

EFFECT ON TIPPING OF BARMAN DRAWING A SUN
ON THE BOTTOM OF CUSTOMERS' CHECKS¹

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Summary.—Previous research has demonstrated that a pleasant drawing (a smiling face) on a restaurant bill increased the number of tips left by clients. A similar experiment was carried out using a drawing of the sun since it is known that tips increase on sunny days. The experiment was carried out in local bars and involved clients who have ordered an espresso coffee. Analysis showed that the drawing of the sun led clients to leave a tip more frequently than when this drawing is not present. The size of the tip left was also higher. The hypothesis of the creation of a positive frame of mind by this stimulus is discussed.

Waiters and waitresses in restaurants or bars generally receive low wages and place importance upon tips to increase their income. In France, this further income is even more sought after since it adds to a guaranteed minimum wage and no tax or national insurance charges are taken out of it. There is nothing certain about leaving a tip for a waiter in a bar, as legislation dictates that service must be included in the price of the drink (exactly 12% of the bar bill), and the clients know that the waiters receive a minimum wage. Leaving a tip is therefore an occasional practice. The study of factors influencing tipping behaviour takes on particular importance as it is here a matter of finding methods which elicit a such behaviour, contrasting with clients' usual behaviour. In other countries, where this practice of tipping is common, much research has been carried out to identify the factors likely to predict when and how much a waiter will receive. Despite apparent evidence, the relationship between the quality of service and amount of the tip is not as automatic as one would think (Harris, 1995) and the same is true concerning the perceived quality of the food (Lynn & Latané, 1984). External factors may influence behaviour of the client more. For instance, when the weather is fine this has a positive effect upon tipping (Cunningham, 1979). This also holds when information about the weather is supplied by the waiter to clients of the hotel who have not yet seen what the day is like outside (Rind, 1996). This effect probably stems from a positive frame of mind brought on by good weather.

Most research on tipping has focused on the interaction between the waiter and the client. A personalised welcome, where the waitress gives her

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first name to the client, is sufficient to increase the tips she will receive (Garrity & Degelman, 1990). Effects are also obtained from nonverbal interactions. A waiter's touch of the client's arm or shoulder tends to increase the size of the tips (Hornik, 1992) particularly when he is young (Lynn, Le, & Sherwyn, 1998). A customer receiving a broad smile from a waitress leaves a larger tip than when he receives a simple smile with lips closed (Tidd & Lockard, 1978). The same is true when the waiter leans towards the client (Davis, Schrader, Richardson, Kring, & Kieffer, 1998).

Recently, a certain number of studies have focused upon the use of information added to the client's bill. Thus, for a waitress, the simple fact of writing "thank you" by hand at the bottom of the bill tends to increase tips (Rind & Bordia, 1995). The same is true for a drawing of a smiling face, which leads to higher tips for waitresses but not for waiters (Rind & Bordia, 1996). The present research is inspired by the work of these authors and investigates the nature of the drawing and the positive feeling it creates. As far as we are aware, combining a personal drawing of an ornamental stimulus associated with positive feelings should increase tips, we expected such a drawing at the bottom of a bar bill would more dispose the client to leave money for the waiter.

METHOD

Subjects were 177 clients (92 in the control group and 85 in the experimental group), 98 men and 79 women, sat alone at the terraces of a bar in a famous seaside resort (The peninsula of "Quiberon," on the west Atlantic coast in France). They had previously ordered an espresso coffee, making it possible to monitor the price of the product. The experiment took place in the morning between 09.00 and 11.00 and was held over three consecutive days of a particularly sunny week.

Four waiters and 2 waitresses served clients in their usual fashion taking their orders and then bringing their drinks, in all cases in under four minutes given the few people present during the experimentation. In a random manner, the bill (placed under a dish as usual) either featured or did not feature a hand-drawn picture of the sun, with a surface area of about 1.5 cm² and located 1 cm below the total for the bill. The division of subjects in the sun and control conditions was random, as obtained by algorithm using a list of two codes, A (sun) or B (control). When the waiter or the waitress ordered an espresso coffee for a given table from the barman, the barman immediately consulted the list of the series corresponding to the order number of the client. If it was 'A', he added the handmade drawing of the sun. In each case, the bill was placed under a dish and put on the waiter's tray with the order. In this way, the drawing could not be seen, and the dish and the bill were brought to the table with the coffee. Therefore, the waiter

could not know before returning to clear the table the condition for the client. After having cleared the table, the waiter or waitress returned to the bar and gave to the barman a report of the client's behavior—whether a tip had been left for him and, if so, the amount.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No statistically significant mean differences were found between the four waiters and the two waitresses [$\chi_1^2(N=177)=1.24, p>.20$]. Also, there were no significant differences related to the sex of the waiter [$\chi_1^2(N=177)=2.18, p>.10$] or to that of the client [$\chi_1^2(N=177)=0.83, p>.30$], so the data were combined. When a sun was drawn on the bill, 37.7% of the clients left a tip, compared to 20.7% with the bill presented normally. The difference was [$\chi_1^2(N=177)=6.22, p<.05$]. The same is true for the average amount of the tip which, expressed as a proportion of the total sum of the bill and calculated among the clients who left a tip, was higher ($t_{49}=2.14, p<.05$, two-tailed test) when the sun was presented ($M=26.40, SD=14.0$) than when it was not ($M=19.1, SD=6.7$).

Drawing a sun on the bill was associated with increased tips a waiter or waitress received. The results show that the number of clients leaving a tip was higher when the drawing of a sun was featured on the bill and, also, that the size of the tip left was larger. It is possible that the illustration made the environmental conditions more attractive to the subject; however, we know that a sunny day or the announcement of a sunny day makes it possible to increase tipping (Cunningham, 1979; Rind, 1996). One may also think that the sun or the promise of a fine day puts the subject in a good frame of mind, which is known to promote generosity (Harris & Smith, 1975).

There appears, therefore, to be a positive effect associated with using a pleasant drawing, confirming the results obtained by Rind and Bordia (1996) who found similar results using the drawing of a smiling face on clients' bills. These authors, however, observed that the drawing was not effective for a waiter. Here, no difference between the sex of the waiters was noted. It is possible that the subjects think that such a drawing is not misplaced or strange, even when it comes from a man, since the context (a seaside resort) and the weather (sunny) make the drawing particularly relevant.

Research demonstrated that many factors affect tips. Some are directly under the waiter's control. That is the case with nonverbal factors as a tilted posture (Davis, *et al.*, 1998), a touch (Hornik, 1992; Lynn, *et al.*, 1998), or a smile (Tidd & Lockard, 1978). Other factors depend on the client: the amount of the bill (Lynn & Latané, 1984) and his alcohol consumption (Lynn, 1988), and lastly, environmental factors act also as the sun (Cunningham, 1979). Recently, studies showed that information added to a client's bill favoured increase of tips. That is true, for instance, when the waiter writes "thank you" by hand, at the bottom of the bill (Rind & Bordia, 1995), or when he draws a smiling face (Rind & Bordia, 1996), or when a helpful message is written on the back of the customer's bill (Rind & Strohmets, 1999). A lot of these factors, different in appearance, affect the tip rate probably because they influence, in the same way, a

client's mood. If a waiter or a waitress makes jokes, shows originality, displays a particular interest in his client by touching him or by a large smile, then the service elicits a positive mood given qualitative gain in social interaction inferred from such contact. The same is true of a sunny day, knowing that he favours social interactions, and of a meal with several guests which lends itself to laughter and exchanges between friends. Is it not odd that a reference to these pleasant circumstances of social life, even a drawing, makes activation of a good mood easier? At least such interaction induces, in return, a more sizeable tip for the waiter or waitress.

This experiment suggests that the factors encouraging increased proportional size of a tip are largely under the control of the waiter. These factors are seldom costly, easy to reproduce, and can modify positively the mood of clients. It would simply be necessary to train waiters in this respect as well as the managers of the bars or restaurants to create a pleasant climate of interaction between the personnel and the client, encouraging the latter to return and the former to be rewarded better for their service and pleasantness.

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