

# DRIVERS OF CUSTOMERS' TIPPING BEHAVIOUR IN RESTAURANTS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The motivation to assist servers, to reward service personnel, to gain or sustain future special service, to gain or uphold social regard such as approval, status, liking and fulfilling felt duties and obligations primarily drive tipping. This study examined the factors that motivate tipping behaviours of customers in Nigeria's restaurant context. The study used survey research approach to provide a comprehensive overview of the variable studied through primary data. The study sampled a total of 102 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Data analyses was done using linear regression, and was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study reveals that quality of service, bill size and group size are three important factors that influence tipping behaviour. The therefore concludes that tipping behaviour of consumers depends on quality of service, bill size and group size; and recommends that restaurant managers should develop training programs that help their workforce deliver premium services to develop the enterprise and better understand that only happy customers return for further patronage and tips good behaviour.*

**Keywords:** Felt obligations, motivation factors, service quality, tipping, tipping behavior

## INTRODUCTION

The expansion of restaurants into what they are today is without doubt not distinguishable from the status of consumers, as the change itself is also followed by the progression of consumer behaviour. Changing habits in restaurant industry can also be seen as development. Convenience and a need for socialization motivated society as a whole to spend extra money on restaurants (Kennedy, Way, & Ryan, 2003). The New York State Department of Labor (2003) states that a tip is a sum a customer pays for service to the worker. Money, check, or credit card format may provide a tip. There are many facets of tipping trends around the globe. In some situations, the provision of service is considered an act of appreciation, while in other cases; customers are expected to leave a few tips, though the service was merely satisfactory. In other instances, a service fee is applied to the customer's bill, instead of a tip. Giving tips is popular in some situations just to approximate the bills into more convenient numbers, but in other cases, it might not be adequate. From a business perspective, there are many aspects to consider in promoting restaurant's growth in order to keep up with industry trends. In the view of Sanders, Paz, and Wilkinson (2002), a customer does not assess a restaurant because of the food served alone, but also on other considerations, such as the price, value, and service of the restaurant. In fact, the service arrangements, together with the quality of service offered, become a concern for customers in offering tips to service personnel in restaurants.

Tipping is an act voluntarily and deliberately performed by individual consumers. Hence, its true significance lies in the individual human inspiration. Cognitive and societal processes clearly underlie tipping, but they function on and/or through motivation and their impacts cannot be fully comprehended separately from some tipping motivation. Tipping is determined mainly by motives like supporting waiters, rewarding service, getting or retaining potential preferential service, acquiring or maintaining social respect (approval, reputation, liking), and satisfying feeling of duty and obligation. Two main restrictive motivations are against these positive tipping reasons-the desire to retain the tip money for other purposes, and the fear of the status inequalities implied and fashioned by tipping.

Tipping practice is a complex process driven by several factors. Numerous studies focused on tipping perceptions of customers as well as on how different characteristics of restaurants (food quality, service quality, atmosphere and price) add to the tip-amount decision of customers (Conlin, Lynn, & O'Donoghue, 2003; Noll & Arnold, 2004; Fernandez, 2004; Becker, 2012; Lynn, 2004). Consequently, when deciding the tip amount, the question arises as to how customers think and behave in the same way, and then how they make their choice based on those restaurant qualities. Further to this unresolved issue, as noted previously, broad literature suggests that consumers tip for high-quality of service, and this motivation is influenced by demographic features like consumer age, race, gender, etc. (Kerr & Domazlicky, 2009). In addition, literature considers customers' preferences, attitudes, service setting, waiters' activities and gender, bill size, dining part size, patronage frequency and payment method and

service commitment as other important motifs of tipping behaviors. Tipping behaviors as seen from the foregoing are influenced and could be modified by many factors; and these variables are outside the control of waiters. However, waiters may manipulate tipping through nonverbal behaviors such as smiling and mimicry in addition to verbal behaviors such as name presentation and delivery of certain messages (Seiter, 2007).

Tipping is unnecessarily complicated, bad for restaurants, and arguably illegal (Azar, 2008). However, some restaurants are well with it because it allows them to pay less wages to workers. Consumers are naturally rational economic agents, whose activities are primed to optimize utility, subject to constraint. Yet tipping is entirely a voluntary action that runs counter to rational expectation. Many people tip as a social standard and it is usual to pay between 15%-20% of the total bill size (Lynn, 2007). From a conventional economic standpoint, tipping is often viewed as an economic activity that is somewhat uncharacteristic or irrational, as consumers could avoid paying tips altogether legally and willingly (Artuger & Cetinsoz, 2013). However, this is an omnipresent economic activity; as customers have a propensity to offer tips in restaurants when they experience above per service quality, enjoy their interaction with service personnel or want to demonstrate their social status.

Tipping is not a standard practice in Nigeria; yet it is common to see or hear of tips given by consumers in appreciation of their experience with a service provider's personnel. The intention of this study therefore, is to determine the factors that motivate customers' tipping behaviour and to determine if tipping affects service quality. The study is guided by the following hypotheses stated in null forms:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect of customer's bill size on tip amount.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant influence of restaurant service quality on customers' motive.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant effect of customers' group size on tip percentage.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Tipping in Restaurants

Tips are a generous amount of money consumers voluntarily extend to service workers (Lynn & McCall, 2000; Lynn, Jabbour, & Kim, 2012). In line with several studies by Azar (2004), theories of why people tip were explored both empirically and theoretically. In an analysis of restaurant servers, McCarty *et al.* (1990) found that tipping results from quality of service expectations and situational factors. Hence, McCarty *et al.* (1990) claim that a consideration is the number of individuals at the Table, or who is there with the one paying the tip, as the tip may be to please others. Conlin, Lynn and O'Donoghue (2003) suggest that this was reinforced by the people at the Table as an absolute variable in deciding tipping actions. Lynn, *et al.* (2012) citing Saunders and Lynn (2010) notes that psychological factors that might explain tipping are the desire to compensate quality service, support waiters, and get social recognition or appreciation. Lynn *et al.*

(2012) discovered that tips are growing more strongly with service, the greater the size of the bill.

Conlin *et al.* (2003) citing Mills and Riehle (1987) states that customers are taught to accept tipping as a percentage of the bill and to measure tips based on a percentage of 70 per cent of the bill and that 70 per cent calculate tips based on a percentage of the check. No research has focused on addressing this issue. In Norway, average tips are 17.5% (Conlin, *et al.* 2003); Parret (2011) found the average tip is 19.1% while Azar (2010) found it to be 16.4% and 12.8% in Israel. Maynard and Mupandawana (2009) found that the average tips in Canada are 15.6 per cent.

Lynn and McCall (2000) discovered in a meta-analysis of 13 studies at 20 restaurants with 2547 dining parties that the "...relationship between tip sizes and service ratings across restaurants and studies was fairly consistent." They study obtained results similarly indicating a limited but consistent and positive relationship between service evaluations and tip size. For the multi-item scale, they found a mean  $r = 0.11$ , implying that the variance in tip size is explained to a maximum of 5 per cent. Furthermore, it was found that customer attitude is an implausible reason for service-tipping relationship.

Restaurant tips amplify with perceived service quality and this relationship is robust through meal type, day of the week, gender and waiter's race as well as alcohol consumption, jobs, income, ethnicity, frequency of worship and work experience in customer hospitality (Lynn, *et al.*, 2012). Conlin *et al.* (2003) found that group size had a positive effect on percentage tips. There is a positive relation between tip size and Table size (Conlin *et al.*, 2003; Parrett, 2006). Parrett (2006) proposed customer dining on a big Table may tip a greater percentage to suit their social status.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. This is in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the variables under investigation. The research was composed of a concise survey template, which helped to obtain more details. For choosing the sample, a purposeful sampling method was used. The study of "information-rich" cases, which yield insights, and a thorough understanding of tipping practice is termed purposive sampling. More notably, purposeful sampling was used for the analysis because it was not possible to determine the real and precise number of customers. One hundred and two (102) customers were surveyed across fifteen (15) selected restaurants, using a questionnaire. Between seven and eight (as the case may be) customers were chosen in each restaurant to provide relevant data needed to provide answers to this study's research questions. The study employed regression statistic for data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Respondents' Demographics**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	47	46.1	46.1
	Female	55	53.9	100.0
Marital Status	Single	40	39.2	39.2
	Married	56	54.9	94.1
	Others	6	5.9	100.0
Age	21-30years	51	50.0	50.0
	31-40years	34	33.3	83.3
	41-50years	14	13.7	97.1
	Above 50years	3	2.9	100.0
Educational Qualification	SSCE	16	15.7	15.7
	HND/B.Sc	54	52.9	68.6
	M.Sc/MBA	32	31.4	100.0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Perceptions**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Service Quality	102	1	5	4.1588	0.47290
Tip Percentage	102	1	5	3.4412	0.79570
Bill Size	102	1	5	3.5471	0.65999
Tip Amount	102	1	5	3.3431	0.71109
Customers' Motive	102	1	5	3.9902	0.54600
Group Size	102	1	5	3.2647	0.67916
Valid N (listwise)	102				

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

Demographics of the respondents are listed in Table 1 above. it shows that 47 (46.1 per cent) of the one hundred and two (102) respondents are male; while 55 (53.9 %) are female. Through definition, we have more female respondents in the survey than male respondents. Additionally, 40(39.2%) of the total sampled respondents are single while 56 (54.9%) are married and 6 (5.9%) are neither married nor single. This indicates most of the respondents being sampled are married. However, of the 102 respondents, 51 (50.0 %) are between the ages of 21 and 30; 34 (33.3 %) are between the ages of 31 and 40; 14 (13.7 %) are between the ages of 41 and 50; and 3 (2.9 %) are 51 years and older. Through definition, the bulk of respondents are aged between 21 and 30 years. There are, lastly, 32 M.Sc. And M.BA (32.4 %) holders, 54 HND / B.Sc. Inhabitants (52.9 %). While 16 are holders of SSCE (15.7 %). It indicates most respondents have high HND / B.Sc. Academic qualifications.

**Table 3: Influence of Bill Size on Tip Amount**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.566	1	8.566	20.154	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	42.504	100	0.425		
	Total	51.070	101			
a. Dependent Variable: Tip Amount						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Bill Size						

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The regression result as illustrated in Table 3 reveals that the F-test was 20.154. In this analysis, the model achieves statistical significance (Sig = .000,  $p < .0005$ ). This meant the model was well-specified.

**Table 4: Model Summary of Influence of Bill Size on Tip Amount**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.401 <sup>a</sup>	.168	.159	0.65195
a. Predictors: (Constant), Bill Size				
b. Dependent Variable, Tip Amount				

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

However, the outcome of regression as found in Table 4 shows that the  $R^2$  gave a large value of 16.8 percent. This means that the model (including bill size) describes 16.8 per cent of the expected tipping amount variance.

**Table 5: Coefficients**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.778	.355		5.014	.000
	Bill Size	.441	.098	.410	4.489	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tip Amount

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The outcome of regression, in particular as found in regression coefficients, checks this study's first hypothesis. From the above performance, there was a positive relationship between perceived tip amount and perceived bill size such that a unit increase in bill

size scores caused an increase of approximately 0.441 units in perceived tip amount scores, which was statistically significant at 5 per cent with the support of the p value (0.000). The null hypothesis is dismissed based on the result; therefore, there is statistically significant impact of bill size on tip amount.

**Table 6: Influence of Service Quality on Customers’ Motive**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.649	1	3.649	13.791	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	26.461	100	0.265		
	Total	30.110	101			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Motive						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality						

Source: Authors’ Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The result of regression as revealed in Table 6, reveals that the F-test was 13.791. The model in this study reaches statistical significance (Sig = .000, this really means p<.0005).

**Table 7: Model Summary of Influence of Service Quality on Customers’ Motive**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.348 <sup>a</sup>	.121	.112	.51440
a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality				
b. Dependent Variable, Customer Motive				

Source: Authors’ Fieldwork Computation (2021)

In addition, the result of regression as contained in Table 7 shows that the R Square gave a large value of 12.1 per cent. This means that the model (which includes service quality) explained about 12.1 per cent of the variance in perceived customers’ motive.

**Table 7: Coefficients Influence of Service Quality on Customers’ Motive**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.319	.453		5.118	.000

	Service Quality	.402	.108	.348	3.714	.000
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a. Dependent Variable: Tip Amount

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The outcome of regression as provided in the Regression Coefficients, distinctly tests this study's first hypothesis. From the above results, there was a positive relationship between perceived customer motive and perceived service quality such that a unit increase in service quality scores produced approximately 0.402 units increase in perceived customer motive scores, which was statistically significant at 5 per cent with the help of the P-value (0.000). Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected; thus, the intention of consumers has had a statistically significant effect on the quality of service.

**Table 8: Influence of Group Size on Tip Percentage**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.998	1	4.998	8.479	.004 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	58.949	100	.589		
	Total	63.947	101			
a. Dependent Variable: Tip Percentage						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Group Size						

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The regression result as shown in Table 4.4.5.1: ANOVA reveals that the F-test was 8,479. In this analysis, the model reaches statistical significance (Sig = .004, that actually means  $p < .0005$ ). This meant the model was well-specified.

**Table 9: Model Summary of Influence of Group Size on Tip Percentage**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.280 <sup>a</sup>	.078	.069	.76778



- a. Predictors: (Constant), Group Size  
 b. Dependent Variable, Tip Percentage

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

Furthermore, the output of regression as shown in Table 9 shows that the R Square gave a large value of 7.8%. This means the model (including Group Size) clarified about 7.8 per cent of the expected Tip Percentage variance.

**Table 10: Coefficients of Influence of Group Size on Tip Percentage**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.372	.375		6.324	.000
	Group Size	.328	.112	.280	2.912	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Tip Percentage

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

The result of regression as given in the Regression Coefficients especially tests this study's third hypothesis. From the above performance, there was a positive relationship between perceived Tip Percentage and perceived Group Size such that a unit increase in Group Size scores brought around 0.328 units increase in perceived Tip Percentage scores that was statistically significant at 5 percent with the help of the P-value (0.004). The null hypothesis is dismissed because of the result; thus, there was a statistically significant impact of Group Size on the percentage of tips.

**Table 11: Test of Multicollinearity**

Correlations							
		Service Quality	Tip Percent.	Bill Size	Tip Amount	Customer Motive	Group Size
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.053	.143	.139	.348**	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.597	.153	.164	.000	.498

	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
Tip Percent.	Pearson Correlation	.053	1	.431**	.470**	.233*	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.597		.000	.000	.018	.004
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
Bill Size	Pearson Correlation	.143	.431**	1	.410**	.193	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.153	.000		.000	.052	.000
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
Tip Amount	Pearson Correlation	.139	.470**	.410**	1	.376**	.359**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
Customer Motive	Pearson Correlation	.348**	.233*	.193	.376**	1	.315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018	.052	.000		.001
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
Group Size	Pearson Correlation	-.068	.280**	.398**	.359**	.315**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.498	.004	.000	.000	.001	
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Source: Authors' Fieldwork Computation (2021)

Multicollinearity exists when the independent variables are highly correlated (that is  $r = 0.7$  and above). In the table, the highest correlation was 0.470. It shows low multicollinearity problem among Motivational Factors (Bill size, service quality and group size). Therefore, all the variables are retained.

### Test of Homoscedasticity and linearity for Hypothesis One

A scatter plot could be drawn to test for homoscedasticity and linearity of the relationship between dependent variables (i.e. tip amount, customer motive and tip percentage) and independent variables (i.e. Bill size, service quality and group size). There appears to be a weak, positive correlation among the variables. Respondents that tip highly (high Tip Amount) experience high Bill Size i.e. high customers tipping behaviour is associated with high motivation. On the other hand, low tipping amount is associated with low bill size.

### **Test of Homoscedasticity and Linearity for Hypothesis Two**

There appears to be a moderate, positive correlation among the variables. Respondents that receive great Service Quality turn out to have good Customer Motive i.e. high Service Quality is associated with high Customer Motive. On the other hand, low Service Quality is associated with low Customer Motive. There is no indication of a curvilinear relationship (test of linearity) and the scatter plot shows a fairly even cigar shape along its length (test of Homoscedasticity).

### **Test of Homoscedasticity and Linearity for Hypothesis Three**

There appears to be a weak, positive correlation among the variables. By implication, large Group Size is associated with fairly high Tip Percentage. On the other hand, small Group Size is associated with fairly low Tip Percentage. There is no indication of a curvilinear relationship (test of linearity) and the scatter plot shows a fairly even cigar shape along its length (test of Homoscedasticity).

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Influence of bill size on tip amount**

This influence was examined by finding the correlation coefficient between these factors and measuring the  $R^2$  to observe how bill size scores explain the variance in tip amount. The results showed that there is a reasonable relationship between bill size and tip amount ( $r = 0.410$ ), and that bill size explains 16.8 per cent of perceived tip amount variance. Nevertheless, the relationship is not very strong, as the association is considered weak, suggesting that the difference in tip amount is influenced by other factors. For a small bill, the mental impact on the cost is far more important than for a massive bill. A variety of these effects have occurred, but researchers tend to be disinterested in further exploring the influence of bill size on tip amounts apparently content with the current state of knowledge based solely on effects of bill size on constructed tip percentage variable.

### **Influence of Service Quality on Customers' Motive**

The result reveals that there is a slight connection between quality of service provided and customers' motivation. This is equivalent to what customers think of the alliance. It could also be that the degree of service quality affects customers' ratings as they rate

their motivations after enjoying the service. There is however a positive relationship between motivation of consumers and quality of service.

### **Influence of Group Size on Tip Percentage**

It has been discovered that there is a significant, low, and positive relationship between group size and tip percentage ( $r= 0.280$ ,  $n= 102$ ,  $p=.004$ ), explaining 7.8 percent of the tip percent variance. This is in line with the results of Collin *et al.* (2008) at the level  $p=0.10$ , and that group size had a positive effect on tip levels. This analysis achieved level of significance at  $p=0.01$  ( $p=.002$ ).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several factors influence consumers' tipping motivation, which results in tipping actions. This study shows that quality of service, bill size and group size are three important factors that influence tipping behaviour. The study also suggests that when consumers tip, most of them did not consider potential service, nor did they feel obligated to tip. The study thus concludes that tipping behavior of one may be influenced by different motivations rather than just one. Restaurant managers are thus encouraged to develop training programs that will help their workforce better understand tipping motivations, or allow their workforce to be more aware of tipping habits of customers, where possible. Knowledge of either tipping motives or tipping habits will in the best possible way benefit other service industries. Regardless of what reasons waiters may have, the move to provide better services would result in increased satisfaction of customers; and when customers are satisfied and happy, they will become loyal, repeat their visits, and hopefully help to raise awareness and recognition of the brand.

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