

## THE INFLUENCE OF YOUTUBE ON GEN Z CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: AN ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBER JOOB

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**Luiza Pereira da Silva<sup>1</sup> and Eliane Pinheiro<sup>2</sup>**

### Abstract

This article aims to analyze the American YouTuber Joob and the videos published on the platform in order to understand how her content may influence her audience to adopt more sustainable practices, such as upcycling and DIY, as well as how the influencer, through these conscious practices, may help Generation Z develop an individual identity. The methodology consists of bibliographic research using materials available through the CAPES Portal of Journals, Taylor & Francis, and ScienceDirect, as well as an analysis of the YouTuber's channel. The relevance of this article lies in understanding Generation Z's consumption patterns and ecological values, examining how an interest in upcycling and DIY may contribute to consumers' aesthetic identity, and analyzing YouTuber Joob's content and how her channel may influence and inspire Generation Z with regard to environmental awareness and the construction of individuality.

**Keywords:** Consumption, DIY, Upcycling, YouTube.

### INTRODUCTION

YouTube is the second most popular social media platform in the world, with 2.491 billion monthly active users (We Are Social, 2024). Platforms such as YouTube play a key role in raising consumer awareness of sustainability in fashion. Several videos available on YouTube discuss the

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<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate Fashion Student – Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM)

E-mail: [ra138995@uem.br](mailto:ra138995@uem.br)

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4733343676485078>

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Production Engineering (UTFPR) – Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM)

E-mail: [epinheiro@uem.br](mailto:epinheiro@uem.br)

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3449554626775454>

importance of maintaining a personal style rather than following trends as a means of ensuring longevity, and they frequently encourage intentional purchasing or highlight the ethical values associated with potential purchases and the positive impact of these choices (Matterson; Kim, 2025).

Generation Z is characterized by spending more time engaged in online activities and having fewer experiences outside the digital environment (Issa; Isaias, 2016; Chen; Yan, 2016). In this context, when its members connect with a particular product or subject, they tend to become more deeply involved, seeking to learn about and consume content or adopt practices related to their interests (Gollo et al., 2019). For this generation, fashion expresses a worldview marked by realism and hyperconnectivity (Criteo, 2018). At the same time, there has been growing interest in sustainable consumption and significant concern regarding environmental conditions, as highlighted by Prisco et al. (2025).

The American YouTuber Joob is a 21-year-old social media personality, TikToker, and online content creator who has been active since 2023. She is best known for sharing a wide variety of content related to alternative fashion and beauty and also produces videos about thrift-store finds, upcycling, and DIY projects. In January 2024, the influencer participated in the North Carolina Vintage Bazaar and accumulated more than 100,000 followers on her TikTok account (Famous Birthdays, 2026). Among the many YouTubers who create content, Joob was selected because of her videos about her daily life, thrift-store shopping, decluttering clothes, customization, and clothing upcycling. She also produces content in which she styles garments from either her personal collection or thrift stores, thereby inspiring her followers to be more creative with their clothing style and helping them style garments that have remained unused in their wardrobes.

As previously mentioned, the YouTuber addresses upcycling and DIY practices in her videos, both of which are central to the punk subculture with which the content creator identifies. This is particularly relevant because the punk subculture emerged in the 1970s as a vehicle for social expression and a form of protest against capitalism and unrestrained consumption (Gildart, 2013). The punk movement breathed new life into the counterculture through the growth of DIY clothing, aesthetics, media, and values

(Guerra, 2021), such as breaking with traditional aesthetic values, opposing materialism, and expressing freedom through the recycling of old clothes (Lee; Li, 2025). Upcycling, in turn, currently appears not merely as a trend but as a transformative practice capable of reshaping fashion, culture, and sustainability (Zhou; Muhammad, 2025).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **GENERATION Z'S ENGAGEMENT WITH DIY AND UPCYCLING PRACTICES**

The concept of Do It Yourself (DIY) creates an opportunity to adapt and personalize an environment or garment in ways that contribute to well-being and an improved quality of life in housing and living conditions, while also promoting autonomy and individual agency in the creation and construction process (Zanatta et al., 2025). DIY is a practice that can be applied in various circumstances, including clothing customization, household repairs, and crafts, among others. It is characterized as a creative and entrepreneurial approach (Silva, 2021).

Alongside DIY, upcycling, as defined by Wilson (2016), is a practice that transforms something “useless” into something useful without wasting materials or using nonrenewable resources. It is therefore associated with second-hand clothing consumption, particularly in thrift stores, because it involves used garments that “no longer have added value” as a result of use or changes in trends brought about by fast fashion. Furthermore, environmentally conscious people, such as members of Generation Z, seek creative autonomy and the strengthening of their identity through thrift-store shopping (Azevedo, 2023).

Upcycling is considered a sustainable practice intended to raise awareness of the value of potentially disposable products and minimize negative environmental impacts (Moreira et al., 2017). In addition to being regarded as a movement rather than merely a trend, upcycling is a transformative practice that redefines the relationship between fashion, culture, and sustainability. It is also a long-term strategy that values circular fashion, the reduction of textile waste, and support for responsible consumption (Zhou; Muhammad, 2025).

Compared with previous generations, Generation Z, comprising those born between 1997 and 2010, is more likely to purchase and consume second-hand clothing (Masserini et al., 2024). Studies indicate that approximately 88% of Generation Z consumers engage in sustainable behaviors, making their involvement in this cause crucial to ensuring that subsequent generations, including Generation Alpha, comprising those born from 2010 onward, obtain long-term benefits.

For Generation Z, fashion represents a means of expressing individuality, affirming identity, and promoting inclusion (Criteo, 2018). Moreover, these consumers find it easy to adapt to new trends and practices, such as upcycling and Do It Yourself (DIY), which may help encourage more conscious, responsible, and sustainable consumption choices in the fashion industry (Pereira, 2024).

### HOW PUNK CULTURE INFLUENCES DIY AND UPCYCLING PRACTICES

A significant connection can be observed between punk and environmental protection. This association between punk and the environment emerged from the rustic hippie look of the late 1960s. In the following decade, punk fashion introduced the recycling of old clothes, which became a social and environmental issue during the 1980s and 1990s (Sklar, 2013).

Punk was a movement closely associated with the garage rock of the 1960s and emerged in response to the hippie sociocultural movement. It developed as a youth movement through the large number of rock bands that embraced Do It Yourself (DIY) as one of its core principles. The movement's emergence is frequently interpreted within the context of the economic crisis that led to rising oil prices following the 1973 Arab–Israeli conflicts (Guerra; Straw, 2017). Initially, punk was a form of behavior expressed primarily through fashion and music; it was anarchic, nihilistic, and deliberately aggressive (Colegrave; Sullivan, 2002; Reynolds, 2006). This movement provided a framework through which young people reconstructed their identities in the postwar period, becoming a collective of self-expressing individuals, which makes the punk movement difficult to define (Laing, 2015).

The main characteristics of punk include dark colors, DIY garments made with denim, metal studs and patches, torn and stained clothing, and combinations of patterns such as checks and tartan. Garments may include sportswear, uniforms, combinations of knitwear and T-shirts, leather jackets, skinny jeans, flannel, and scarves (Lee; Li, 2025).

Today, punk style draws inspiration from various groups, deconstructing and eclectically adapting its own methods, such as upcycling and DIY, to create a unique style. It has given rise to a notable variety of styles and forms of expression because its designs are aligned with punk fashion, breaking with traditional aesthetic values, opposing materialism, and expressing freedom through the recycling of old clothes (Lee; Li, 2025).

## YOUTUBE AND GENERATION Z CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

YouTube is the second most popular social media platform in the world, and YouTube bloggers commonly showcase products they have tested, providing their opinions about them or promoting them to their audiences (De Veirman et al., 2017). Bloggers' credibility can have either a positive or negative impact on purchase intention (Sokolova; Kefi, 2020). Consumers who actively participate in social media tend to exhibit more sustainable behavior and greater concern regarding fashion (Matteson; Kim, 2025). These behaviors facilitate the dissemination of content and have promoted ongoing discussions about the importance of adopting sustainable fashion practices (Salem; Alanadoly, 2021).

Platforms such as TikTok and YouTube play a key role in raising consumer awareness of sustainability in fashion. Several videos available on YouTube discuss the importance of maintaining a personal style rather than following trends as a means of ensuring longevity, and they frequently encourage intentional purchasing or highlight the ethical values associated with potential purchases and the positive impact of these choices. In addition, YouTubers propose various strategies for reducing clothing consumption, including repurposing existing garments through DIY or upcycling projects (Matterson; Kim, 2025).

Through social media, consumers, particularly members of Generation Z, demonstrate and learn various sustainable fashion practices, such as choosing second-hand clothing, purchasing from sustainable and ethical brands, reusing garments through upcycling, and reducing consumption overall (Haines et al., 2023; Vladimirova, 2021).

YouTube may be regarded as a tool of substantial social and symbolic value that enables more direct contact between people and facilitates the dissemination of information within a highly globalized consumer environment (Carvalho, 2022). This may foster a connection with Generation Z, an audience with a strong media presence whose members use YouTube to find information about more sustainable forms of fashion.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research conducted for this article comprised two stages: (i) selection of a bibliographic portfolio and (ii) selection of videos by the American YouTuber Joob based on the following criteria: whether the materials used were accessible; the upcycling and DIY techniques employed; the presence of tutorials; visual identity; and garment transformations extending beyond simple alterations. Based on these criteria, six videos addressing upcycling and DIY were selected for analysis from among the most-viewed videos on Joob's channel within the defined subject areas. Table 1 presents the videos analyzed, their publication dates, and their view counts.

**Table 1**

*Videos analyzed, with publication dates and view counts*

| Videos analyzed: publication dates and view counts                              |            |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Video                                                                           | Date       | Views        |
| Making my closet cool again   Upcycling old clothes & closet clean out          | 17/06/2025 | 433 THOUSAND |
| Upcycling/DIY: Transforming my boring wardrobe   Alternative DIYs               | 24/02/2026 | 84 THOUSAND  |
| Making my closet cool again part 2   DIY clothes & styling                      | 01/07/2025 | 75 THOUSAND  |
| Recreating alternative clothes with DIY   Recreating Tripp, Demonina, NYC, etc. | 07/10/2025 | 62 THOUSAND  |
| Upcycling and random thrift-store finds   DIY and styling                       | 23/09/2025 | 59 THOUSAND  |
| DIY Christmas gifts (that people actually want)                                 | 02/12/2025 | 56 THOUSAND  |

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

The methodology adopted in this article was based on bibliographic research conducted through searches of the CAPES Portal of Journals and the Taylor & Francis and ScienceDirect databases. The period established for the collection of materials began in 2020. This stage was followed by an analysis of the American YouTuber Joob's channel. The objective was to investigate how social media, particularly YouTube, may influence Generation Z's consumer behavior and how sustainable practices such as upcycling and DIY may contribute to the development of an individual identity.

Data collection involved identifying and analyzing the encouragement of sustainable practices through social media in order to determine the potential influence exerted by YouTuber Joob on young audiences, particularly Generation Z.

After the videos had been selected and the initial portfolio prepared, an in-depth analysis was conducted of the American YouTuber Joob, the videos she published on the platform, and the sustainable

projects and activities undertaken by the influencer. The study also investigated Generation Z's consumption behaviors, together with upcycling and DIY, to determine whether these practices may influence young people, particularly members of Generation Z, with regard to environmental awareness and belonging, as well as how upcycling may help young people develop and express their creativity and personal identity.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED CONTENT FROM YOUTUBER JOOB**

The selection of YouTuber Joob was therefore based on previously established criteria, including the treatment of upcycling and DIY in her videos, particularly the execution of these techniques, how they may be reflected in her visual identity, and how they may serve as a source of inspiration for her followers.

Several practices regarded as sustainable are evident in her videos, including the use of second-hand clothing. According to Santos et al. (2019), the second-hand clothing market, particularly thrift stores, is not merely a fashion trend but a sustainable and viable alternative for minimizing the environmental impact of the fashion industry. The materials identified included scissors, fabric scraps, homemade stencils, which the YouTuber teaches viewers to make in one of her videos, second-hand clothing, pins, eyelets, fabric paint, patches, either handmade or purchased, paintbrushes, and embroidery thread.

In the first video analyzed, entitled “Making my closet cool again | Upcycling old clothes & closet clean out,” the YouTuber divides the video into two sections. In the first part, she sorts through her clothes, deciding which garments will be donated and which will undergo upcycling. In the second section, Joob displays all the materials that will be used throughout the video and then teaches viewers how to make patches from fabric scraps and fabric paint, as shown in Figure 1.

## Figure 1

### *Patch creation*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

The next item to be customized is a red top, which is upcycled by adding eyelets, as shown in Figure 2. Once again, the entire process of attaching the notions is demonstrated in the video.

## Figure 2

### *Garment customized with eyelets*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In the second video, entitled “Upcycling/DIY: Transforming my boring wardrobe | Alternative DIYs,” the influencer provides a brief introduction explaining what will be done in the video and then begins the first DIY project: customizing a white T-shirt by painting an image on it with fabric paint. She teaches a DIY technique intended for followers who may not know how to draw, which involves placing the T-shirt beneath a laptop screen and tracing the design (Fig. 3). She also suggests using a mobile phone

or drawing the image on paper and subsequently transferring it to the fabric as though it were a stencil. Joob allows her audience to choose whichever technique is most accessible and suitable for them.

**Figure 3**

*DIY T-shirt*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

Figure 4 shows the YouTuber modifying an old, worn, plain black bag in the same video. Patches were made from fabric scraps and hand-sewn across the bag using embroidery thread, giving it a visual identity aligned with punk fashion.

**Figure 4**

*Bag customization*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In the video entitled “Making my closet cool again part 2 | DIY clothes & styling,” Joob continues the first video analyzed because she had set aside too many garments to which she wanted to apply DIY

and upcycling techniques and therefore needed to record a second part. The YouTuber had previously stated that she found the process of customizing and altering clothes enjoyable and would therefore not mind producing additional installments of this content. The first garment to be transformed is a pair of denim capri overalls (Fig. 5).

**Figure 5**

*Customization of denim capri overalls*

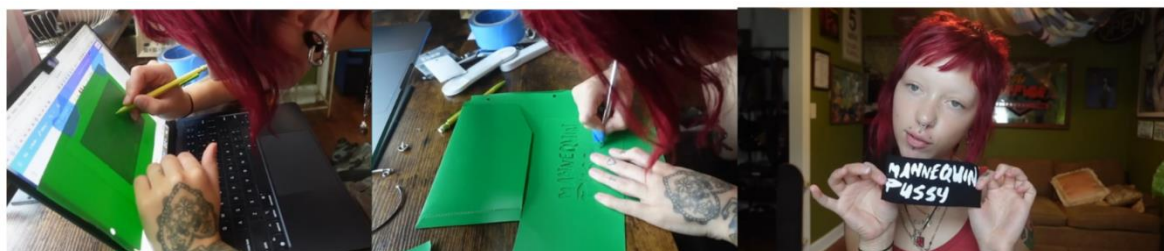


Source: Joob's channel (2026).

The alterations clearly consisted of increasing the garment's length and adding patches. As shown in Figure 6, Joob teaches a less expensive method for making a stencil at home. In the tutorial, the YouTuber uses a plastic folder to produce the desired lettering. She uses her laptop as a surface for tracing the design and then cuts out the necessary sections with a utility knife. The next step consists of applying paint to the fabric.

**Figure 6**

*DIY homemade stencil*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In the fourth video, entitled “Recreating alternative clothes with DIY | Recreating Tripp, Demonica, NYC, etc.,” the YouTuber mentions in the title several alternative clothing brands that she purchases so that her followers can identify the style to be used in the upcycling and DIY projects. Throughout the video, before customizing her clothes, Joob displays on screen the necessary materials and the garment to be used. As shown in Figure 7, this project involves customizing a pair of camouflage jeans that will be given a new life as a skirt. Once again, the entire garment-transformation process is demonstrated in the video.

**Figure 7**

*Transformation of trousers into a skirt*

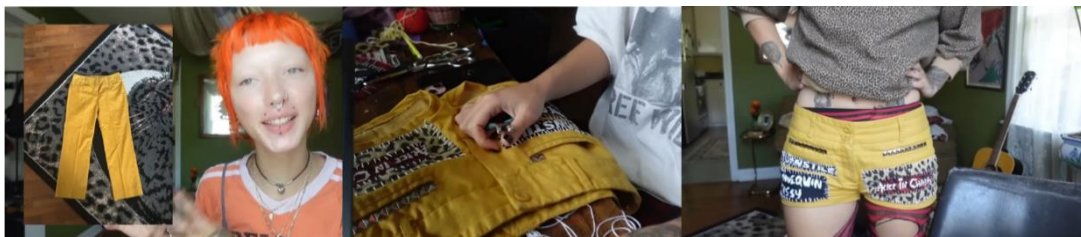


Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In the next video examined, entitled “Upcycling and random thrift-store finds | DIY and styling,” the same pattern as in the previous videos is followed. The YouTuber visits thrift stores in search of clothing to which she can apply upcycling or DIY practices, or she uses garments from her own wardrobe. She provides a brief introduction explaining which garments will be customized, what will be done, and which materials will be used. Accordingly, two trouser customizations were selected. In the first, shown in Figure 8, a pair of yellow trousers is transformed into short shorts featuring various handmade patches sewn on by hand with embroidery thread.

## Figure 8

### *Transformation of yellow trousers into shorts*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

The second pair of trousers was customized by adding fabric scraps along their length. These were sewn on by hand, and the sashiko embroidery technique was also employed (Figure 9).

## Figure 9

### *Application of fabric scraps to trousers*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In the final video analyzed, entitled “DIY Christmas gifts (that people actually want),” the DIY project considered most relevant to the article, based on the established criteria, was the customization of a white sneaker, which the YouTuber described as “a blank canvas, perfect for any customization.” In the video, Joob applies the same technique used in the previously analyzed video, hand-sewing fabric scraps across the entire sneaker, as shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10**

*DIY sneaker*



Source: Joob's channel (2026).

In keeping with the video's theme, the customized item was intended as a gift for her sister. Throughout the video, the YouTuber repeatedly commented on how much she valued handmade gifts and how many other people valued them as well. She also stated that such gifts conveyed feelings of affection, served as a way of demonstrating love and care for the recipient, and were imbued with personality.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In light of the foregoing discussion, the objective of this article is considered to have been achieved through an analysis of videos published by the American YouTuber Joob aimed at understanding how her content may influence audiences to learn about and adopt more sustainable fashion practices, particularly upcycling and Do It Yourself (DIY). The analysis indicates that the creator presents these practices in an accessible manner, encouraging creativity, the reuse of materials, and the customization of garments.

Furthermore, her content connects sustainability with the expression of individuality, both of which are relevant to understanding the relationships among fashion, identity, and consumption. Although the analysis of the videos does not make it possible to demonstrate actual changes in followers' behavior, it highlights the potential of digital content to disseminate knowledge, stimulate reflection on consumption habits, and present more sustainable alternatives. The study therefore contributes to the

discussion of the role played by content creators in disseminating sustainable practices and constructing new ways of relating to fashion.

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