

Leadership Styles in Fast Food Restaurants in Rizal Affecting Generation Z Purchase Intentions Through Brand Trust and Customer-Service Orientation

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Abstract

This study examined how customer-perceived leadership styles in fast food influence Generation Z purchase intentions through Brand Trust and Customer-Service Orientation. Guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response model, Social Exchange Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. A focus group discussion with six Generation Z consumers informed the quantitative phase. The researcher-developed instrument was expert-validated and pilot-tested with 100 respondents, showing high reliability for Leadership Styles ($\alpha = .94$), Brand Trust ($\alpha = .92$), Customer-Service Orientation ($\alpha = .91$), and Purchase Intention ($\alpha = .87$). The main cross-sectional survey included 390 Generation Z fast-food consumers. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to evaluate the measurement and mediation models, with bootstrap analysis based on 5,000 resamples. Results revealed that leadership effects varied. Servant Leadership significantly influenced Purchase Intention through Brand Trust ($\beta = .08$, $p = .05$) and Customer-Service Orientation ($\beta = .10$, $p < .001$). Visionary Leadership showed a significant indirect effect through Brand Trust ($\beta = .08$, $p = .04$). At the same time, Situational Leadership operated through both Brand Trust ($\beta = .09$, $p = .01$) and Customer-Service Orientation ($\beta = .06$, $p = .02$). Autocratic Leadership also demonstrated a significant indirect effect through Brand Trust ($\beta = .06$, $p = .01$). In contrast, other styles showed limited or nonsignificant mediation. Qualitative findings converged with these results, emphasizing empathy, ethical conduct, responsiveness, adaptability, consistency, and authenticity. Overall, Brand Trust and Customer-Service Orientation emerged as key mechanisms linking leadership to Purchase Intention. The findings reposition leadership as a market-facing organizational capability and show that these leadership styles are not interchangeable predictors of consumer behavior. Fast food targeting Generation Z should integrate servant, visionary, and situational leadership competencies with service culture, employee empowerment, brand integrity, and customer-experience strategy.

Keywords: Brand Trust; Customer-Service Orientation; Generation Z; Leadership Styles; Purchase Intention

