

Abstract

This study examined the relationship of tipping behavior based on the formatting of the bill that was presented to the customer. The data was originally collected by the students in Experimental Methods of Psychology class at Washington State University. Each student picked 3 participants to be in the study and the data was collected and sent to the professor. The results were analyzed using SPSS one-way Anova test and Post-Hoc Tukey HSD. It was hypothesized that patron's tips would vary across the 3 conditions. There were three chosen formats, Control (condition 1), Social Norm (condition 2), and Social Norm plus Anchor (condition 3). The findings support the hypothesis that the average tip size differs across the three conditions.

Method

Participants

This research aims to shed light on the tipping behavior of restaurant goers by using three different bill formats randomly given to participants of the experiment. Each student in the class picked 3 participants to engage in the experiment. There were a total of $N = 93$ participants, 49 female and 44 male, between the ages of 18 and 70. The average age $M = 35.23$ years ($SD = 12.68$ years). The sample consisted of 93 people who willing volunteered to participate in the study. Participants were asked if they were willing to watch a short video and answer a questionnaire. The participant had no prior knowledge of the questionnaire or the type of bill to be given. There was no compensation to the participants for their involvement in the study.

Materials

The materials for this experiment included a consent form to be signed by participants, a short dining experience video, dining scenario, a questionnaire (one for each participant) and a debriefing statement. A quiet setting and a computer were used for this study. Participants were given a questionnaire picked at random by the researcher with a hypothetical check printed therein.

Procedure

This experiment was conducted in a way that the participants did not know what was being evaluated. The participants were asked to participate in a study to determine the behaviors and attitudes of restaurant goers. The participants were first presented with a consent form and asked to read and sign it before beginning. The dining scenario and a short video were presented to the participants on a computer in a quiet setting. There were three types of checks added to the

questionnaire presented to the participants, condition 1 was a check referred to as “Control” where there was no gratuity guidelines, condition 2 was a check referred to as “Social Norm” and had a gratuity guideline written on the bottom that read “most people acknowledge quality service with a gratuity,” and condition 3 referred to as “Social Norm + Anchor” had a gratuity guideline stating, “most people acknowledge quality service with a gratuity. For your convenience 25% = \$10.82.” This was a 2 x 3 Factorial design with the IV (independent variable) being the tipping behavior; manipulated by the type of check presented to the participant. The DV (dependent variable) in this study was the size of the tip, the likelihood that a participant would return to the restaurant, and if the participant would recommend the restaurant; measured by a fictitious check presented to the participant to which a tip was either added or not by the participant and the results of the questions of the participant’s likelihood to return and likelihood to recommend. Upon completion of the questionnaire the participants were given a debriefing statement about the true nature of the study but, results from other participants were not revealed to the participants as, that information is private as stated in the signed consent agreement.

Results

According to the data there is a significant difference in the three conditions as reported by the one-way ANOVA. $F(2, 90) = .29, p > .05$

The results show a significantly higher variation for condition 1 (control) as compared to the other 2 conditions. Control = ($M = 9.90, SD = 9.07$), Social Norm = ($M = 8.81, SD = 3.04$), and Social Norm + Anchor = ($M = 9.56, SD = 5.78$).