. Nevertheless, half of the trainees disagree with the statements that their community offer “social inclusion and good life chances for all” and “low levels of crime, drugs and antisocial behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing”.

Table 4: Active, Inclusive and Safe Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
a sense of community identity and belonging	94	53,4	56	31,8	14	8	12	6,8
tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs	74	42	77	43,8	24	13,6	1	0,6
friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighborhoods	72	40,9	75	42,6	22	12,5	7	4
opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities, including for children and young people	44	25	77	43,8	52	29,5	3	1,7
low levels of crime, drugs and antisocial behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing	34	19,3	55	31,3	68	38,6	19	10,8
social inclusion and good life chances for all	27	15,3	63	35,8	76	43,2	10	5,7



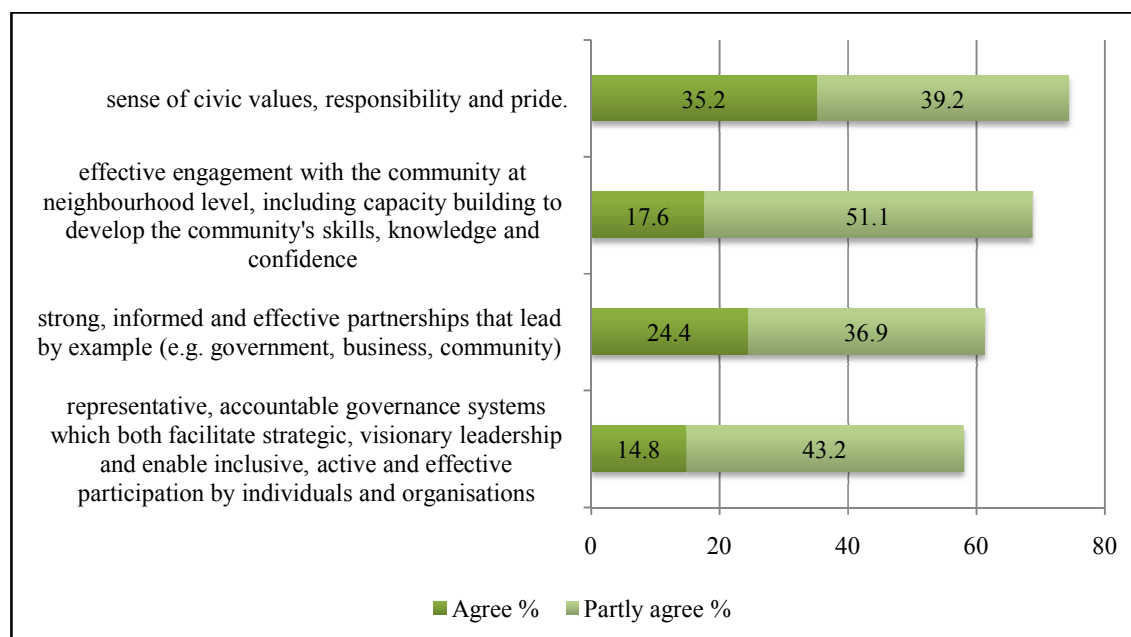
Graph 2: Active, Inclusive and Safe Category

**Category 2 - Well Run:** Table 5 and Graph 3 show that most of the trainees believe their community offer “sense of civic values, responsibility and pride” by 74.4% and "effective engagement with the community at neighborhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills,

knowledge and confidence" by 68.8%. Both of the other two statements related to this category supported by around 60 % of trainees.

Table 5: Well Run Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations	26	14,8	76	43,2	60	34,1	14	8
effective engagement with the community at neighborhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence	31	17,6	90	51,1	33	18,8	22	12,5
strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)	43	24,4	65	36,9	56	31,8	12	6,8
sense of civic values, responsibility and pride	62	35,2	69	39,2	33	18,8	12	6,8



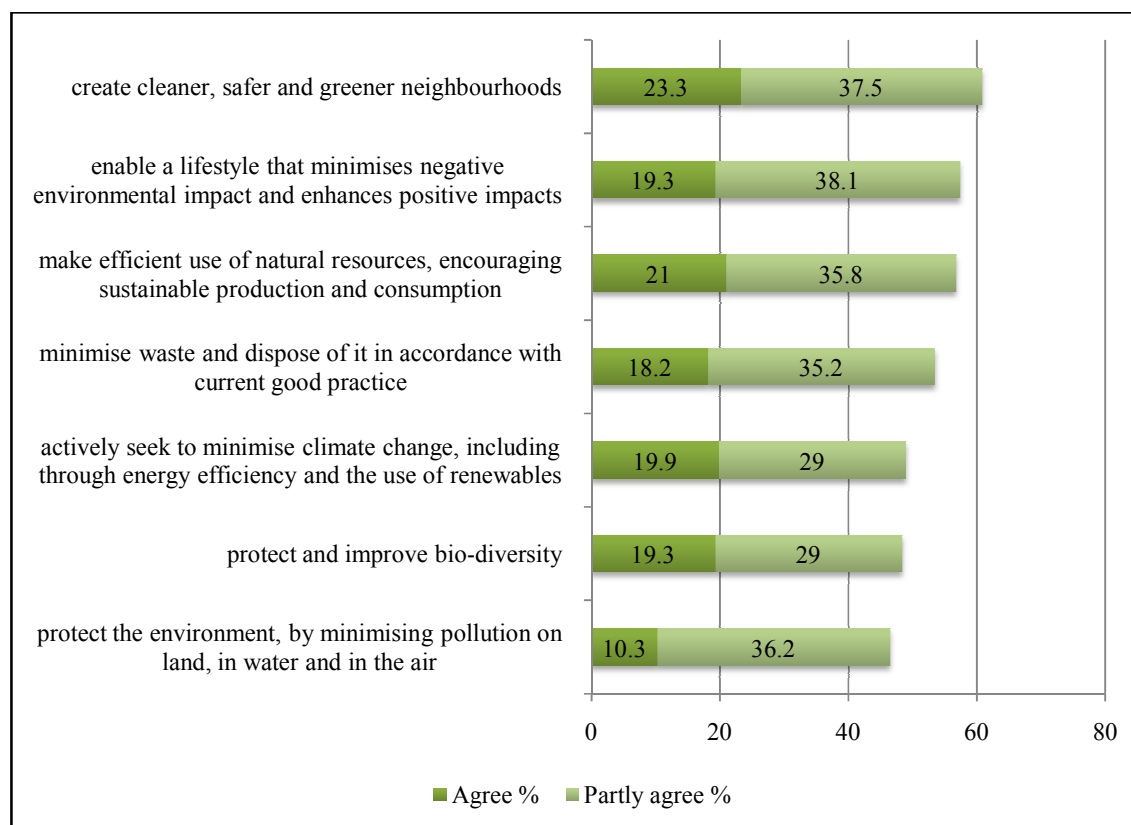
Graph 3: Well Run Category

**Category 3 - Environmentally sensitive:** It is seen from the Table 6 and Graph 4 related to environmentally sensitive category show that most of the trainees (60,8%) believe their community “create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods”. Other statements in this category supported by between 40% and 60% of trainees but most of the responses in “partly agree” category. Nevertheless, around half of them do not believe that their community “protect the environment, by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air”, "protect and improve bio-diversity" and "actively seek to minimise climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewable".



Table 6: Environmentally Sensitive Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
actively seek to minimise climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewable	35	19,9	51	29	72	40,9	18	10,2
protect the environment, by minimizing pollution on land, in water and in the air	32	18,2	61	34,7	77	43,8	6	3,4
minimise waste and dispose of it in accordance with current good practice	32	18,2	62	35,2	67	38,1	15	8,5
make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption	37	21	63	35,8	67	38,1	9	5,1
protect and improve bio-diversity (e.g. wildlife habitats)	34	19,3	51	29	72	40,9	19	10,8
enable a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and enhances positive impacts (e.g. by creating opportunities for walking and cycling, and reducing noise pollution and dependence on cars)	34	19,3	67	38,1	68	38,6	7	4
create cleaner, safer and greener neighborhoods (e.g. by reducing litter and graffiti, and maintaining pleasant spaces).	41	23,3	66	37,5	63	35,8	6	3,4



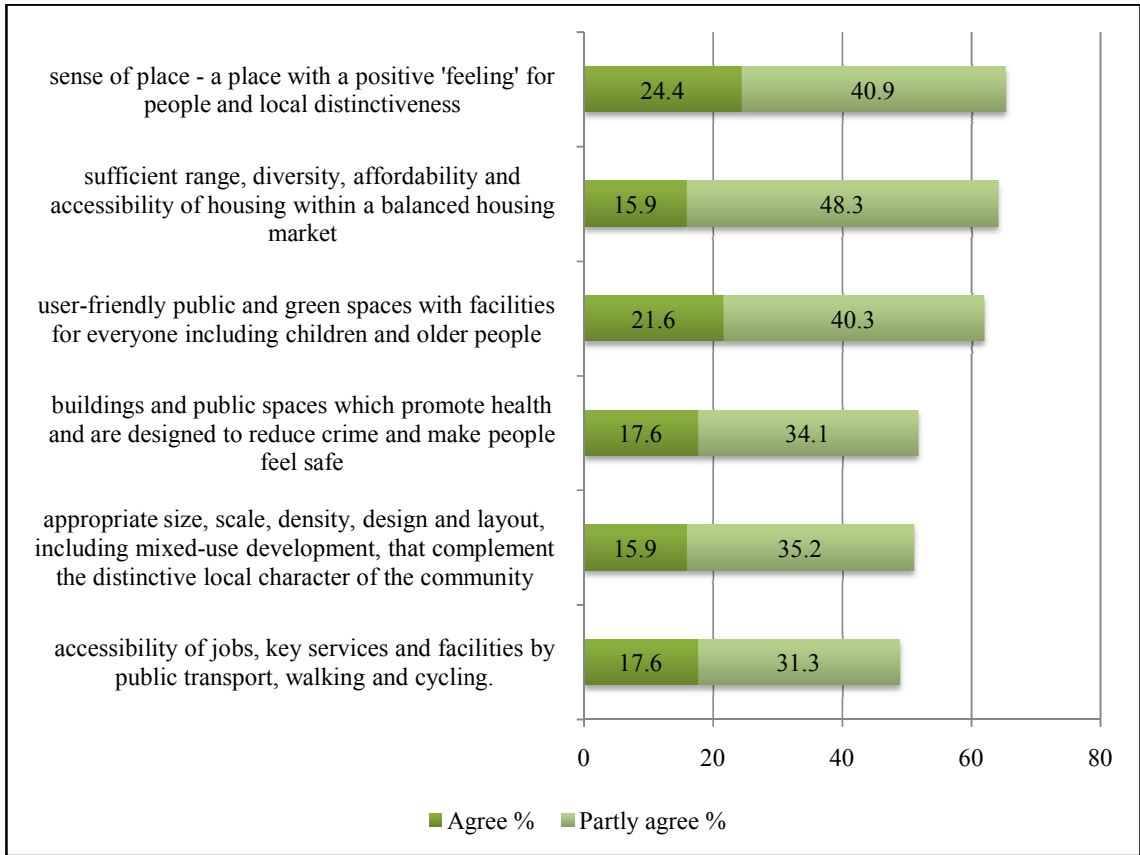
Graph 4: Environmentally Sensitive Category

**Category 4 - Well Designed and Built:** Table 7 and Graph 5 related to well designed and built category show that majority of the teacher trainees believe their community offer “sense of place - a place with a positive 'feeling' for people and local distinctiveness” by 65.3%, "sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market" by 64.2% and "user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people" by 61.9%.

Nevertheless, nearly half of them do not believe that their community offer “accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling”, "appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community" and “buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe”.

Table 7: Well Designed and Built Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
sense of place - a place with a positive 'feeling' for people and local distinctiveness	43	24,4	72	40,9	35	19,9	26	14,8
user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people	38	21,6	71	40,3	59	33,5	8	4,5
sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market	28	15,9	85	48,3	56	31,8	7	4
appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community	28	15,9	62	35,2	76	43,2	10	5,7
buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe	31	17,6	60	34,1	76	43,2	9	5,1
accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	31	17,6	55	31,3	78	44,3	12	6,8

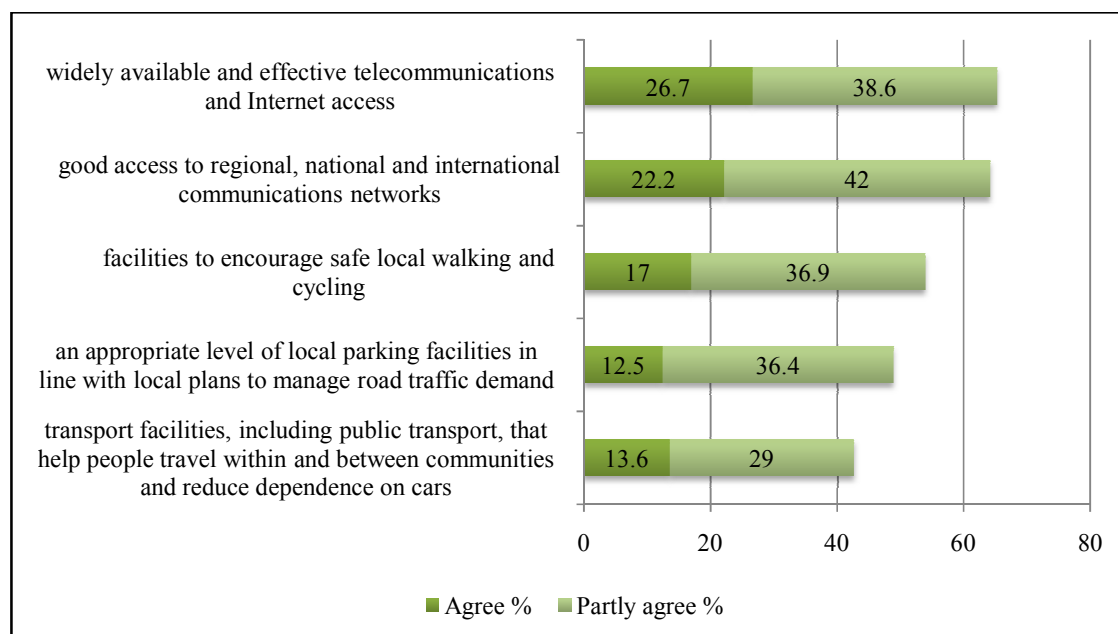


Graph 5: Well Designed and Built

**Category 5 - Well connected:** Table 8 and Graph 6 show that around 60% of the trainees believe their community offer “widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access” and “good access to regional, national and international communications networks”. Unfortunately, trainees believe that their community does not offer “transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars”, “an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand” and “facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling” 52.8%, 44.9 % and 43.8%, respectively.

Table 8: Well Connected Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars	24	13,6	51	29	93	52,8	8	4,5
facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling	30	17	65	36,9	77	43,8	4	2,3
an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand	22	12,5	64	36,4	79	44,9	11	6,3
widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access	47	26,7	68	38,6	47	26,7	14	8
good access to regional, national and international communications networks	39	22,2	74	42	48	27,3	15	8,5

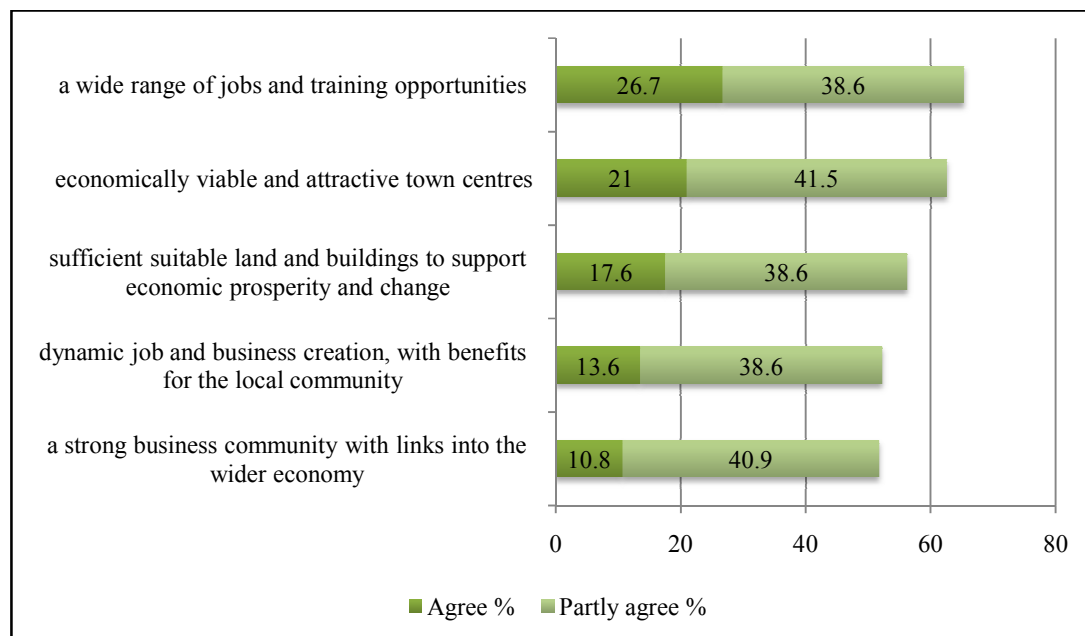


Graph 6: Well Connected category

**Category 6 - Thriving:** It is seen from the Table 9 and Graph 7 related to thriving category that around 60% of trainees believe their community features “a wide range of jobs and training opportunities” and “economically viable and attractive town centres”. Other statements in this category supported by under 60% of trainees.

Table 9: Thriving Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
a wide range of jobs and training opportunities	47	26,7	68	38,6	52	29,5	9	5,1
sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change	31	17,6	68	38,6	61	34,7	16	9,1
dynamic job and business creation, with benefits for the local community	24	13,6	68	38,6	70	39,8	14	8
a strong business community with links into the wider economy	19	10,8	72	40,9	73	41,5	12	6,8
economically viable and attractive town centres	37	21	73	41,5	56	31,8	10	5,7



Graph 7: Thriving Category

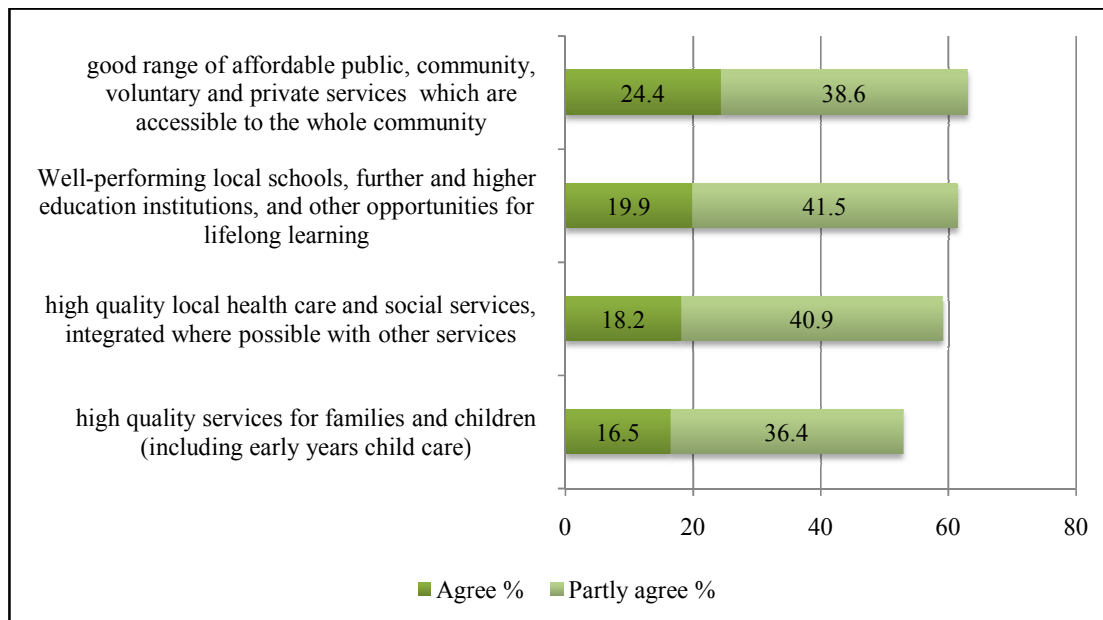
**Category 7 - Well served:** Table 10 and Graph 8 related to well served category indicated that around 60% of the trainees believe their community have "good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services which are accessible to the whole community", "well-performing local schools, further and higher education institutions, and other opportunities for lifelong learning" and "high quality local health care and social services, integrated where possible with other services". Nevertheless, around 36.9% of the trainees disagree with the statement that their community has not "high quality services for families and children".

Table 10: Well Served Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Well-performing local schools, further and higher education institutions, and other opportunities for lifelong learning	35	19,9	73	41,5	54	30,7	14	8
high quality local health care and social services, integrated where possible with other services	32	18,2	72	40,9	61	34,7	11	6,3
high quality services for families and children (including early years child care)	29	16,5	64	36,4	65	36,9	18	10,2

good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (e.g. retail, fresh food, commercial, utilities, information and advice) which are accessible to the whole community

43 24,4 68 38,6 58 33 7 4

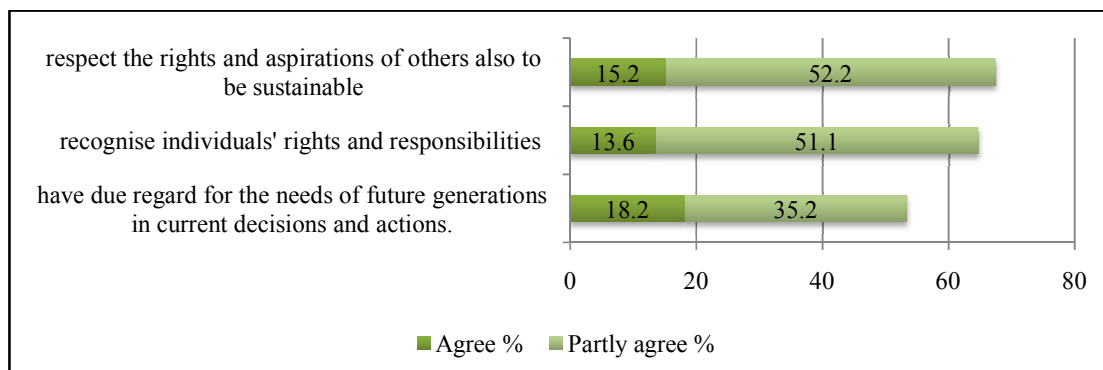


Graph 8: Well Served Category

**Category 8 - Fair for everyone:** Table 11 and Graph 9 related to fair for everyone category show that most of the trainees (around 60%) believe their community “respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable” and “recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities”. Nevertheless, 38.6% of trainees believe that their community have not due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions.

Table 11: Fair for Everyone Category

<i>My community offer</i>	Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		No idea	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities	34	19,3	79	44,9	50	28,4	13	7,4
respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable	24	13,6	90	51,1	50	28,4	12	6,8
have due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions	32	18,2	62	35,2	68	38,6	14	8



Graph 9: Fair for Everyone Category

## CONCLUSION

This current research which was conducted in Kutahya city, Turkey revealed the strong and weak issues which were determined by teacher trainees for their community. According to the questionnaire findings, social studies teacher trainees' perceptions of their community regarding various components of sustainability are far from being satisfactory. The general results based on the average score showed that teacher trainees' perception of their community in terms of sustainability was under the mean point. This finding is quite similar to the research of Alkis (2012) which was conducted in Bursa city with teacher trainees at Uludag University, in Turkey. It can be concluded that there are some necessities which indicated in findings for these community towards sustainability. Besides, as stated before, the coverage of sustainable development in Turkish universities primarily focuses on environmental aspects, but relevant social and economic issues are not sufficiently covered in a balanced manner. Therefore, there is a need for holistic ESD that incorporates three dimensions of SD in teacher education programmes.

It is clear that the most people want to live in a place where they know their neighbours and feel safe. A place with good homes, local shops, lots of jobs and opportunities for young people to get a good education (Cited in Bell, 2011). Through education, it can be possible that students, their families and all community to learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. It is obvious that teachers can influence students to develop their own commitments to a more sustainable world. The study findings shed light on teacher trainees' perception of their community regarding various components of sustainability and depict a picture of the current situation. Also, further studies along these lines would be very useful in other countries, since it is vital to revealing the current situation of different communities on an international scale.

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