

Introduction

The rise of disposable fashion consumption has been in the limelight, as the changing trends have left significant marks on environmental sustainability, especially among Asian younger consumers (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012). Their yearning for luxury brands that have high-quality but at steep costs have predominantly contributed to the fast-fashion industry's growth (Joy et al., 2012).

Numerous researchers have determined that the short-lived fashion brings countless detrimental impacts to the environment by creating air pollution with carbon footprints (Linden, 2016) and disturbing "ecological system and transnational recycling industries" (Brooks, 2019). Even though Asian young individuals express concerns about environmental issues, their inability to connect fast-fashion industries and sustainability leads to increased consumption of fast fashion brands' clothing (Jang et al., 2012; Joy et al., 2012).

Under this context, their lack of awareness and perception of sustainability regarding the fastened production-chain, and their recycling processes have not been paid enough attention (Joy et al., 2012). Thus, our study aims at investigating how Asian youths' knowledge level of sustainability influences their consuming and recycling behaviours--"What role does sustainability knowledge play in Asian youths' preference for fast-fashion clothes and their recycling behaviours?"

Methods

The quantitative research method was utilized by researchers with the use of an online survey for this research. The target population was 32 Asian undergraduates at UBC Vantage College who have experience in purchasing fast-fashion clothing. The questionnaire on Qualtrics was available online from June 23 to 29. It requires the participants to answer a few sets of multiple-choice questions, scale questions, and short-answer questions regarding their knowledge of sustainability, and how it impacts their fast-fashion consumption behaviors and recycling patterns.

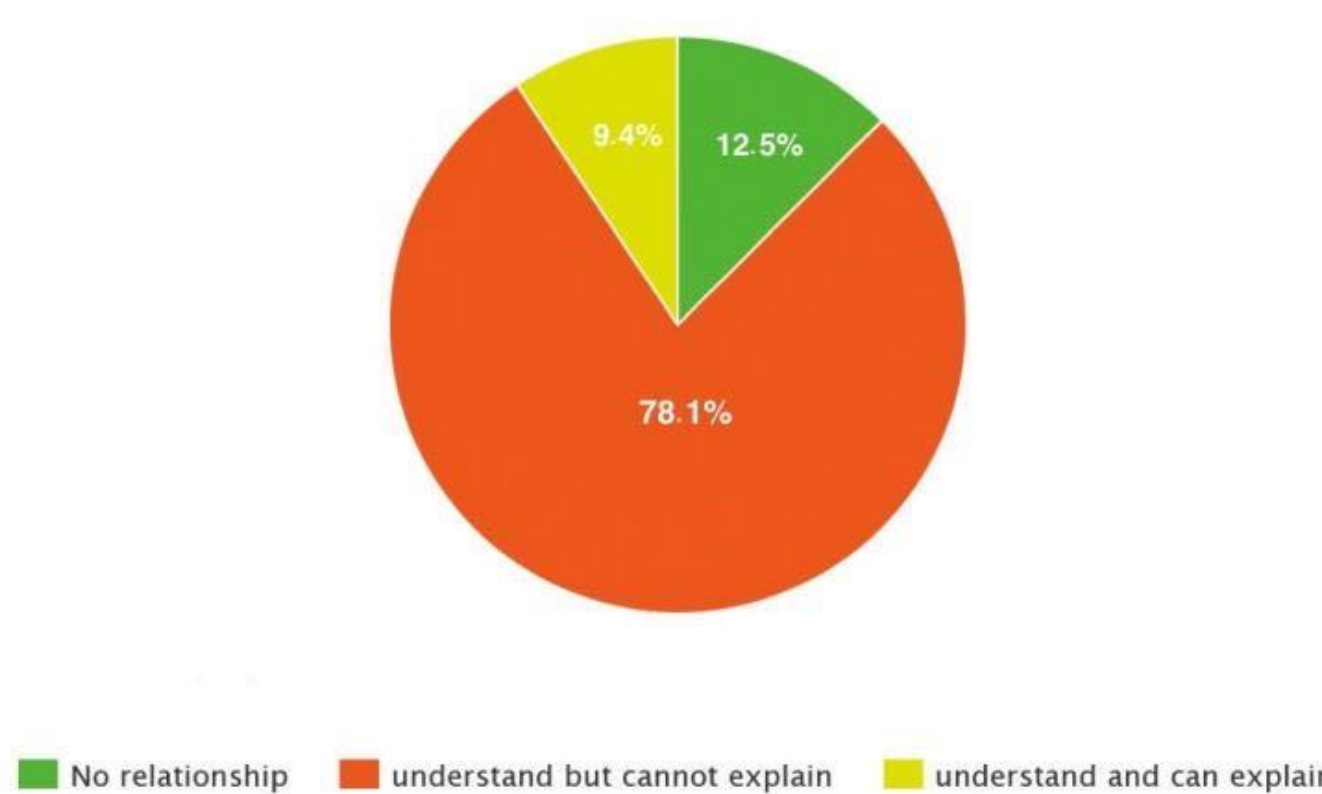
The collected data from short answer questions were analyzed and coded, and multiple-choice questions were converted into numerical data. Meaningful findings, that both directly or indirectly answer our research question, were translated into infographics using charts and graphs to visualize the results.



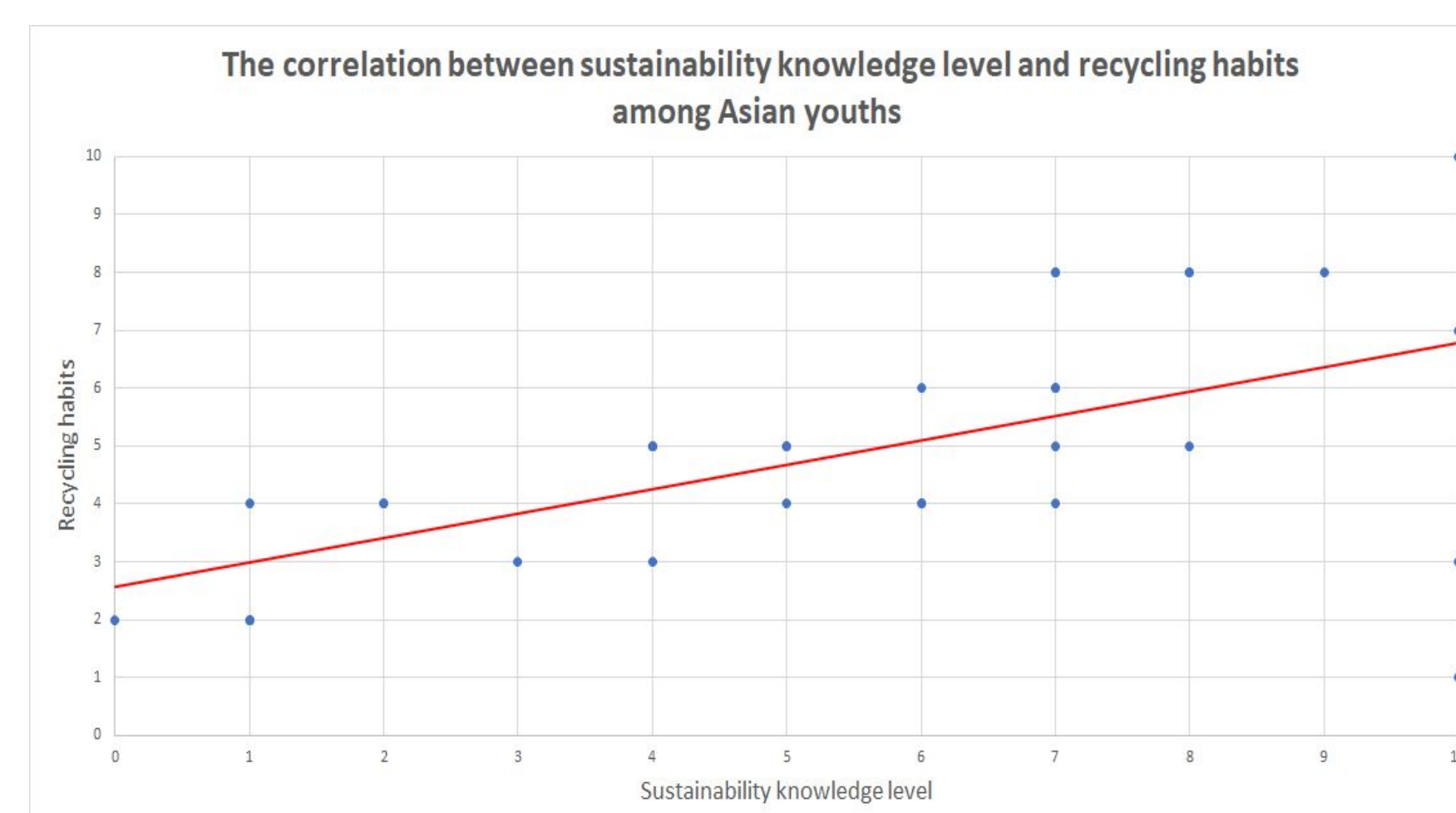
Graphs

Graph 1

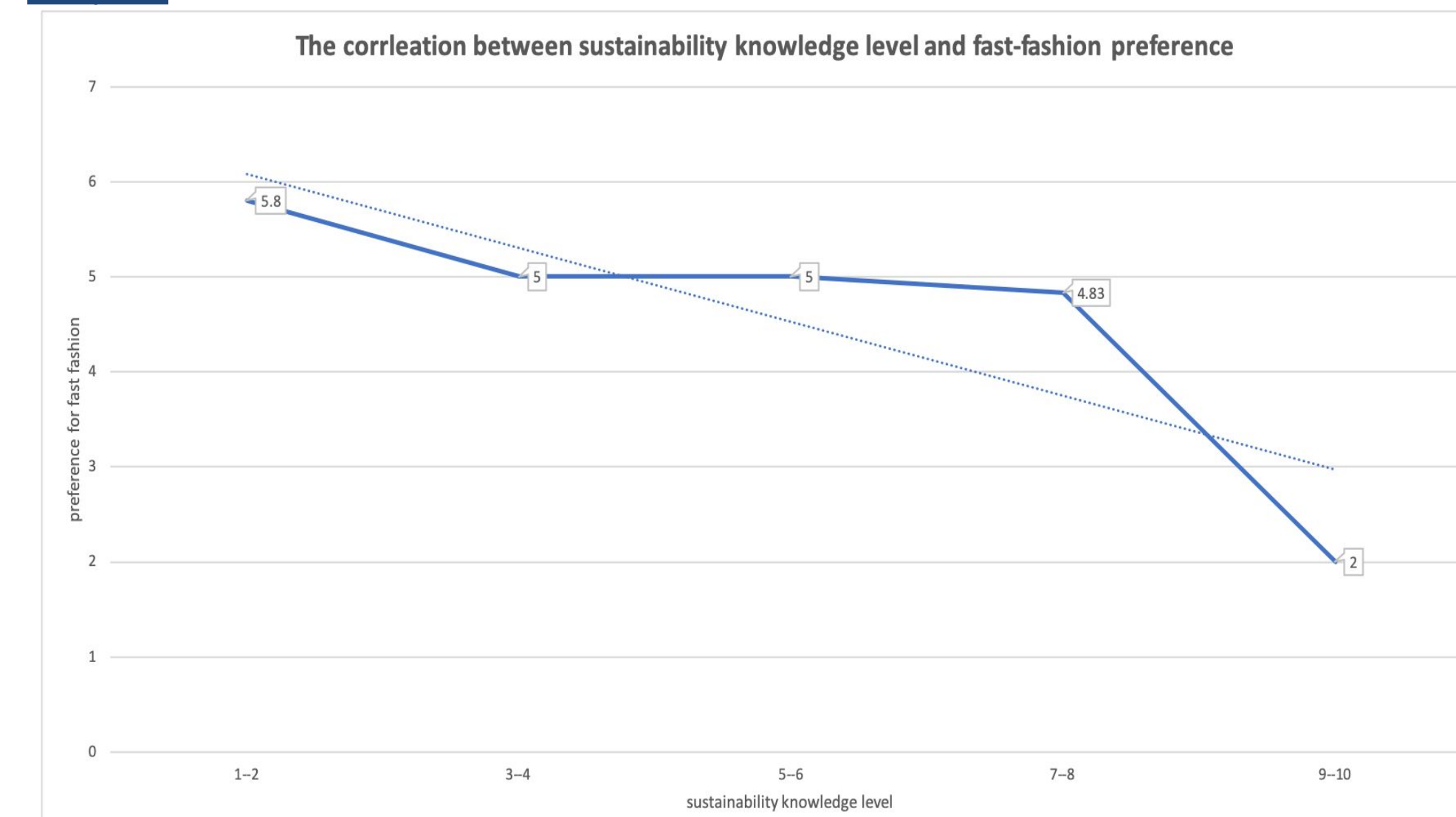
Participants' understanding of the relationship between sustainability and fast-fashion



Graph 2



Graph 3



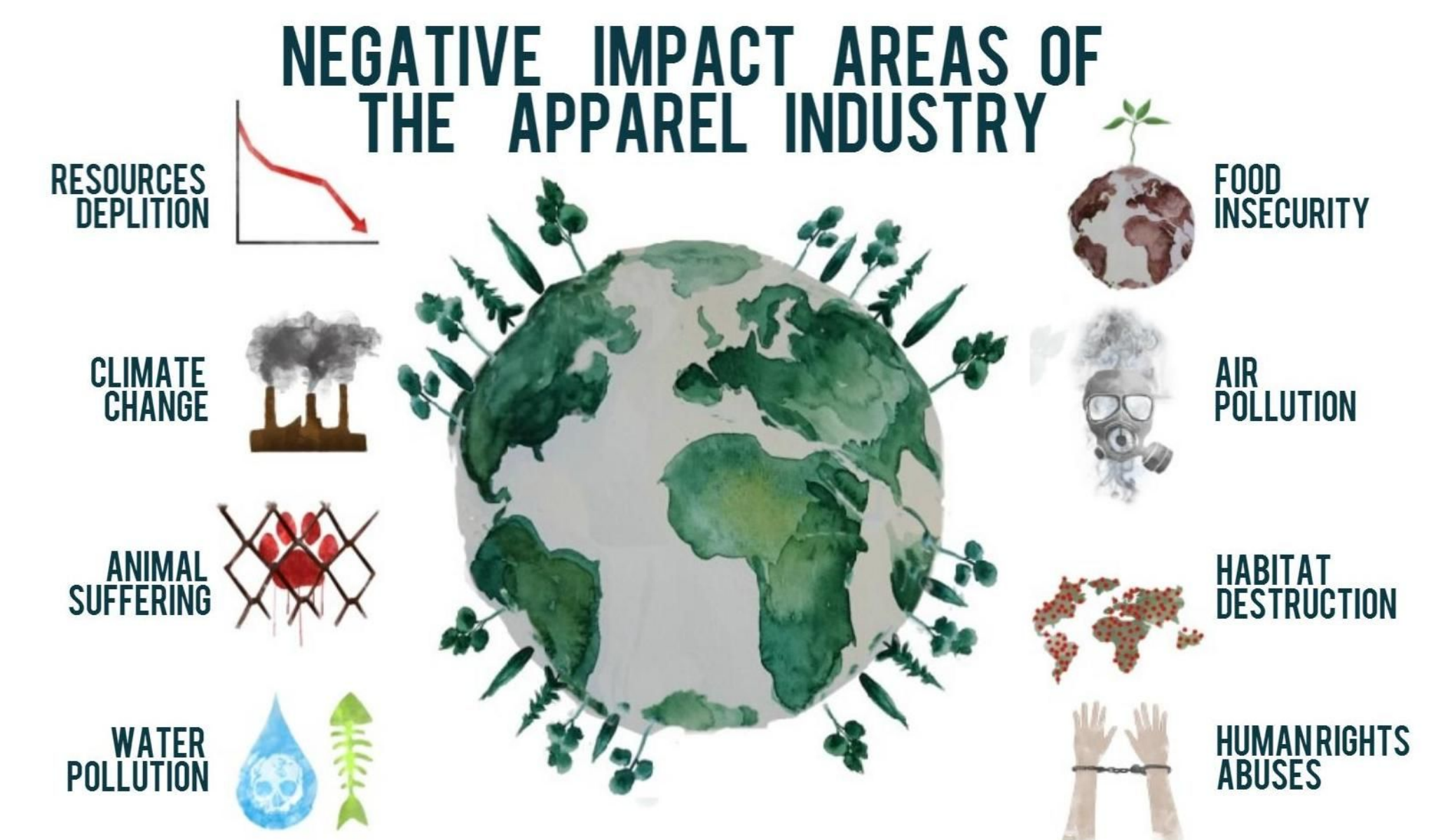
Results

Based on the collected data, 90.6% of the participants lack accurate understandings of the adverse outcomes brought by fast-fashion industries to environmental sustainability (see Graph 1). To be more specific, 78.1% of the participants are not able to explain the relationship while 12.5% of the participants consider that there is no relationship between the fast-fashion industry and sustainability. The participants' inability to connect the two concepts demonstrate that Asian youths' sustainability knowledge is still deficient.

The results also present two correlations (see Graph 3&4), indicating the relationship between sustainability knowledge level and participants' preference towards disposable clothes and recycling habits respectively. The graphs reveal that with a higher knowledge of sustainability, the participants tend to purchase less fast-fashion clothes and engage in more frequent recycle actions of the disposable clothes they no longer need.

Discussion

The research findings provide an opportunity for participants to deliberate about their obsessive disposable consumption patterns and to gain more comprehensive recognition of the threatens brought by fast-fashion industries in the long-term. "The fact that many individuals value fashion over the protection of the environment" (Linden, 2016) has to be paid attention and resolved with solid actions.



This study is significant as the results share consistent data that aligns with previous studies which indicate that Asian youth lack sustainability knowledge and struggles to connect their fast-fashion consumption and environmental issues. However, with an expansion on the existing knowledge that demonstrates the youth's yearning for the latest trends as one of the predominant factors of the growth in fast-fashion industries (Joy et al., 2012), our data results also provide extended viewpoints of the youths' disposable consuming motivations, and how sustainability knowledge level correlates with consumers' purchasing and recycling habits.

The fundamental goal of this study is to increase awareness of the negative impacts caused by fast-fashion industries, that are often underestimated or unseen by the main consumer group- the young generation including our participants. By exploring their motivations for purchasing disposable clothes, our research inspires some novel approaches or understandings that hopefully would decrease fast-fashion clothes' demand and consumption. The two correlations we draw also prove that Asian youths' sustainability knowledge plays a vital role in promoting a healthier consuming pattern.

Lastly, we explored a third variable that might have contributed to the result of our data. A possible explanation could be that one's socioeconomic status and cultural asset might have impacted the first and second variables. Although this study did not go further on finding out the correlation with the third variable, it could provide the groundwork to guide future researchers to focus on the possible factors that contribute to the youth's decision making. In this way, not only the motivations of Asian youth's fast-fashion consumption pattern can be fully understood, but also how society and social structures could impact individuals' choices which ultimately brings impacts to the environment and ecological system.

Reference / Bibliography

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