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Effects of Tipping Styles on the Quality of Service

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Occasionally people enjoy, or engage in dining out at restaurants. People go out to celebrate birthdays, holidays, promotions, and many other special events. However, along with celebration follows showing the server appreciation by tipping. People have their own reasons for tipping big or leaving the server a penny. Some guests tip 5 percent and some tip 50 percent. Most people tip at the end of the meal as compared to the beginning. Some would say that might keep the server on their toes. Many people tip on the speed of the food, if the server kept their beverages full, or how nice and personable they were. The quality of the service and the atmosphere could account for a large portion of the inconsistency in the tips a server receives. Adding gratuity decreases the quality of service provided by the server.

What if the tables were turned, and the server already knew the tip was “in the bag”. Before a family of 3 sat down the server is aware that “the more I ring up on the bill the bigger the tip I will get because gratuity is added.” The server might not be concerned with earning their money or the quality of service. It seems that the whole history of serving is based on earning wages. The server might be less friendly and unconcerned with the individuals who come in alone or the people who just stop in for coffee. Many guest oppose added gratuity because the guest wants control and the ability to regulate service (Martin, 1997). Gratuity leaves the guest more vulnerable to unsatisfactory service and an unpleasant visit to the restaurant. Adding gratuity decreases the quality of service provided by the server.

Gratuity benefits everyone but the customer. Restaurants often support applying gratuity to each check because it helps regulate revenue, guarantees the employee's wages, and helps at tax time (Martin, 1997). Adding gratuity makes it easier for the company to keep track of the money flow in the business and with the Federal Government. However, adding gratuity decreases the quality of service provided by the server.

Methods

Participants

The participants will include nine confederates that will be responsible for paying the bill. The participants would consist of 60 Lindenwood University First Semester Freshmen with few than 21 credits. The participants will include 60 people with a Bachelors degree that have been out of college for 3 to 6 years. The participants will also include 60 faculty members between Lindenwood University and St. Charles community College who are 35 years or above. This selection was chosen to have a wider variety of participants across a larger age field. This might find other finding that tipping and tipping standards might be difference with age. The participants will be given a pre-test to evaluate their ideas of quality service. An example question would be: How important is it to keep the guests beverage full? They would have a rating scale from one to ten, ten is very important. The participants will be grouped based on their test. Each group will consist of at least on3 person from each age group that defines the quality of service differently then the rest. For example, a freshman that thinks friendliness and full sodas is good service, a college graduate that has been out for 4 years thinks that speed of the food and the atmosphere are important, and lastly a Lindenwood Professor who is 41 thinks

that taste of the food is the most important would all three be together. The participants who dine together should all be evaluating something different during the visit.

Materials

The materials include nine restaurants. Three five star, three four star, three three star restaurants. The participants will be rotated between groups and restaurants to lower order effects.

The materials also include 180 pretest, 60 black pens, 180 consent forms, 180 small checklist, 180 feedback letters, and money for the meals and tips.

Implications

I speculate that the participants will give lower rating of quality when gratuity is added. My hypothesis is the quality of service decrease with added gratuity so my hypothesis would be supported. However, they will not be aware whether or not the gratuity is added because there will be a confederate at each dinning experience. They will not be aware that money has anything to do with the experiment. I will use a paired t-test to evaluate the data because there is one Independent variable which how the server is paid. There are two levels, server is aware of gratuity at the beginning, and the other is the server gets tipped at the end.

If my hypothesis that the quality of service decreases with added gratuity is supported then the results could influence restaurant owner's decision to add gratuity to checks. Restaurant owners might take another approach with their servers or the policy of gratuity. The experiment could help the costumers dinning experience by leaving the tip in their control. This could help prove that adding gratuity sacrifices the quality of the business which often is why people come back to eat again.