

# FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' TIPPING BEHAVIOUR IN RESTAURANTS IN LUZERN

**Jessica**

Hotel Management Program, Faculty of Economics, Petra Christian University

E-mail: [jessicathong@live.com](mailto:jessicathong@live.com)

**Abstract :** Food and food service that are widely known today have always played an important role in Europe. Cultural differences, also high quality and variety of meals provided in Europe have become the main reason why there are so many restaurants as they are now, including in Luzern. Thus, resulting in a culture of dining out, which cannot be separated from the norm of tipping. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, tipping has become a custom in Europe. People give tips to express their gratitude for the service provided, and some give tips simply because it is expected to do so. However, previous studies from hospitality academicians and researchers stated that there are many other factors behind tipping phenomenon. Regarding this matter, this study was conducted to review customers' tipping motivations and further investigate factors influencing customers' tipping behaviour, specifically in table service restaurants in Luzern. Both primary and secondary researches were used in this study. Primary research was conducted through quantitative research by implementing survey strategy using questionnaire, which resulting in 80 usable responses. The results shows that people tip based on product quality and service received. Secondary research was also conducted by reviewing books, journals, magazine and newspaper articles, and webpages.

**Keywords :** Service, Tipping, Consumer behaviour, Restaurant, Luzern

## INTRODUCTION

The development of restaurants to what they are today certainly cannot be separated from the role of customers, since the development itself is also followed by the development of customers' behaviour. Changing lifestyles are also counted as a development in restaurant industry. Convenience and a need for socialization have made an impact on society to spend more money in restaurant (Kennedy, Way, and Ryan, 2003).

From business perspective, in order to maintain a successful business in restaurant industry, there are many aspects to be considered to support the development of the restaurant itself. According to Sanders, Paz, and Wilkinson (2002), a customer do not evaluate a restaurant based on the food presented alone, but also from other factors, such as quality, value, and service from the restaurant itself. Furthermore, the arrangements of service, along with quality of service provided, becomes a consideration for the customers in giving tips to servers at restaurant.

As stated by New York State Department of Labor (n.d.), a tip is an amount given by a customer for service provided by the employee. A tip can be given in the form of cash, check, or credit card. Tipping practices vary around the world. In some places, it is considered as an act of gratitude for giving service, while in

other places, it is expected that customers will leave some tips, even if the service was simply adequate. In another places, a service charge will be applied to customers' bill in place of a tip. In some places, it is normal to give tips just to round up the bills into more convenience numbers, but it may be not enough in other places. For instance, in Spain, customers usually leave 7 to 13 percent in cash to round up the bill. But, it is also not unusual for them to walk out of the restaurant without leaving anything. In Switzerland, most restaurants have included 15 percent service charge in the bill. In spite of that, it is common to leave small amount of money between 5 and 10 percent extra; however, it still depends on the service received (Murphy, 2008).

When customers finally made a choice of the desirable dining place, it is normal that they would expect good service from the servers, despite the type of restaurant they visit. When customers give voluntary payments of money (tips) to servers who have performed services for them (Lynn and McCall, 2000), tipping, in this case, has become a social norm and a form of customers' behaviours (Azar, 2005). It is common that customers will give tips to both restaurants that they frequent and those that they might never visit again.

From the economic view, it is said that tips relate to service quality and thus, has associations with future service considerations (Ozdemir, Yilmaz, Caliskan, and Aydin, 2014). It is widely known that the restaurant industry is a good place for tipping to be used, for tipping only functions well in a profession where managers do not easily monitor the productivity of employees. Customers play an important role in this part, since rather than the restaurant managers, they are in a better position to observe the quality of service provided by the servers (Hooas and Bigler, 2004).

On the other hand, in case of tipping serves as a social norm, it happens because it can increase social welfare. Sometimes, the reason customers tip is because it is what others do. Psychologists suggest that it is a way to be accepted by the society. So, many may feel guilty or embarrassed if they do not comply with this social norm. However, some follow the norm because they simply feel that it is the right thing to do (Azar, 2005), because they realize tipping also has effect on employees' motivation to provide better service (Azar, 2005). Customers who have learnt this norm also believe that the tips they give also serve as incentives for employees to provide better, friendly, and personalized services (Kwortnik, Lynn, and Ross, 2009).

A better understanding of culture of tipping and factors influencing customers' tipping motives could become an indicator of customers' satisfaction, which would help managers and owners in the restaurant industries. On the other hand, the knowledge of the customers' tipping behaviour would allow employees in service industry to develop strategies for raising their incomes.

### **Aim**

This study aims to research factors influencing customers' tipping behaviour in Luzern.

### **Objectives**

1. To review secondary data on service tipping and customers' tipping motivations,

2. To investigate factors influencing customers tipping in restaurants in Luzern through primary research,
3. To provide recommendations to restaurants in Luzern on factors influencing customers' tipping behaviour, based on customers' satisfactions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Food Service Industry**

Food service is the provision of fully prepared food for immediate consumption. Food service industry ranges from full-service restaurants to self-service buffets, from fine restaurants to takeout operations, and from company cafeterias to hamburger stands (Dittmer and Griffin, 1997). According to Ninemeier (2000), food service industry is divided into two:

1. Commercial food service operations, which has goals to maximize profits through the sales of food and beverage, and
2. Noncommercial food service operations, which usually exists in properties that the food and beverage sector is not the main goal.

Dittmer and Griffin (1997) stated that there are many types of food service arrangements in restaurants, which are:

1. Table service, where customers' orders are taken and will be delivered to their tables,
2. Counter service, where customers are served across a counter,
3. Room service, where customers are situated in either a hotel room or hospital room, and
4. Self-service, where customers select food from the display and carry the food themselves.

### **Table Service in the Restaurant**

Jacob and Guéguen (2013) stated that table service requires the servers to have a good knowledge of the products of the restaurant, to always pay attention to the customers, and to show hospitality all the time. The servers also always need to take care of their physical appearance and keep maintaining positive behaviours and attitudes, like smiling. Several studies reported that tipping increased when servers smile to the customers or make an interaction with them (Jacob and Guéguen, 2013). According to Klara (2005), a server's interpersonal skills, which are friendliness, quickness, or even body language shown, are able to stimulate a customer to give tip. Whereas Mathews (2004) mentioned that in a table service restaurant, a tip is given according to quality of service provided.

### **Defining Tipping**

A tip is an extra amount of money that is voluntary given by customers to the employees in order to show their gratuity for the services provided. Tipping is often viewed as an interesting event. It happens in many countries and practically important by people in some places, although it is also avoidable by some customers. Tipping norm is a kind of tipping behaviour based on social norms, although it is not enforced by law (Lynn, 2006). According to a poll conducted by [www.tipping.org](http://www.tipping.org) (n.d.), 57 percent of respondents suggest that servers in the restaurant have to be given tips. From this, it can be seen that many customers

have adopted the tipping norm. Moreover, tipping, which has been involving large amount of money, has become the source of income for many employees in the industry. Not only that, tipping is also used by managers to measure customers' satisfaction, service quality of the establishment (Fu and Chen-McCain, 2011), employees' performance, as well as to motivate the employees to deliver good services (Lynn, 2001). Tips are normally given after the service has been delivered, and employees who have provided service cannot change the service in response to the tips given by customers (Yesiltas, Zorlu, Sop, and Beydili, 2014).

The origin of the word "tip" itself, according to Ayres and Nalebuff (2004), came from the phrase "To Insure Promptness." However, nowadays "tip" is read as "To Insure Prejudice" instead. This new phrase came after a research conducted by Ayres, Vars, and Zakariya (2005), which perceps the size of tips that must be given might lead people to leave nothing instead. According to his research, tipping activity also leads to discrimination against minority passengers, such as African-American passengers, and taxicab drivers.

### **Tipping Behaviour**

Tipping can be described in different ways: a gift from customers to employees, to reward good services or to punish employees because of bad services, or as an obligation for tipping is a norm (Whaley, Douglas, and O'Neill, 2014). Lynn and Simons (2000) stated that tipping is a behaviour driven by social norm. Other than that, it is also found that service tipping is influenced by repetition, age, frequency of one's visit, and cross-gender interactions (Conlin, Lynn, and O'Donoghue, 2003). In addition, customers' tipping behaviour are influenced by their tipping strategies. Lynn and McCall (2000) stated that customers might give tips based on fixed percentage, such as 15 or 20 percent of the bills. Some also may implement the fixed dollar amount strategy, which is leaving tips in certain amount of money. Other strategy is called tit-for-tat, where customers leave tips according to service quality received. These strategies are related to Azar and Tobol's (2008) statement, that tipping behaviour is related to strategic behaviour in order to ensure future service, which is motivated by social and psychological aspects.

Klara (2005) stated that tip size given by a customer is not only affected by service quality provided, but also affected by social condition, psychology condition, and other factors coming from the customer, such as:

1. Payment method, where a customer tends to give a larger tip when paying with credit card rather than paying with cash,
2. Group size, where customers who come as a large group tend to give smaller tips although the bill size of the group was quite large,
3. Type of beverages consumed, where a customer who consumes alcoholic beverage in a restaurant or a bar often to face difficulty in counting the tip needed to be given,
4. Weather, where nice weather is proved to stimulate customers to give larger tips,
5. Who the customer is and in what occasion, where a male who comes to have a dinner with his female friend tends to give larger tip in order to show his executiveness, professionalism and generosity,
6. Mood, where a customer who is in a good mood tends to give larger tip.

### **Adam's Equity Theory**

This theory is consistent to the reason why people tip. It is common that people feel anxious or concerned when the relationships they have with others are unfair or inequitable (Lynn, 2001). A relationship is considered inequitable when the outputs of one are unbalanced to the inputs of others. In service encounters, both customers and servers are involved in a relationship where both parties are exchanging positive resources. The positive resource from customers is tips, while from the servers is services. They will create a fair or equitable relationship when the outputs of one are balanced to the inputs of others. Hence, customers maintain the equitable relationship with the servers by leaving larger tips in response of better service they received. This equitable relationship can be one of the reasons of customers' tipping decision (Lynn and McCall, 2000).

### **Service Quality**

According to study conducted by Artuğer and Çetinsöz (2013), customers tend to give tips in restaurant when they find factors such as: food is served with an appropriate temperature, the ordered dishes meet expectations, the service equipment is clean, the service employees refrain from hard sell tactics, the service employees apologize for any mistakes, the service employees enjoy their work, are friendly and are able to form good rapport. The method used by servers to provide services will also influence customers' tipping decision. For instance, customers that made a direct contact (touching) with servers are more likely to give tips, even if it is only a small touch on the shoulder. Servers that introduce themselves and squat next to the table when taking orders and talking with customers are also more likely to get higher tips from the customers. The eye contact and closer interaction are proved to create more intimate connection when forming rapport. There is also the method when one or two candies are given along with customers' bills. This method is proved to be the most effective one, since it is also has the largest impact on the increase of the tip (Lynn and McCall, 2000).

### **Tipping Motivations**

Although tip is not always required, whether customers tip or not, they have their own motivations – the drive that made them to do so. According to discussion on [www.tipping.org](http://www.tipping.org) (2001), there are seven reasons as to why people tip in restaurants:

1. The payment for service received, where a tip functions as a response for the service provided by the server, for bringing them food from kitchen to customer's table,
2. Customer feels he/she is treated and served nicely, where a tip functions as a response for the caring attitude from server to a customer in a restaurant,
3. Servers receive low wages,
4. Working as a server in a restaurant is a difficult and tiring job, full of pressure, etc.,
5. Everyone gives tip,
6. Dignity,
7. Tipping makes customers feel nice.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Secondary Research**

The author implemented the secondary research through books, journals, magazine and newspaper articles, and webpages, which were obtained from the library of IMI University Centre, Science Direct, Emerald Insight, Institute of Hospitality, Academia, as well as statistical report from Luzern governmental website, and so forth

### **Primary Research**

#### **Quantitative Research**

The author implemented quantitative research in order to reach the purpose of this study, which is to investigate customers' tipping motives and what factors influencing customers' tipping behaviour are. Numerical data was collected by using a valid and reliable questionnaire.

### **Research Instrument**

#### **Survey**

In designing the questionnaire, the author firstly reviewed some of previous studies regarding service tipping (Whaley, 2011; Whaley, Douglas, and O'Neill, 2014; Artuğer and Çetinsöz, 2013). The questionnaire firstly included close-ended questions regarding demographic (Lietz, 2010), and also included close-ended rating questions regarding factors influencing tipping behaviour (Artuğer and Çetinsöz, 2013). To specify the level of agreement or disagreement to close-ended questions, and to compare the results with previous studies, 5-point Likert scale was used (Pearse, 2011).

### **Population and Sample**

The study was conducted in Luzern, Switzerland, where there is approximately population of 79,478 persons living, as stated by the end of 2012 ([www.lustat.ch](http://www.lustat.ch)). According to calculation table by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), for a margin of error of 5 percent, to represent the whole population of 100,000 persons, the minimum sample size needed will be 383 respondents. However, due to the limited amount of time, the author implemented the central limit theorem, which requires minimum number of 30 respondents for statistical analyses. And for this study, the author will target 80 respondents as the sample size, however, by distributing 80 questionnaires to obtain adequate results. The sampling frame of the study was the people staying in Luzern with the minimum age of 18 years old, who dined in the restaurants and gave tips after dining.

### **Data Analysis**

The author measured the data and provided descriptive statistics, which includes mean, standard deviation, and correlation. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), mean refers to the central value (average) of the data – which represents the distribution of the values, standard deviation refers to the variations in the data – to identify the score gap from the mean, and correlation is the type and size of the relationship between the variables. These statistical sets

were presented in form of graphs, and have aided the author in analysing customers' tipping motives and determining customers' tipping behaviour in table-service restaurants.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey sessions were conducted from 20<sup>th</sup> until 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014, during lunchtime (12:00) until the evening (18:00). The response rate was 100%, as 80 out of 80 questionnaire distributed were properly filled, and also considered suitable to be analysed.

In order to properly represent the population living in Luzern, the author used probability sampling, which enabled equality for samples to be chosen. Respondents, with the total of 80 people, were asked to provide information about demographic data. It is shown that all 36 male respondents tipped when dining out, whether consistently or occasionally. However, out of 44 female respondents, although most of them gave tips when dining out, 11% of them did not tip.

Genders	When dining out, do you tip?			Total
	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No	
Female	43%	45%	11%	44
Male	44%	56%	-	36

Table 1. Tipping Activities by Genders

Further analysis was conducted in order to understand better the odds of 11% that occurred. The author then tried to figure the age ranges of respondents whom tipped when dining out. Table 2 shows the tipping activities of respondents by the age ranges. From the said contingency table, it was found that out of 29 respondents aged 18-23, 17% of them chose not to tip.

Ages	When dining out, do you tip?			Total
	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No	
18-23	21%	62%	17%	29
24-30	50%	50%	-	28
31-40	67%	33%	-	12
41-50	60%	40%	-	5
51-60	50%	50%	-	4
61 and above	100%	-	-	2

Table 2. Tipping Activities by Ages

Using table 1 and 2 as foundations, another analysis was conducted in order to compare both results. Figure 1 shows the age ranges of female respondents whom tipped when dining out, while figure 2 shows the age ranges of male respondents. Looking at the results, the author concluded that 48% of the female respondents were aged 18-23, while 47% of the male respondents were aged 24-30. Similar to the previous finding, figure 1 below also indicates that the odds of 11% of female respondents (table 1) whom chose not to tip when dining out were found to be aged 18-23.

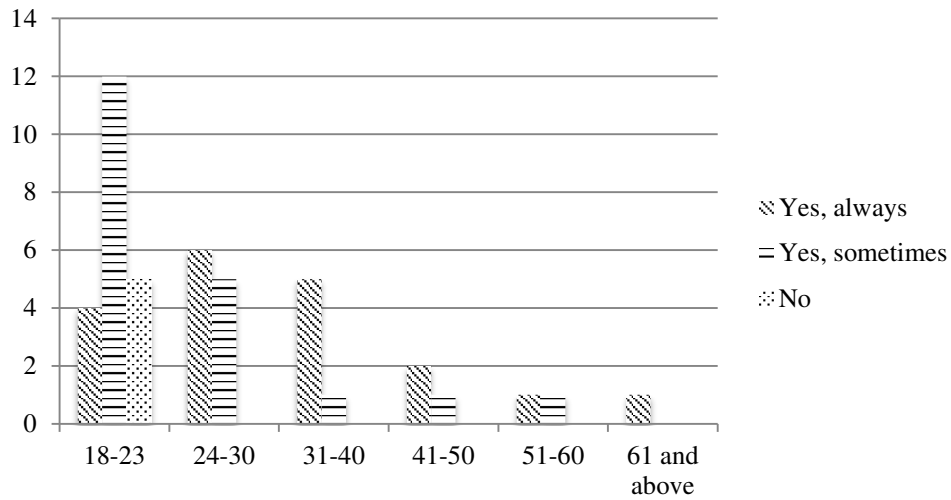


Figure 1. Female's Tipping Activities by Age Ranges

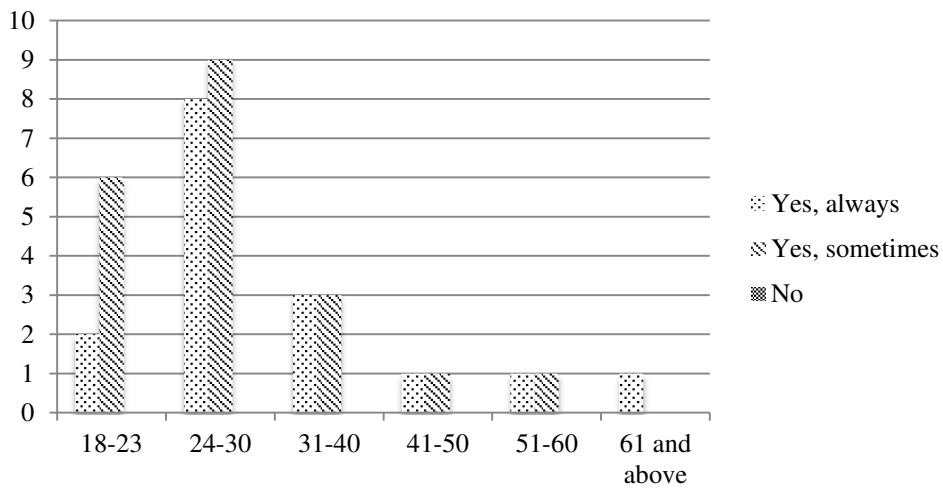


Figure 2. Male's Tipping Activities by Age Ranges

Another analysis was conducted to better understand the results of figure 1, which shows that the respondents chose not to tip were female (11%) aged 18-23 (17%). The author tried to see from different point of view, such as the employment statuses of the respondents. Table 3 shows the results of the said analysis, and it was found that the respondents who chose not to tip were all



students (15%). From the author point of view, it might be because most students did not have enough allowances to spend on tipping.

Employment Status	When dining out, do you tip?			Total
	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No	
Student	24%	61%	15%	42
Employed	52%	48%	-	3
Unemployed	100%	-	-	33
Retired	100%	-	-	2

Table 3. Tipping Activities by Employment Status

In order to find out more about the respondents who chose not to tip, the author did another analysis based on the total spending in a restaurant. Table 4 shows that the respondents' spending whom chose not to tip ranged from less than CHF 20 to CHF 80. From this results, the author found that the respondents who chose not to tip did not spend too much money for their meals, and if possible, would like to spend even less money. There are the possibilities that because of their allowances allowed them to have only meals needed, so they did not have more money to spend on tipping. Or they felt that they have already spent so much money for their meals, so there was no need for them to spend more on tipping.

Total Spending	When dining out, do you tip?			Total
	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No	
Less than CHF 20	-	83%	17%	6
CHF 21-50	36%	58%	6%	50
CHF 51-80	68%	26%	5%	19
CHF 81-100	100%	-	-	4
More than CHF 100	-	100%	-	1

Table 4. Tipping Activities by Total Spending

Looking at the results of table 1, 2, 3 and 4, the author concludes that the 6% of respondents who chose not to tip, were found to be five female students, aged 18-23. Their spending in restaurants ranged from less than CHF 20 to CHF 80.

### **Factors Influencing Choice of Restaurants**

The respondents were asked to choose their top three choices of what influenced their choice of restaurants the most, and the food selection available in restaurants proved to be the most influential, since 25% of the respondents chose it. Following closely behind, there was the location that influenced 23% of the respondents. In the third place, prices were also considered influential by 17%. However, restaurants' specialty did not influence most of the respondents (chosen only by 1% of the respondents). Figure 3 shows the factors that influence respondents' choice of restaurants.

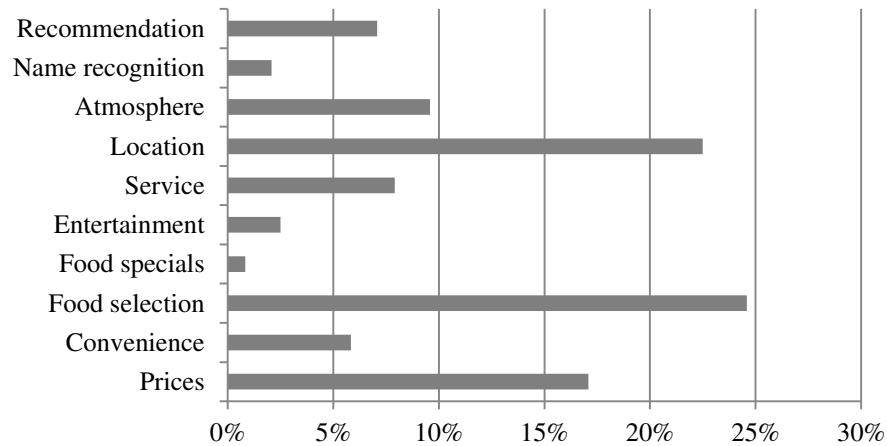


Figure 3. Influential Factors in Choosing Restaurants

### Analysis of Respondents' Perception of Factors Influencing Tipping Behaviour

Variety of factors that influences customers' tipping behaviour according to previous studies (Whaley, 2011; Whaley, Douglas, and O'Neill, 2014; Artuğer and Çetinsöz, 2013), were asked to 80 potential respondents. Based on the survey results, most of the respondents agreed that it was actually the cleanliness of service equipment that pushed them to tip. Other top factors that influenced them are the quality of restaurant's food and whether the orders were served at an appropriate temperature or not. This results slightly contradict with Mathews (2004) and Gambetta's (2006) statement, that tip is given according to the service provided by the server. However, in this study, although it was not the most influential factor, service received was still deemed important, as it came in the 6<sup>th</sup> rank. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked if they tip in order to impress, which in responses, turned out to be disagreeable to most of them.

Top 10 Factors Influencing Tipping Behaviour	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
The cleanliness of service equipment	4.66	0.57	1
The quality of a restaurant's food influences my tipping behaviour	4.56	0.61	2
Orders are served at an appropriate temperature	4.54	0.65	3
Satisfaction with the meal served	4.54	0.71	4
A server's attitude influences my tipping behaviour	4.53	0.55	5
The service received influences my tipping behaviour	4.53	0.69	6
Poor service influences my tipping behaviour	4.48	0.75	7
Good communication of the server	4.33	0.69	8
Reasonable waiting time	4.3	0.66	9
Timeliness of service influences my tipping behaviour	4.29	0.78	10

Table 5. Top 10 Factors Influencing Tipping Behaviour

<b>Bottom 5 Factors Influencing Tipping Behaviour</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
A server's gender (male/female) influences my tipping behaviour	2.48	1.23	25
I feel obligated to tip even when service is bad	2.45	1.17	26
I feel more obligated to tip when dining with friends and/or family	2.2	1.01	27
I feel embarrassed when others in my party do not tip	2.16	1.00	28
On occasion, I tip to impress	1.89	0.89	29

Table 6. Bottom 5 Factors Influencing Tipping Behaviour

Table 7 below illustrates the summary of factors influencing customers' tipping behaviour. From the table, it is shown that 'product quality' stands out the most in respondents' minds and it is believed to influence tipping behaviour the most, with the average mean score of 4.58. 'Service received' is also shown as an important factor, with the average mean score of 4.45. These high mean scores show strong acceptances for the variable mentioned. This result agrees with previous study conducted by Artuğer and Çetinsöz (2013), which found that the most important factor in tipping was product quality. On the other hand, it is also shown that 'social pressure' does not hold an important role in tipping behaviour (average mean score of 2.19). This lowest mean score for 'social pressure' illustrate more negative responses. Although social pressure or social compliance factors, such as self-interest, obligation (Gambetta, 2006) or simple attractions toward servers (Koku, 2005; Lynn and Simons, 2000), could push people to tip, the respondents in Luzern disagreed. This, however, might be partially due to the fact that tipping is not obligated here in Luzern, or in Switzerland itself, therefore the respondents neither feel any pressures regarding their tipping behaviour, nor they feel the need to impress others by tipping.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	Service received	4.45	2
2	Social compliance	2.36	9
3	Social pressure	2.19	10
4	Server's attentiveness	3.18	6
5	Server's actions	3.14	7
6	Operational processes	4.25	4
7	Future service	2.81	8
8	Presentability	4.29	3
9	Product quality	4.58	1
10	Value for money	4.25	5

Table 7. Factors Influencing Customers' Tipping Behaviour

## **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The results obtained from this study showed that every individual has different motivations to tip, whether it is rational or irrational to them, such as self-interest, reciprocity, guilt, or any other motivations that might occur (Gambetta, 2006). Thus, there are many factors that influencing one's tipping motivation, which resulting in the tipping behaviour. The participants of this study have implied that the product quality and the service received were two important factors that determined their tipping behaviour. In addition, the participants have also implied that most of them did not consider future service when they tipped nor they felt obligated to tip. From this study, the author concludes that instead of only one certain motivation, it is possible that one's tipping behaviour is influenced by many different motivations. As stated by Gambetta (2006), whether it is the same people or different people, when it comes to tipping, it is likely that they are driven by either the same motivations or any other different motivations. Thus, it is highly likely that factors influencing tipping behaviour vary between one and another. However, from this study that conducted in Luzern, it was found that the product quality of a restaurant was the most important factors that influence customers' tipping behaviour, followed by the service received by customers, presentability of the servers, operational processes of the restaurant, whether the products offer value for money, server's attentiveness, server's actions, customers' consideration for future service, social compliance and social pressure.

### **Recommendations**

The author suggests that the restaurateurs or restaurant managers to create training programs that will help their employees to better understand the tipping motivations, or so far as possible, encourage their employees to be more aware of customers' tipping behaviour. Knowledge of either tipping motivations or tipping behaviour will aid many service industries in a best possible way. Regardless of what motivations the employees might have, this action to provide better services will be resulting in the growth of customers' satisfactions, which will benefit the restaurant or any other service industries. When customers are satisfied and happy, it is always possible that they will become loyal and repeat their visits, and hopefully in a way, will help increasing the brand awareness and recognition.

In terms of further research, since this study mainly focused on respondents who are not employed in hospitality industry, the author suggests that a study focusing on respondents who are employed in hospitality industry, preferably those who hold tipped jobs, to be conducted in order to gain results with different perceptions. From this study, the author concludes that respondents who are not employed in hospitality industry believe that the product quality influences their tipping behaviour the most. Therefore, the author becomes curious and interested of the perceptions of respondents employed in hospitality industry – will it be the same results or will it be different ones.

## Limitations

This study had several limitations. Since Luzern is located in the German part of Switzerland, not all of the people in the area speak English well. Thus, it was quite difficult for the author to have people participating in the surveys. Because of the time constraints and available resources, the author was not able to fully reach the ideal sample size of 383, thus the author decided to get only 80 respondents. Although the minimum number of 30 respondents was properly reached, the results might not fully represent the entire Luzern population. Furthermore, due the use of questionnaire, there was a possibility that the questions might not be fully understood by the respondents, hence the results might not be accurate. However, to anticipate this, pilot test was conducted in order to reach understanding and validity of the questionnaire.

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