

Tipping culture phenomenon research and analysis in Uzbekistan and other Asian countries.

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the tipping culture phenomenon in Uzbekistan and other Asian countries through their guest experience and hospitality traditions. The research focuses on the factors provided by many websites, including general background and economic impact. This topic has been analyzed by collecting scholarly written studies, writing about personal observation, creating a survey about the observed topic, conducting interviews with Winesday Cafe & Wine Shop Tashkent, TKKH Restaurant Tashkent, and Khoroshaya Devochka Restaurant Tashkent to make a conclusion and recommendation to improve based on 149 respondents' answers. After data analysis, tipping is considered as an appreciation of the service for both service providers and respondents' feedbacks. A country's tipping culture may play a crucial role in its hospitality. For this reason and to respond to a lack of scholarly research and consider the outdated status of the available studies, this paper presents some solutions and highlights the importance of getting orientation about tipping culture when planning a trip. In this way, the country will be able to attract more tourists and foreign investors soon.

1. Introduction

The study aims to research the role of the two „protagonists” (service provider and customers) in the restaurant, and comparing to observation (personal point of view), a conclusion can be defined, which can contribute to a higher level of satisfaction and guest experience, furthermore, the service provider can adequately do its job.

The importance of researching tipping culture before traveling is in the spotlight of this paper to avoid any inconveniences on the spot. Because of the lack of relevant and up-to-date literature, this paper has been started to achieve the goals above. It is looking for the answer to what importance tipping has and its economic background, how much guests are satisfied with the culinary experience, why they leave a bigger tip than usual, and what their overall opinion and reaction are in the world of tipping fatigue.

Abduvakhidova et. al. (2019) noticed a relationship between gastronomy and tourism, as it helps to increase the flow of tourists, make the stay of tourists longer, and to raise the amount of profit from tourism. A lot of authors stated that Uzbekistan has the potential to improve in gastronomy tourism, because of its unique national cuisine and tradition of good hospitality. Abduvakhidova and Sherzod (2019) considered Uzbek cuisine as one of the most well-known parts of its culture and the tastiest cuisine in Central Asia and the most beautiful and diverse one from the East. Some Uzbek dishes have a long history dating hundred years back (Kudratovna et al., 2021). Abduvakhidova and Yunusova (2019) must admit, “Food reveals the secret of the spirit of the people and helps to understand their mentality” (p. 150).

Gastronomic tourism has a high reputation in emerging niche market, but it results very few published articles about Uzbekistan. Most studies tend to analyze the cultural and heritage attractions of Uzbekistan (Hasanovich, 2017), but Xidirova and Turakulov (2019) have researched the need to highlight other kind of tourism like gastronomy tourism, and discussed the limitation of tourists. They are curious about only historical and architectural monuments and sometimes neglect the culinary experience (Patterson-Tureav, 2020).

The public opinion about Uzbekistan is that its tourism potential is not being utilized to its fullest extent and being performed at a lesser level than it is now (Kapiki-Tarikulov, 2014). This misbelief has been created due to the focus on showcasing the cultural, archeological, and environmental aspects of the ‘Silk Road’ cities - the historical sites of the most direct trade route connecting China and Europe - has led to the creation of this false perception.

With an emphasis on its historic civilizations and cultural traditions, the Republic of Uzbekistan has increased the visibility of its nation as a fresh and intriguing travel destination in 2016. From 1996 to 2018, the number of international tourist arrivals rose from 173,000 to 5,35 million (World Data.info., 2018). Tourists reported being enthralled with distinctive architecture in the ancient cities. In 2018, foreign visitors stayed an average of 6.9 days (Patterson, 2020).

One of Uzbekistan's best chances to achieve long-term economic and tourism stability may be through gastronomic tourism (Patterson, 2020). The Uzbek people are considered a hospitable nation. It is important to keep Uzbek family traditions, the tradition of hospitality reveals the characteristics of both nations and cultures (Makhammadovna, 2022). Gastronomic travel trails are a good sign for cooperation between agriculture and tourism, which is flourishing in this country. It offers diverse ingredients.

Due to the raised popularity of gastro tourism, numerous destinations are marketing themselves as main hubs for cuisine and culture and utilizing regional food and drinks as additional attractions (Robinson and Getz, 2012). This results popular tourist destinations due to their distinctive cuisine and gastronomy (Hjalager, 2002). Regional specialties were getting more significant for understanding the place and its cultural diversity (Gyimothy et al., 2000), which means raising tourist arrivals and the number of the spent night and gastronomy tourism became an integral part of the culture in a destination (Ferguson et al., 2017).

The main tourist destinations (Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent) account for 76.2% of the overall visitor flow, which can be explained by the concentration of accommodations, transportation and other tourism facilities in Uzbekistan (Olimovich, 2015).

1.1 Asian cuisine

Traveling is one the best way to taste different foods! The plates differing from one country or even a region to another, as do the colors, textures, and tastes. In addition to being a part of the culture, food is also an adventure, a lovely way to meet people, and and a means to learn about other aspects of the society through gastronomy. However, new foods bring with them new customs (secret-retreats.com).

It is common for cuisines from China, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, India, or Turkey to be referred to by the names of the nations from which they originated, although this can frequently confuse visitors. Considering this, a lot of cuisines are associated with nations that

are national unifiers or fabricated emblems rather than traditional and distinctive cuisines that developed in the nations for which they are called (yab.yomiuri.co.jp).

Japanese food from the perspective of foreigners contains sushi, tonkatsu (pork cutlet), ramen, yakiniku, sukiyaki, and curry rice. The origin of sushi can be traced back to the fermented or seasoned raw fish that was once eaten in Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian. It is often recognized that the Edomae sushi tradition in Japan, originated at the same time as modern Japan was being formed.

The important thing to remember is that as civilizations and people's habits change, so do many aspects of culture, including food. Global city residents sample and evaluate these evolving culinary innovations before they mingle all over the globe. New Asian cuisines are emerging in major cities such as Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Bangkok, Seoul and so on, due to immigration. So, the saying is true: new food is created when many civilizations come together (yab.yomiuri.co.jp).

Asia is massive and diverse due to the size of the region, but there are nuances, where similarities can be noticed. The continent is bordered to the west by Turkey, to the east by Japan, and to the north by Kazakhstan and Mongolia, and to the south by the islands of Indonesia and East Timor. The culinary customs of Asia are as vibrant as their cultures (yab.yomiuri.co.jp).

Considering the characteristics of Asian culinary cultures throughout the region, rice and noodles are the most common foods consumed in Northeast Asia. Meat and vegetables are frequently used as side dishes, and when they are cooked, they are flavored with spices, bean paste, soy sauce and fish sauce. This enhances the flavor of the food and attracts foodies (turkmenistan.gov.tm). Asian cuisine comes in a range of colors and scents as well. Eating customs can be distinguished between the West Asian custom of eating with bare hands and the Northeast Asian custom of using chopsticks and spoons (yab.yomiuri.co.jp).

Asian cuisine varies widely between the Central, North, South, East, and West regions; each has distinct traits and cuisine specialties of its own. While rice is a common ingredient, regional variations exist (pnut.com.au).

Due to Uzbekistan's advantageous location at the intersection of several trade routes, the influence of the Turk and Persian cultures is responsible for the variety of dishes found there. Because of this mixture, Uzbek recipes differ in terms of both the food and the cooking techniques. Many meals have intricate formulas that call for years of knowledge and culinary artistry, especially when they are prepared by hand (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

Kazakh cuisine from the very beginning was originally a nomadic cuisine with the use of meat and products from horsemilk.

Lamb and horse meat are basic for this gastronomy. The traditional drinks are tea, kumis, and shubat. The bread is eaten very little here, boursaki and flatbreads are consumed instead (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

The fact that practically every dish in Kyrgyz cuisine is made entirely of fresh ingredients and very few are preserved is one of its defining characteristics.

Mastava, a rice soup with vegetables eaten with ayran and pilav with queen-apple pepperidge, is one of the most well-known Kyrgyz foods. The majority of meals in the southern portion of the nation are influenced by Uzbek cuisine (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

The national Tajik cuisine is like the Central Asian countries' but has its own characteristics. It is based on recipes of meat dishes, but the vegetables and spices are used here much more than in the Kazakh and Kyrgyz cuisines.

Moshkichiri, a porridge made with rice and moong dal, is a well-known Tajik dish. Another dish known as fatirmasks, when served hot, is finely crumbled flatbread placed in a big wooden bowl. Parts of the flatbread are combined with the melted dairy butter to make dimples (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

Although Turkmens have their own cooking techniques for every meal, their national cuisine is similar to that of other Central Asian nations in terms of technology and product selection. All the diverse dishes of the country culinary art was written in the book of "Turkmen dastarkhan" authored by the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. The state's chief author stated that the Turkmen cuisine has been developed over the years (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

The national cuisine is one of the most important parts in the Turkmen culture, that reflects the unique people's traditions.

The most popular dishes are ishlekli (pie with meat), gutabs with various stuffing and main food of every holiday is the aromatic Turkmen pilav, and unash (soup with bean and pulled noodle) (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

The best dishes from Central Asian countries of the culinary art were presented in 2021 at the International Exhibition of National Dishes of the Peoples of the Central Asian Region held at the Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia, in Turkmenistan (turkmenistan.gov.tm).

1.2 Guest experience

The Republic of Uzbekistan has a lot of political, economic, and general historical, and cultural potential for a ripe and developed tourism industry (Olimovich, 2015; Khaydarov, 2021). The main cities are situated along the Great Silk Road's trade caravan routes. For centuries, Uzbekistan offered the most intriguing and unique cuisines found in other nations since these Uzbek cities drew a large number of Asian traders. For this reason, foreign foods have affected Uzbek cuisine, and over time, many of these dishes have turned into national favorites. The most well-known ones are the tandoori bread, lamb kebabs, plov, manti, dolma, hasip, and somsa. Rice, pork, carrots and onions are the primary ingredients. The way how to prepare can be different for different regions.

The first authentic taste of Uzbekistan culture is sipping green tea at a Bukhara teashop or perusing the dried fruits, nuts and spices, at Samarkand's Siyob Bazaar. Being hospitable to visitors is an essential part of Uzbek culture and food and drink can replace saying 'welcome'. In Uzbek households, the value of hospitality is higher than the wealth of a table and the family's affluence, and as the saying goes "the guest is greater than the father". Only an invitation for tea often ends up with a full-on meal for compulsory entertainment featuring with bounty of Uzbek melon fields and orchards.

Arriving at an Uzbek home, footwear is left outside. Handshakes and greeting kiss at the doorstep are better to avoid because they are associated with bad luck; so follow the host's lead when it comes to saying hello, to the most honorable seats at the table away from the entrance. Looking at a traditional Uzbek household, men and women sit in separate rooms, because people of the same sex find it more comfortable to be with each other (responsibletravel.com).

All meal begins with prayer, and then there's tea. Breaking bread, the host distributes it. Then, after some nuts or sweets to whet the appetite, work or amusement can start. The actual meal is a bit of a free-for-all. Food is served and frequently consumed on communal plates using large spoon or hands (uzbek-travel.com).

1.3 Tipping culture

"Tipping, or gratuity, is a sum of money given by a customer to appreciate the service provided by a worker" (indiatimes.com). It is given as an addition to the basic price of the service. The amount of the tip is based on how satisfied the guests are with the quality of the

given service. Some countries do not define tips with a fixed percentage, since tipping may not be expected when a fee is explicitly charged for the service (indiatimes.com). There are some general rules, which are a good way to follow. Waiting staff needs to be tipped by 10-15 % unless service is included, otherwise, rounding up the bill is recommended. Showing satisfaction for tour guides is £20-40 per day and for the hotel room attendants is £2 per day and for bag carriers, £1 per bag (and separately tip the driver £10-20). Salon workers and parking attendants need to get £2 or a round-up (johnlewisfinance.com).

Tipping custom has a long history, but its origin is still disputed. One source mentioned it has no clear origin, but most probably it was primarily practiced in Tudor England from the 15th century (investopedia.com). It arrived from Europe in the 15th century, but it was getting more popular in the United States in the 19th century (investopedia.com). The practice of tipping has roots in England, where waiters get extra money when they perform well. Guests are judging their waiters, but it is true from the other way around as well, waiters are judging them also from the moment they walk through the door.

According to Dr. Peters and Birardi, typical tipped workers should tip no less than 20%, and bigger tips (over 20%) should be given in appreciation for exceptional customer service (cnbc.com).

From the middle of the 17th century, boxes started to be labeled “to insure promptness/to insure promptitude (TIP)” to award waiters for quick yet good service by guests in London coffee houses and other shops (investopedia.com).

This practice reached America from Europe. In the beginning, it was not well-received by Americans, as they saw it as unrelated to the values of a democratic society. What they say about the culture of appreciation and how a larger societal themes are reflected in their opinions toward tipping. The tipping aimed to establish social status by the elite. Today this example fell because most of the people tip just to show off, some give tips to complete the salary of the waiter, while others consider it as out of duty (indiatimes.com), but definitely helped to increase in low-wage labor after the Civil War. Today, it is most regular for workers who get the tipped minimum wage (\$2.13 of tip per hour at the state level), regardless if they’re tipped or not, which also reflects that restaurant owners do not have the option of charging labor costs onto customers (eater.com).

In 2018, Eater found that non-black servers and bartenders nationwide earned a median pay of \$7.06 an hour in tips, while for Asian workers was only \$4.77. Using tips shows a means of compensating employees may violate the Civil Rights Act (newyorker.com).

California expects employers to pay the full state minimum wage before tips. The state tipped minimum wage is different from the regular minimum wage for non-tipped employees (investopedia.com). The European minimum-wage standards were showing a positive trend, and tipping mostly disappeared there. In 1966, the American base wage businesses were lowered by paying tipped workers. Nationally, it's still just \$2.13/hour (newyorker.com).

In the 20th century, an anti-tipping demonstration started due to an undemocratic view which created a servant class. The first state that banned this manual was Washington in 1909, followed by Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee and Iowa, but it was ended in 1926, and since then tipping has become more popular (bbc.co.uk).

Although there are significant regional differences, the US is the nation where tips are accepted the most worldwide. According to behavioral economics professor, Ofer Azar, "tipping can be problematic because it seems to create classes, that of the customers, and that of the service workers, who have to satisfy the customers and sort of 'beg' for the tips.

Five years ago, both diners and restaurant workers tried to get rid of tipping, but they were afraid to lose their staff, and then to lose their guests. Based on the experience of Ops (service-inclusive establishment), in 2015 it went through a transition to tip-free. Instead of increasing the prices on the menu by 20 % across the board, the owner calibrated the opening prices to those at comparable pizzerias and tried to correct them primarily with the cost of wine. During the first two years, Ops did not generate a profit (eater.com).

Tipping started to be created to express appreciation for the quality of the food or the service or even the kindness of the waiter. Tipping got another function because the restaurant owners were unable to close the wage gap. Nowadays service charge is inevitable for American diners because tipping has become a tradition in American dining culture and these places are not prepared for service-inclusive pricing (eater.com).

1.4 Tipping cultures all over the world

Every country has its own rules for gratuities, they are so diverged, that is why, it's important to consider other cultures when traveling. For this reason, researching local tipping customs is highly recommended to avoid causing offence: some expect tips, but some feel offended by being tipped.

1.4.1 Europe

In Europe, it is highly recommended to check for service charges. Especially in costly Scandinavian restaurants, since service is usually included, tipping is not necessary.

In Germany, even if the service is included, a small “*trinkgeld*” is appreciated (johnlewisfinance.com). In France, “*service compris*” means the bill already includes the tip, but especially in the eastern part of Asia, the lack of any tipping tradition is a symbol of pride (bbc.com).

1.4.2 America

North America proposes tipping more and more often. The habit of tipping in North America is dominant, and the 15-20% rate on restaurant meals is quite high. Customers used to leave an extra dollar per drink at the bar (johnlewisfinance.com, westernunion.com).

In Central and South America, the practice is leaving 10 %. Tipping was not always part of the culture, but mainly Mexican overtourism has generated “propina” which is appreciated nowadays. 10% is the normal rate in restaurants, but if a service charge is already added, rounding up the bill is welcome (johnlewisfinance.com). It is getting kind of mandatory because without it excellent service is not guaranteed.

1.4.3 Africa

Sub-Saharan African region says “a little extra can enhance travel experience”. Tips do matter in Africa because thanks to gratuities workers’ salaries go up higher. So, in that case, rounding up is not enough to express satisfaction. Guests should hand the extra money directly to the service providers to make sure they receive it. 8-10% or a few local banknotes can cover the expenses for necessities (johnlewisfinance.com).

In Egypt, taking a closer look at *baksheesh*, both dollars and Egyptian Pounds are welcome, in general USD 1-2 (or E£30-40) is enough (bbc.com).

1.4.4 Middle East

In the Middle East and North Africa, the recommendation is to tip more often, but with smaller amounts. When dining out, in general service charge is added, but it’s worth adding a small, symbolic price for the waiter. However, in the United Arab Emirates such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi, tipping is similar to Northern America (johnlewisfinance.com).

1.4.5 Asia

Asian countries do not have a big history of tipping culture, but the inbound tourist arrivals have transformed the cultural expectations in some countries, but not everywhere. In the case of dining out in Asia, to check if a service charge was imposed, always scan bills. In that case, tipping won't be anticipated.

Due to China's unique geography, which includes both distant rural areas and bustling cities, as well as vast, diversified states, travelers are certain to run into regional variations in etiquette. When choosing a seat and when to start eating the food on the table, the seniority norms take effect. Two basic rules are good to keep in mind about chopsticks: avoid resting them vertically and playing with them (secret-retreats.com, tripsavvy.com).

Most of the meals are served with hot tea and ice is uncommon in China. Servers will bring a steaming pot of Chinese tea right after sitting down (secret-retreats.com). After that, dining companions will pour for themselves. Later, the courtesy of pouring a cup, and tapping two fingers on the table a few times signifies gratitude (intrepidtravel.com).

Regarding one of the tenets of China, all people are equal which means none is a servant to another. While China increases its number of grand hotels and restaurants, particularly in not frequently visited areas, giving tips still is somewhere between being considered ill-mannered and a bribe. Historically it was rude, but times are changing. To tell the truth, the country still is not in the mood for tipping, indeed, but gratuity is becoming acceptable in bigger cities because of the increasing number of international tourist arrivals (bbc.com), and however, leaving a small tip is usually appreciated and considered a sign of exceptional service (johnlewisfinance.com, westernunion.com). So, even if it is not a regular practice, guests are welcome to leave one if they are astonished by the service at a more formal eatery (secret-retreats.com). In top-level restaurants, this action is getting more popular by adding a service charge of 10-15%. In Hong Kong likewise, leaving some change on the table or, rounding up the bill is appropriate (tripsavvy.com).

Polite eating in Japan means having the ability to handle chopsticks. The access to other eating utensils is kind of limited. Sitting on a tatami at a low-set table is the way how to eat. Before eating, wiping hands with a warm towel is recommended. The host is a guide after he or she starts to eat, others do likewise. Following the etiquette as closely as possible is trying to eat everything from the plate (intrepidtravel.com, secret-retreats.com). It is likely the host will pay for the meal, but being the highest-ranking person at the table changes the situation, and settling the bill will fall to this person (intrepidtravel.com).

Japan is considered where tipping is embarrassing and awkward, except weddings, funerals, and special events. Regarding a tip-free service culture, it must be spelled out to internationals to warn them and cause offense, because, in more common situations, they feel offended if they are tipped. Even if tourists know the country doesn't tip, some people still feel the urge to show their appreciation with money. It's part of daily life to leave money for staff at restaurants, then the staff try to give their money back by chasing them on the streets or some servers politely refuse the tip (indiatimes.com, westernunion.com).

Because the Japanese service industry is renowned for over-delivering, customers can be sure they will always receive excellent service. Serving customers comes first and getting a tip is not why they work so hard at their jobs. It's preferable to use an envelope and seal it when leaving a tip. When taking money out of the wallet in public, the locals usually become upset about it (wonderfulwanderings.com, secret-retreats.com).

In a Vietnamese home a meal is meant to be eaten by sitting on the floor, so better to prepare for it when dressing for the occasion. Based on many other Asian customs, shoes are usually taken off at the front door of the home (secret-retreats.com). It is traditional for man to be served first when dining out.

Tipping is not a common custom in Vietnam, so leaving something extra does not cause any pressure to feel. In the case of invitation to dine at a local's home instead of out at a restaurant, bringing a gift shows respect and gratitude (secret-retreats.com).

In the case of dining in a South Korean's home, the shoes need to be removed. In some local restaurants, it is possible to share a table with another dining party. Eating should always start with the oldest person at the table in particular. There is a proper chopstick etiquette in South Korea. As in many other Asian countries, it's crucial to avoid resting chopsticks vertically. In Korea, chopsticks are typically constructed of stainless steel and are significantly heavier than one may anticipate (secret-retreats.com).

In Indonesia, the tip is planned for about 10-15%, however, the exact tip amount can vary by the place, occasion, and sometimes the size of the order. Giving a slightly higher tip when it is deserved by the waiter staff is more common than for a bartender, who is used to sharing the tip with the workers from the kitchen (wise.com).

In South Korea, it is polite to thank the host afterward and say how much the meal is looked forward to. Declining an offer of Shochu (Korean clear spirit distilled from rice, tapioca or sweet potato) is a rude action. To show respect when drinking alcohol, it is meant to face away from everyone at the table while drinking, especially the elders, and to use both hands to raise the drinking cup to toast and to drink (secret-retreats.com).

In South Korea, tipping in bars and restaurants is not expected. Based on the general rule, the service always should be exceptional, with no expectation of extra pay. Whoever invited the group to dine will generally pay for the meal. The person who is in charge of the bill has the option to tip. This is by no means expected, especially because it can be considered rude and frowned upon in Korean restaurants, but as feeling pleased with the service in a Western-style restaurant 5 percent tip is usually left (intrepidtravel.com, wise.com, secret-retreats.com).

The tipping cultures in Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia are similar. Tipping culture is unknown, especially since its government actively discourages the practice of tipping. However, most restaurants and hotels used to add a service charge, which is usually written on the menu (wise.com). So, in that case, tips are unnecessary. At sit-down restaurants and bars, the bill is charged a 10% service fee. The notation “++” denotes “plus service charge and taxes”. It’s required of tourists to pay only the correct amount and nothing extra. Tipping is optional if there is no service charge at the restaurant, but it is advised to tip no more than 10% (wonderfulwanderings.com).

Singaporeans don't tip, foreigners are expected to have more money and tip more frequently. Ultimately, the decision is up to the guests, but if the service is good, their appreciation should be shown (tripsavvy.com).

In the Philippines, tipping is not obligatory but an act of goodwill if getting good service. Due to not being financially well off, tips are gratefully received (tripadvisor.com). A local may be less inclined to tip compared to a tourist. Tipping is usual for the middle and upper classes for good service. A service charge (often 10%) may be automatically added to the bill at some sit-down restaurants. The employees receive 85% of this charge by law, with management receiving the remaining portion (wonderfulwanderings.com).

When dining in Thailand, be ready to share food. Everything ordered at a restaurant is meant to be shared among a group. Before sitting down and getting ready to order, the host will likely tell where to sit (intrepidtravel.com, secret-retreats.com).

As taking time to savor all the different dishes, it’s rude to eat noisily. Avoiding more food than the ability to eat and leaving large amounts of uneaten food on the plate should be kept in mind (intrepidtravel.com). The same Asian utensil rules are going to pop up. The use of the fork is meant to push food into the spoon, they do not eat with it (secret-retreats.com). Forks are only used in order to put the food onto the spoon, so for that matter there won’t be knives on the table. Food in Thailand is usually cut and served in bite-sized pieces (secret-retreats.com).

Chopsticks are normally used for eating noodle dishes. Nowadays, Japanese food and Chinese food (where they are eating with chopsticks) are very common in Thailand so Thai people will eat likewise (secret-retreats.com).

As for being the guest of honor, giving a short toast at the end of the meal is a nice gesture, after the host. At the end of the meal, it is polite to offer to pay (intrepidtravel.com).

Tipping is a matter of preference in Thailand. Customers should never tip if they are not satisfied, even with the arrival of Western visitors and the beginning of the serving staff's expectation of gratuities. It's not required by law. A gratuity is more likely to be anticipated at a superior establishment. While 10% is customary at upscale establishments, locals never provide tips at street vendors (wonderfulwanderings.com).

1.5 No tipping phenomenon

The US represents a no-tipping movement and a change to create a more equitable compensation method for staff, but it requires a longer period. Tipping is legally voluntary in the US, but considering wages paid by hour, waiters are underpaid (bbc.com).

Due to the underpayment of the service staff and depending on a daily cycle of gratuities, more and more retailers are adding an optional service charge to counter sales. In most of the cases, it is about paying staff a lower wage and passing more cost straightforward to the customer. Based on an example in the US, for water, not only the price of the water but 20 % of tips are needed to pay, meaning tipping is generally based on a predeterminate percentage of the total cost of goods or services, the cost of a gratuity simply raises when the price of goods or service increases (investopedia.com).

Denmark is commonly famous as one of the happiest countries in the world for endeavoring equality, community generosity, and benevolence to other people, so being a tourist to Denmark, this country is a large nation of non-tippers (bbc.com).

Mainly, the coin has two sides: citizens gain from higher GDP per capita and a well-being program of higher standard than in most other countries, which means service staff is not dependent on tips in the same way; and the bill includes hospitality and hotel services. Even if tipping itself isn't a habit, but rounding up a restaurant bill is normal in Denmark, as a token gesture. These days, almost everywhere in Europe, service is commonly rewarded with either a monetary tip or the loyalty of repeat visits (bbc.com).

10 years ago, a restaurant located in New York banned tipping, while some American restaurants from other states have already replaced it with an exact optional service charge of

15-20 % instead of a tip. On the receipt, it says „Following the custom in Japan, staff are fully compensated by their salary. Therefore, gratuities are not accepted.” (bbc.co.uk).

Even though tipping is not affected by the quality of service, Americans are under the illusion they are tipping on service and at the same time of being able to reward. They don't want to get rid of this, because as discussed before, it gives them power (bbc.co.uk). Sometimes guests are entitled to say why to leave a tip, the waiters just do their job. Maybe, it's more than that... (fortune.com).

1.6 Phenomenon of “Tipflation”

Tipflation is related to the raised rates that people “have to tip” at restaurants and for other goods and services. Before COVID-19, tipping for the servers was common by 15% to 20% based on the service. Today, that range can be different when faced with a preset tipping screen at many types of businesses, including for such services that were not tipped previously. These tipping screens, which are preset tipping recommendations, often starting at 20% (investopedia.com), often put extra pressure on people's shoulders to tip a higher amount than before. Because tipping is not going away anytime soon, guests should find their comfort level to decide how much they will tip and for what kind of services. Furthermore, it is a super obnoxious gesture to tip in front of the staff, because sometimes guests do not want to leave a tip or they do not have enough money for it. Especially in the United States, based on my experiences, before any tasting or performing I need to decide how much I will tip for the food and the staff, or even the all culinary experience, which is inconvenient because I have no clue how the food likes or how the waiters perform. It can influence my opinion about the place and create a high expectation in me. The gratuity has gone contactless. Also, with many prices going up due to inflation, tipping has risen accordingly since it's typically based on a percentage of the total bill.

Some countries take tipping culture seriously, such as the US, where adding 20-25% to a bill is a normal action, but tipflation presents challenges for both locals and visitors in the same way. The amount that is given and expected has grown and the rise of digital tipping options deepened the complexity further (bbc.com, forbes.com).

In the States employees at Apple Store are proposing asking for tips and in the northern part of America, people believe is getting out of control. Already, "guilt tipping", "tipping fatigue", "tip creep", "viral tip shaming" and "tipflation" are getting into our daily language (bbc.com).

The main cause of the tipflation can be explained by the expansion of digital tipping which is a part of the company's self-resetting which intends to rise the company's revenue and digital and physical footprints (entrepreneur.com), during the pandemic especially food delivery staff was rewarded by guests (investopedia.com). To help service staff even when they are unemployed, virtual tip jars have been set up (bbc.com). Tipping on screens leads to the lack of the personal touch in this sphere (newyorker.com), but I think due to this fact, tourism and hospitality can lose its importance: human-based contacts. The whole thing is effortful, with a potential for embarrassment. It can be a root of paranoia of being judged by the waiter, and the guests overtip to compensate. But, let me tell you a secret: the guests also judge the waiters and get an opportunity to express their satisfaction with a higher or a smaller amount.

The gratuity, classically, means a “thank-you,” but it can also function as a “sorry.” People regularly tip when the workers are less happy than the customers. As Ernest Dichter explained the compulsion by paying, psychologically, for the guilt created in the unequal relationship (newyorker.com).

1.7 Tipping fatigue

These days, it's as of now uncommon in case clients are not inquired for a tip when they purchase something. Tipping culture has gotten out of control since clients indeed within the drive-through are asked to tip. Tips have been on the rise for decades. 10% of the bill was typically left as a gratuity in the 1950s. That increased to 15% by the 1970s and 1980s. These days, tips range from 15% to 25%. According to one 2022 survey, consumers said they tipped more than 21% on average. 17% growth in tips may be shown at full-service eateries, in the last quarter of 2022 compared to 2021, while in a quick-service restaurant is 16% for the same period of time (cnbc.com).

The traditional tip jars (that a guest could feel good about throwing some spare change into) were replaced by tablets, that propose tip amounts.

Tipflation refers to not just tipping more but tipping everybody for everything. Customers can be guilted into tipping on something that is not technically a service. Someone is basically doing their job.

In 1855, servers who received the full wage went on strike requesting higher compensation. They were replaced by women who employers may pay less. A decade afterward, there was a population of recently liberated slaves. The idea of these restaurant

owners was that they were giving the luxury or benefit of a white person's tips. That was without a full wage (cnbc.com).

Whereas the primary government minimum wage law was passed in 1938, it was not until nearly three decades afterward that the tip minimum wage was built up. In 1991, the federal minimum wage for tipped workers was set at \$2.13, which is what it remains as of March 2023. The USA is the only nation that exempts tipped workers from having to receive the total minimum wage. In 43 states, paying tipped laborers less than the standard minimum wage is legitimate since tips probably make up that difference (cnbc.com).

During the pandemic, buyers begun to tip for things, that they never had before. The percentage of remote transactions from the pre-pandemic period when tipping was an alternative that the consumer tipped appeared an increase from almost 46% to around 86% in January 2022. During the coronavirus, businesses that lost a lot of traditional customers and transactions were looking for alternative ways to make up that income (cnbc.com).

Customers feel pressured to tip more since they are inquired to do it before service completion. They are afraid not to tip since service providers can do less good work, so better to do it just to ensure safety. Tipping everywhere leads to asking where the tipping point is.

2. Data specification and methodology

For collecting data, various methods were applied. Based on experiences of the author, during a one-year stay and travel in Uzbekistan, the study also includes personal understanding of the effect of tipping culture.

On one hand, questionnaire was created where the goal was to map the motivation and the last experiences about eating out and to get to know the amount of tips the guests leave in a restaurant. This survey created on Google Surveys was sent to private groups on Facebook and group chats at Silk Road University. After the data cleaning, the feedback of the respondents was analyzed by the SPSS program.

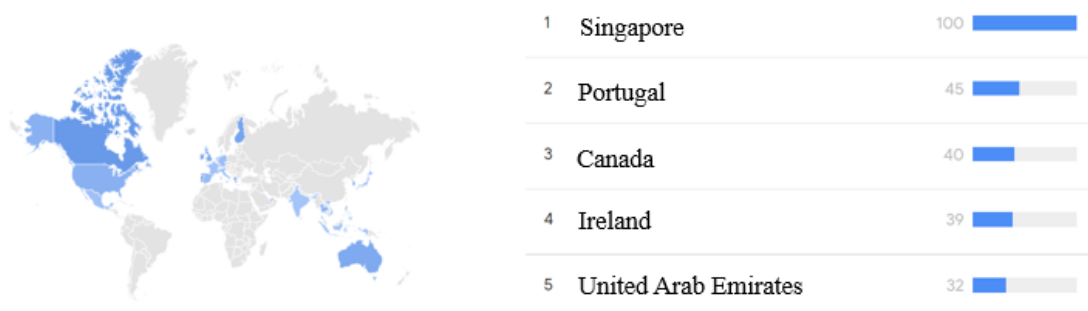
On the other hand, interviews were conducted with the support of local restaurant owners such as Winesday Cafe & Wine Shop Tashkent, TKKH Restaurant Tashkent, and Khoroshaya Devochka Restaurant Tashkent. Questions about the history of their restaurant for example foundation, the number of employees, the composition of guests, tipping culture and how much percentage they put on the bill for tips or completely let the guests decide on the amount have been asked. As discussed about the functions of gratitude in the literature review, interviewees were surveyed about how they consider this action. The last question was related to how the general guest experience is at their restaurant.

Apart from these methods, the word “tipping culture” was checked in Google Trends to get to know if tourists are informed about this policy or not. This website shows how many times and from which countries searched this word. The last 12 months worldwide and the last 12 months for Uzbekistan have been checked. Worldwide the number of searches is infinitesimal (under 100 until January 2024), but from Uzbekistan, there is no search at all.



Graph 1.: Searches for “tipping culture” in Google Trends worldwide for the last 12 months by interests, source: Google Trends

Speaking of regions, it is interesting to see Singapore was the only country where people searched for this keyword (100) to get orientation in this rule. In the top 5 countries, Singapore is followed by Portugal (45), Canada (40), Ireland (39), and the United Arab Emirates (32) with an amount less than half of the Singaporean amount.



Graph 2: Searches for “tipping culture” in Google Trends worldwide for the last 12 months by interests regionally, source: Google Trends

2.1 Observation

Growing up in a different country, times of the Soviet Era, or the stretch of its reign were not discussed during the majority’s school years. Perhaps it feels too far away, or too out of topic to discuss, but it makes people curious to find out what today is like for the cities of the Silk Road and to learn more about what was going on.

Comparing 5 'stans, Uzbekistan offers more good restaurant options than in neighboring countries, especially international cuisine. In the case of being vegetarian, there is no luck in finding many options, because local cuisine mostly consists of meat, but in this situation, a wide range of Russian salads is encountered, and the local markets with all sorts of vegetables (againstthecompass.com).

People have doubts about travel to the 'Stans because history and media present a certain image abroad, that creates some preconceptions (awaywiththesteiners.com).

Stan means land in Farsi, a word for "place of" or "country". This region is surrounded by land with diverse geography and a lot of history behind it (awaywiththesteiners.com).

Uzbekistan has opened its borders to the world of the ancient Silk Road, with its spectacular mosques, shrines, and wonderfully formed historic cities. This country is considered the most tourist-friendly in Central Asia and a must-see destination for those who like sightseeing. However, this former Soviet Republic has many peculiarities bureaucratically and culturally as well, which they are highly recommended to know well in advance (againstthecompass.com).

In 2019, traveling-related requirements to Uzbekistan were moderated, when the government offered a 30-day free visa on arrival for most nationalities. The main tourist in Uzbekistan is a 50-80-year-old group of people. Especially, during high season, the number of the groups shows a positive trend (againstthecompass.com).

This country is not only the center of the ancient Silk Road, but the world capital of plov. This Central Asian dish consists of fried rice in lamb fat, meat and various vegetables. The variety of plov can be explained by the variety of the region. Not only Uzbek people find it delicious, but this love is also shown in Tashkent, where a real Central Asian Plov Center was built to serve only this type of food (againstthecompass.com).

Uzbekistan does not have a national cuisine, because its principal dishes have been influenced by Tajik, Mongol, Turkish, and Russian gastronomy due to its location along the Silk Road. They all have contributed to the actual Uzbek culture. The most so-called main dishes are Shashlyk and Plov. For vegetarians, there is a limited choice of Russian food. The most popular drink in Central Asia is Vodka, but some local beers are also worthy to try (audleytravel.com).

Generally, tipping is not expected, but they actually charge clients an additional service fee, which is 10-20% of the bill. In fact, many restaurant managers and owners do not share this money with the waiters, so it never reaches the actual people who gave clients this service. However, in the larger international hotels in Tashkent and Samarkand Western-style

tipping is the norm. For guides and drivers in Central Asia, tipping is a sort of salary and, even if it is not compulsory, can be a way to show your appreciation for some services (audleytravel.com).

Based on the personal experiences of the author, since the prices are low, it encourages people to eat out more often. For this reason, it was enough time to look around, taste, and have an impression of Asian gastronomy.

Due to the lack of English-speaking staff in tourism, this part of Uzbek hospitality faces some issues. They can not create great contact with foreign guests because of the language barrier. The Uzbek Government is working on a solution like: it tries to educate more and more students even locals or internationals with scholarships in Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, which a great idea because the language of the studies here is English and this university has built a training center where students have practical classes, so they gain more experience in the tourism field.

2.2 Survey

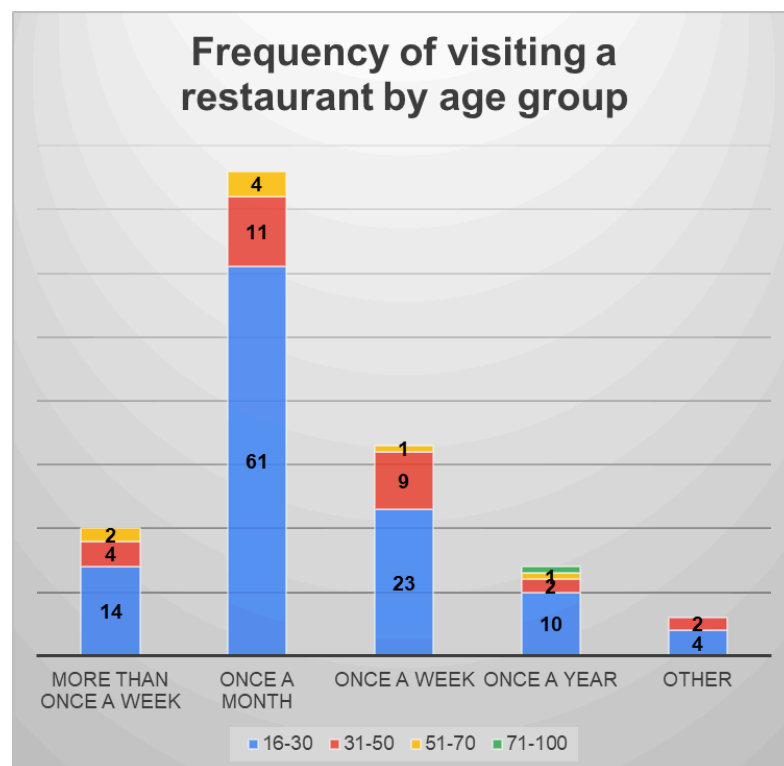
After data cleaning, the number of respondents is 149. The proportion of males and females is 30.2 and 69.8%, which can be explained by the willingness to complete a form. The age group of 16 to 30 years old represents 75.2% and of 31 to 50 years old is 18.8% of the total respondents. 41.7% of the respondents have bachelor's and 28.2% have master's degrees. To get a clear understanding of the profile of the respondents, this table can help. The biggest group by educational level is 16-30-year-old, BA diploma holders represented by 60 respondents. The majority of the 31-50-year-old group has an MA degree.

Education level	Age			
	16-30	31-50	51-70	71-100
PhD	2	4	1	0
Master's degree	25	13	3	1
Bachelor's degree	60	10	1	0
High school	24	0	3	0
Technical/Vocational school	1	1	0	0

Table 1: Crosstabulation of Age and Educational level, source: own questionnaire

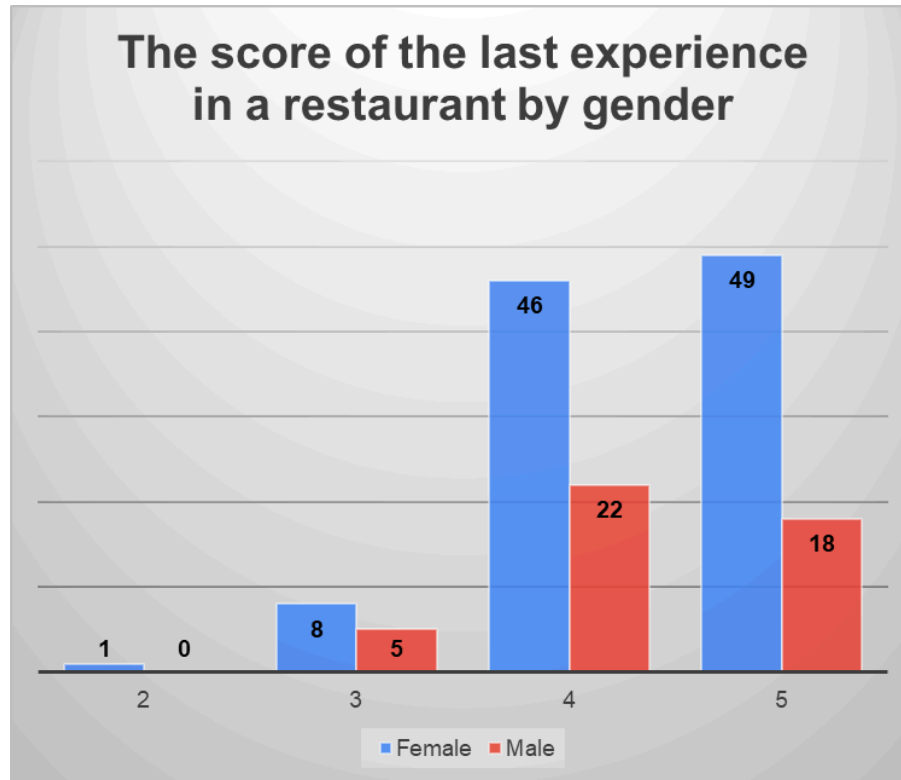
These people are from 29 different countries, but the majority came from Hungary, Mexico, and Uzbekistan. The questionnaire is composed of four main sections such Habits to eating out, Leaving a tip in a restaurant, Tipflation and Effects of tipping culture.

Based on the answers for the first section, more than half of the respondents (51%) eat out once a month, 22.1% once a week, and 13.4% more than once a week. The frequency of the visit can be explained by the disposable income, the motivation, or the free time. In SPSS program, Chi-square test was used to make comparison analysis between two variables. It showed that females are visiting restaurants more often than males, but both gender visit exactly as much as time for more than once a week. The 16 and 30 year-old people are going out more often among the age groups, which can be explained by the youth and the hunger to spend time with friends for the younger people, and the stable salary for the elder ones. The majority of people is dining in once a month because of the lack of freetime and disposable income.



Graph 3: Frequency of visiting a restaurant by age group, source: own questionnaire

In general, they are satisfied with their last experience in a restaurant because, in a Likert scale, they scored it between 3 and 5 beside one answer. Based on comparison analysis, females are more satisfied guests than males and they did not even give less than 3 out of 5.



Graph 4: Score of the last eat-out experience by gender, source: own questionnaire
(1-very bad, 2-bad, 3-average, 4-good, 5-excellent)

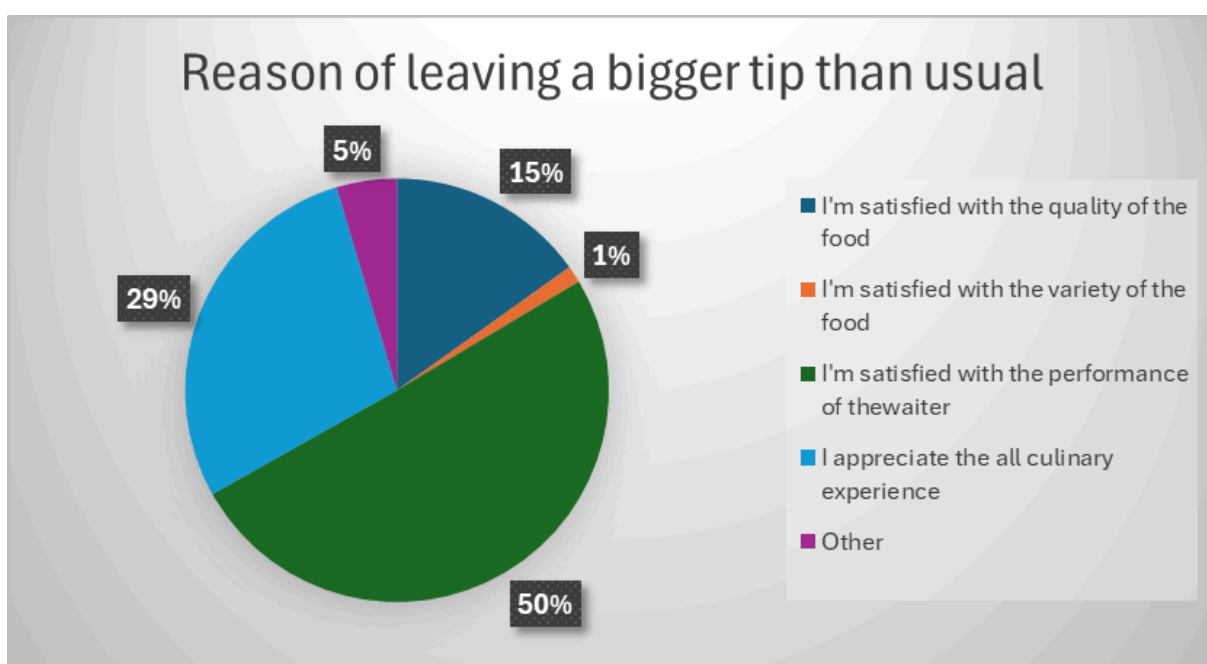
Overall, the respondents were amazed by the taste, variety, and quality of food, atmosphere, design, and service, but they explained the lack of the maximum score by the cleanliness and loudness of the place and they felt embarrassed when a waiter did not even know the menu.

The “Leaving a tip” section started with an association of a country which comes first to their mind if they hear “tipping”. The USA got the highest vote, which as discussed before even if the tipping itself started in England, it became more popular in the USA.

Only 44.3% used to check how the tipping culture is in a destination when planning a trip, but knowing in advance about it in their next destination before arrival would help them avoid misunderstanding (50.3%) and it would be easier to figure out the budget (36.2%), “I appreciate when we know in advance that a service fee is included, so it means I do not have to worry about a tip after” says a respondent. A little bit less than this percentage, people would not feel influenced because of their stable financial background and the higher

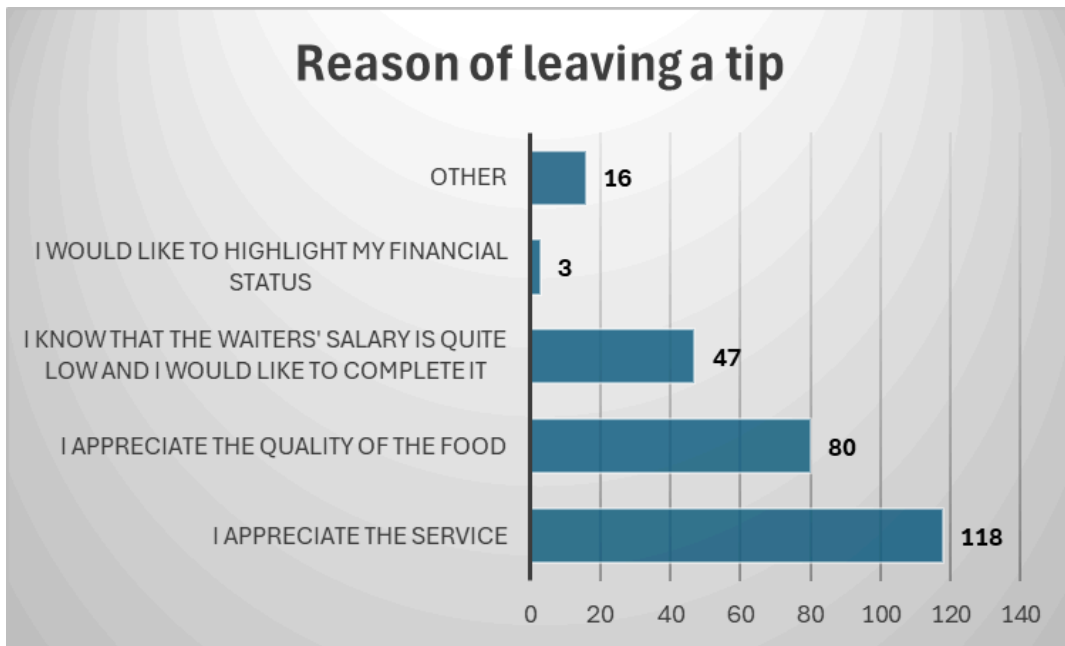
disposable income. The biggest amount of tip they left is an average of 13€, but the biggest 93€ and the least 0.5€ were both surprising. Based on the comparison analysis between the nationality and the amount of tip, Russia with 93€, Mexico with 60€ and the US with 50€ are considered the most generous nations, while Belarus, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Pakistan and Poland with 2€, Hungary and Uzbekistan with 1€ and Hungary with 0.5€ are nations which give the least tip. This unwillingness can be related to the lower disposable income or even to the fact that the country itself has no own tipping culture.

They leave a bigger tip because of the expression of their satisfaction with the performance of the waiter (51%) and their appreciation of the whole culinary experience (28.2%). It happens the least that they leave a tip because of the quality of the food. It refers, as discussed before, to Japanese cuisine where a good quality of food is fundamental, so tipping is kind of a rude action.



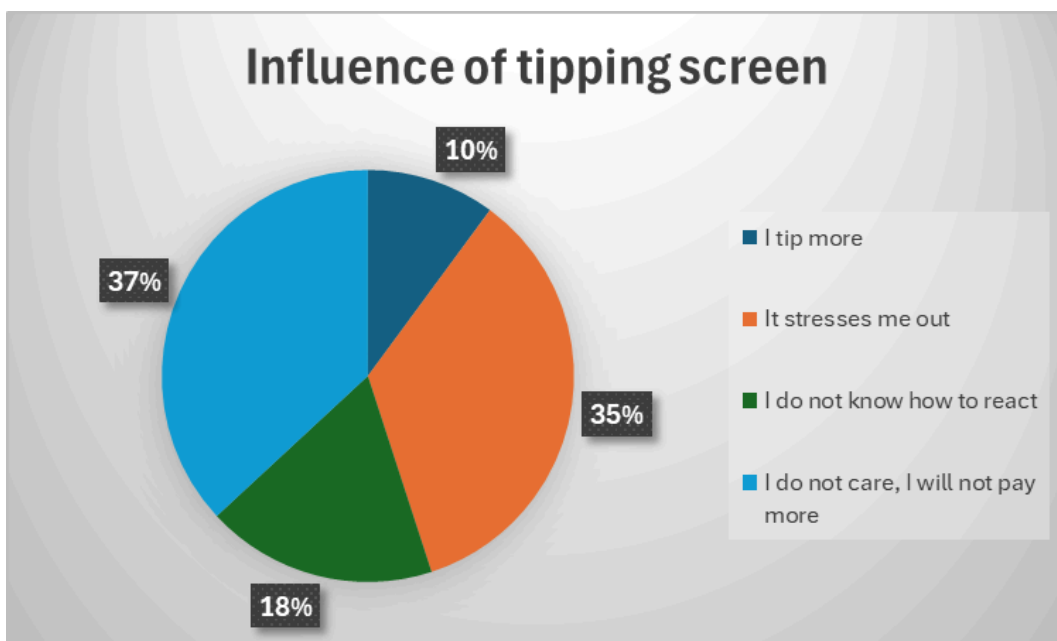
Graph 5: Reason of leaving a bigger tip than usual, source: own questionnaire

In daily life, more than two-thirds leave a tip as a sign of appreciation for the service, more than 50% for the quality of the food and 31% just take into account the fact that the waiters' salary is quite low and for this reason they endeavor to compensate it.



Graph 6: Reason of leaving a tip, source: own questionnaire

As for the “Tipflation” part, when paying the bill and the restaurant provides options with different amounts of tips, 37% do not feel influenced by it, they will not pay more. This action stresses out 35% of respondents and 18% do not know how to react. 10% tip more than usual. Definitely, if people are not informed by themselves or by the service provider, it creates a lot of embarrassing moments for both sides, one said “I always choose 0% because it makes me mad. I tip when I am satisfied.”

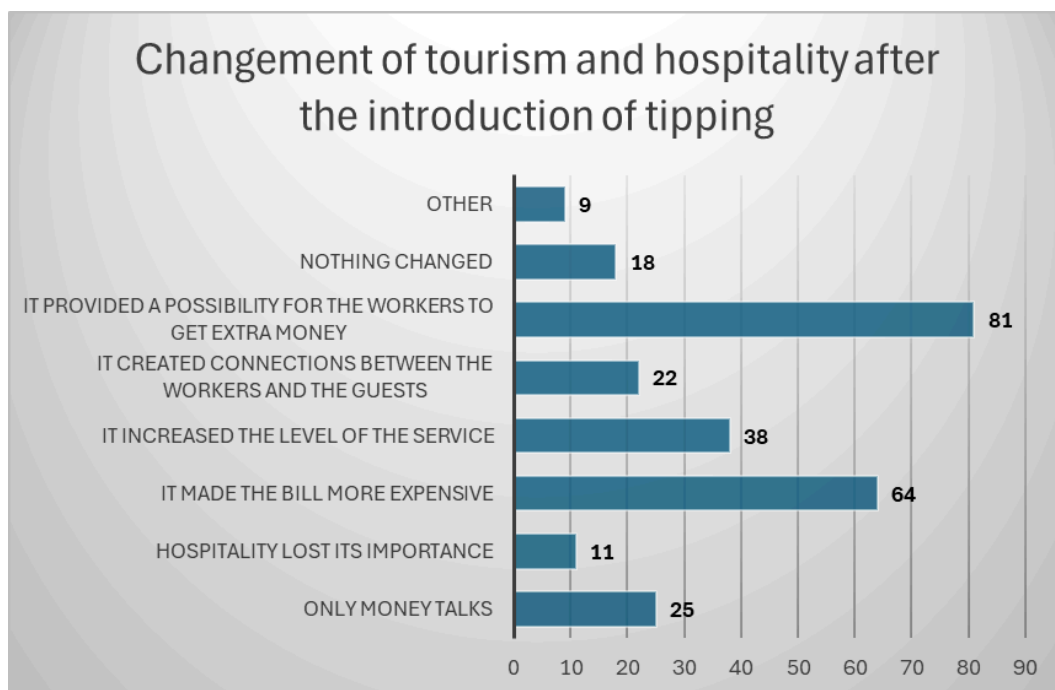


Graph 7: Influence of tipping screen, source: own questionnaire

79.2 % do not tip more than usual when the restaurant provides options to tip. The other part of the totality in this situation pays 10% (43.6%) and 5% (21.5%) of the bill as a tip.

Overall, 54.4% consider tipping culture as a form of appreciation, 31.5% as stressing out and 26.8% think it can be a way to round up the underpayment of the workers in this field. This action affects restaurants by giving a chance to round up the underpayment of the workers (45%), to make the service more attractive (42.3%), or to create connections between the waiters and the clients (20.1%). More than 10% shared their opinion about discouragement of dining in.

Gratuity has many functions, first, it means the appreciation of the service, secondly completing the salary of the waiter, thirdly being in accordance with expectations of the society, and last but not least it represents the own financial status. After the introduction of tipping, tourism and hospitality were not the same anymore. 53.7% think it provided a possibility for the workers to get extra money, 43% say it makes the bill more expensive and 25.5% have a meaning of a higher level of service.



Graph 8: Changement of tourism and hospitality after the introduction of tipping,
source: own questionnaire

34 out of 149 people gave me feedback about my study which I am extremely grateful for. They encouraged me to continue it and expressed their positive opinion by reassuring me that I was on the right way. They also want some relevant information about tipping culture

because of the lack of literature what both the restaurants and tourists can take as advice. They related a lower waiter's salary to earning more tips. They all expressed their dissatisfaction with the salary in this field, but they do not think that restaurant owners should forward this "task" straight to the clients. They say "tipping should be voluntary". Workers should provide excellent service not depending on the fact that they will be tipped, it must be their duty. Tipping does not complete anything: a good salary should be provided to everyone, tipping is not gratitude, it's rather a humiliation. One of them tries to leave a tip in every case to say thanks, however, if it is not an expectation, while others never do it no matter where they are.

The nationality makes a great difference in tipping and if in the original country, tipping is a must or not.

2.3 Interviews

2.3.1 Winesday Wine & Cafe

The first interview was conducted with WinesDay Wine & Cafe, located in the street of Taras Shevchenko, Tashkent. This place is dedicated to wine and food since 2022. They have 14 employees, and 80 seats for the guests. They deliver a wide variety of wines from all over the world for their target group which is mostly composed of wine lovers, the premium segment, and a lot of expats.

In this café, there are no requirements for tipping, but they have a mandatory 15% service charge additional to the bill. They do not care about whether a guest leaves a tip or not unless the bill is not paid. After leaving a tip by a guest, they feel satisfaction on a guest, their guests are happy with the food and service, so that's why a big loyal community has been created since the opening.

If somebody leaves a tip, it is considered as an appreciation for the worker and it shows a general guest experience at this restaurant, which is "mostly satisfied", said the place. If tips appear in cash, it's completely the workers' money only.

This place on Tripadvisor got 5 out of 5 points. Guests left positive reviews by expressing their satisfaction with the place itself and the fantastic service. "One of the best places in the city, where delicious fresh food and wines, and a large option of wines from different countries and all is for quite reasonable prices are provided", so it is highly recommended to visit for every lover of wine and good food to go with wine.

They underlined fantastic manager has such positive energy that makes the atmosphere of this

place even better, and all staff members are driven with the same positive energy. Furthermore, they have seen an incident perfectly solved by the Manager with an arrogant and unpolite client, “who frankly speaking deserved a slap, but I have seen what it means to be a leader and great manager, well done”. One of the reviews referred to the magical atmosphere, pleasant and friendly people, and tasty and exquisite cuisine (tripadvisor.com).

2.3.2 TKH Restaurant Tashkent

“It's TKH that says it all”, promoted themselves on the website (tkh-rest.uz). TKH is a conception of conscious consumption of wine and Georgian cuisine, where hedonism and hospitality culture go hand in hand in the way of uniqueness. The idea to open a Georgian restaurant in Tashkent in 2023 was given by a trip to Georgia, where the food is very popular and delicious. Their mission is to deliver the best Georgian food in Uzbekistan and to engage local guests to try that food and enjoy it. They have 20 employees, and 70 seats for receiving guests in the kitchen and the bar in the street of Mirabad.

Here neither there are no any requirements for tipping, but a 15% service charge additional to the bill is mandatory, so almost no guests leaving extra tips. For this reason, the workers are not dissatisfied because they already considered working without getting a tip. In this place, the level of satisfaction is not connected with leaving a tip, guest may just share their emotions while eating. For them, tipping has a meaning mostly of a way of appreciation. If tips appear in cash, it's completely the workers' money only because it's the level of their appreciation.

2.3.3 Khoroshaya Devochka Restaurant Tashkent

They opened it on the street of Mirabad last year with 30 employees with a mission to be a contemporary place for young successful people to enjoy food, drinks, and life. They have 90 seats for the guests. They are part of a big restaurant holding, and this is their third project with global contemporary cuisine, premium service, and a modern, relaxing atmosphere.

This restaurant joins the two previous in a sense there is no special tipping culture, but they have an obligatory 10% service charge additional to the bill, so “usually it is considered

as a tip”, said the restaurant. As long as the guests pay the bill, the restaurant doesn’t mind at all if they leave an extra tip or not, but the extra cash tip after the bill is paid already is truly appreciation, which goes to the workers.

If some guests are not happy with their meals, they usually express it directly while eating, but most of their guests enjoy it.

In Tripadvisor, this place is rated 5 out of 5. In my opinion, the huge variety of food can be one reason for having a high reputation. Guests can pop in for breakfast, lunch, dinner, brunch, or only for drinks.

Guests are amazed by the place itself with great food and cocktails, and the beautiful, cozy, and chic interior. “It is worth trying”, said a reviewer. What I appreciated the most, the Manager replied and reacted to each one of the reviews by saying thanks for the feedback.

3. Key findings

Leaving a tip has many functions, such as showing the financial status, appreciating the given service, or completing the waiters' wages, and it can vary by every single country. In European countries, since service is included, tipping is not necessary, but in America there is a dominant habit of tipping with 10-15-20% of rate. In other Asian countries, such as South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, tipping is more acceptable in the case of luxury hotels, luxury restaurants, and Westernized establishments (tripssavy.com), but present or small tip is welcome considered as a holy action related to Islam. Tipping is frowned upon and even considered offensive in many nations, such as China and Japan. In this instance, it's advisable to leave the server unoffended by not tipping. Tips are gladly accepted without offense in Hong Kong, where tipping customs differ from those in mainland China. Similarly, in the Philippines, tipping is both encouraged and increasingly anticipated (tripssavy.com). In African countries the unwritten rule is to tip more often, but with smaller amounts.

Even if tipping itself isn't a habit, rounding up a restaurant bill is normal in some countries, as a token gesture. These days, almost everywhere in Europe, service is commonly rewarded with either a monetary tip or the loyalty of repeat visits (bbc.com).

The existence of tipping highlights a serious structural deficiency within the restaurant business, namely, the owner does not provide a good enough salary to the workers. Tipping exposes those who work in service to "beg" for a salary round-up from the client instead of the owner of the business, who possesses full responsibility for the low amount of salary. Furthermore, tipping can be seen as a tool for diminishing class power, the power to demand in unison with other waiters a higher salary. Basically, tipping encloses the waiters in a low pay grade.

Based on the answers of respondents, the majority do this action if the service reaches their level of satisfaction. Usually, 51% eat out once a month and they were satisfied with the last experience, mainly for the taste, variety, and quality of food, the atmosphere and design of the place, and the service, but it also happened if the interior was not clean enough or if they felt embarrassed when a waiter did not even know what the menu is on.

Respondents think tipping habits changed the industry by providing a possibility for waiters to get extra money, but they also indicated disapproval of that restaurants include a tip inside of the bill, this makes it an obligation to tip and will feel like it wasn't a choice. Meanwhile, when the tip wasn't included it could have been more.

It should be an extra over their well-paid salary. They do not want themselves to be charged by a mandatory additional service fee, but to have right to decide how much they reward the place, the waiters' performance, the service or the whole culinary experience. They usually do not tip more due to the fact that guests do not used to the existence of leaving a tip, even if the restaurant has a screen with options of different percentage of gratuity. Nowadays people are expected to tip and many tip only to avoid negative consequences of not tipping, so the goal is to keep away from getting a bad service next time.

The introduction to having a screen with the recommendation of the percentage of tips leads a new phenomenon called tipflation which creates a huge growth of leaving a tip. While restaurant has a bigger benefit from it, in the same time it put pressure on the costumers.

The other reason not to tip is because they do not feel it necessary related to their origin country's tradition, "it was just a nice thing to have sometimes as a server". When the waiter in the restaurant is really nice and funny and just makes the general experience better, guests feel the urge to leave a tip, for example someone gives honest opinions about food when they are asked, makes jokes and makes guests feel welcomed, it also contributes to make them order a bit more.

Nevertheless, somebody comes from a culture where it's not expected to tip and they found themselves super uncomfortable to tip each time. "Should we tip for a coffee of 3,5€? Here it seems yes, which is strange" said one of a respondent. the waitress salaries should be good to not rely on tips.

The other side of the coin is when somebody comes from a country where tipping is basically "mandatory", so they are used to it and cannot imagine not leaving a tip. However, when traveling it's tricky to figure out how high tip to leave, and also needs to convert the currency to own country's currency just to know if tip is not too high/too low.

From the interviews, all three places are located in the capital of Uzbekistan, in Tashkent. They all represents the higher quality of service in a high end place and stand for the same values, for this reason there is no tipping culture, but the mandatory additional service fee. The tip is not expected, but if they get it, considered as a sign of appreciation from the guests to the waiters, it means the workers can take the tip if it appears in cash.

4. Policy implications

Every country has its own rules for gratuities, they are so diverged, that is why, it's important to consider other cultures and respect them when traveling. For this reason, researching local tipping customs is highly recommended to avoid offending: some expect tips, but some feel offended by being tipped.

If the staff is fully compensated by its salary, the gratuities are not needed. The unification of tipping is not possible all around the world due to the diverse standard of living, but raising the salary can be a good way not to focus on extra tips to complete the wage. Tipping culture increases productivity is a toxic premonition furthered by an industry unwilling to pay its workers a human salary. Higher productivity should be achieved by a higher wage, thus creating a clear picture on how much the restaurant values its staff. Not even addressing the exploitative tendency of tipping culture towards staff is seriously unprofessional.

If there are not enough resources to provide it to them, at least the countries should make sure the customers are aware of tipping before their arrival.

As a recommendation for the future of Winesday Wine & Cafe, they should invent a website based on the target group. This wine-lover audience is definitely not the younger generation, but consuming wine is indeed getting more and more popular among youth. The place only use Instagram, which is great, it helps to attract the younger people, but the elder generation do not live their lives in this type of social media by scrolling for hours.

Furthermore, it's good to see that they are on Tripadvisor and personally I really do believe in the power of E-WOM, so this is a perfect place to catch more clients by the experience of others or discourage them from eating out. In their case, there is no reply to these reviews from the part of the place. Even if a comment is positive or negative, it is crucial for reputation, so they should text them back something to say thanks for the feedback and they can improve the lacks.

To improve TKH, I would recommend the option for changing language from Russian to English should be at the top of the website because it is hard to find it. Nowadays clients are not that patient to spend a lot of time on one page. If it does not reach the level of satisfaction (which is different by person), they leave the page and look for another one.

The other two interviewees are on Tripadvisor, but TKH is not. It's the right way for self-promotion and having relations with the clients. Other guests can see how the place functions, reacts to the reviews, or introduces new items on the menu.

As a recommendation for Khoroshaya Devochka, the possibility to change the language on the website should be more visible, because actually it is at the bottom of the page and it is hard to figure it out.

I liked that they are present on Instagram and Tripadvisor by posting and replying to the reviews, no matter if they are positive or negative.

5. Conclusion

Overall, this research tended to analyze gastronomic tourism and guests experience in Asian countries, show the general background, the similarities and the differences between tipping cultures all over the world, the respondents' and the interviewees' opinions about tipping in a restaurant.

Gastronomic tourism attracts a great number of foodies who want to taste local cuisine: this can be considered the main purpose of their travel and stay. Local dishes are made mainly based on traditional recipes that have been inherited over the years. It became an important way to get to know a region's culture and heritage. From Uzbekistan's perspective, gastronomy is also an essential piece of its local culture and identity. The preparation of traditional food goes back to the ancient times of the 'Great Silk Road' (Patterson, 2020). Inexpensive, clean, and safe are the pillars that support Uzbekistan. All inbound tourists of Uzbekistan realize prices here are very modest to extremely low. This is the main reason why they spend money with pleasure. Restaurants offer a rich diversity of cuisine.

In the streets of large cities of Uzbekistan, walking without seeing any empty bottles or cigarette packs appeals a great number of tourists. The country's stability is also well-known, with no wars or revolutions, and a very low rate of minor crime.

A social norm is deeply entrenched in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, that is around the philosophy of tip or charitable alms (*baksheesh*). The rule of tipping is not usually and not too much. By traveling around Asia, gratuity is not a big deal. It can be shown by a present or small tip, regardless of the given service, but sometimes this habit can cause misunderstanding being interpreted as begging. One of the five tenets of Islam is about giving alms to the poor, so especially for this culture tipping is related to a holy action.

Research questions are answered by explaining the importance of tipping and its economic background. The functions of tipping were understood and the impacts of the expansion of digital tipping generated the new phenomenon called tipflation was discussed. Workers are getting lower tips because people are paying tips for so many services or they are displeased with the act of tipping in general, which is a real danger. Servers in sit-down restaurants were greatly affected during and immediately right after COVID-19 by restaurants doing all sorts of fees. Their tips were going down because consumers were complaining to pay for their health insurance and inflation, and so and so for. It went totally to out of control, enough is enough (cnb.com).

The tip is one area that's still quasi-discretionary. Considering inflation, customers have already started tipping less, or sometimes not at all. Based on a study from 2022, 17% of Americans are tipping less because of inflation. However, 10% report tipping more. At the same time, more than half of Americans want to do away with tipping entirely. The extent of generosity influenced by COVID has also gone down. 43% of consumers typically tipped servers 20% or even more in 2022, compared to 56% of consumers in 2021. Meanwhile, the average tip for full-service restaurants shows only a slightly negative trend during the same period of time (cnb.com).

After all, it can genuinely hurt workers who truly rely on gratuities for their livelihood. This current tipping invasion is a net negative for society. With the table right next to the counter no matter where to go, the question is, where is the tipping point? The researchers and the industry itself are both aware of the fact that this situation is unstable, untenable, and unsustainable for the future (cnb.com).

Tipping was introduced to appreciate the culinary experience, but over the years it created a possibility to decrease the salary of the workers under the minimum wage and make up the difference (What importance does tipping have?).

Based on the results of the survey, guests are satisfied with the culinary experience, which is shown by the given scores represented on Graph 4 when they were asked about their last eating-out experience (How much are guests satisfied with the culinary experience?). 45-45% scored it 4 and 5 out of 5.

Leaving a bigger tip than usual can be explained by the satisfaction with the performance of the waiter, which got 51%, but 28% tip better for the whole culinary experience (Why do they leave a bigger tip than usual?).

There are some advantages and disadvantages to tipping. With tips, some workers can earn more than the regular minimum wage, and restaurant owners who provide the tipping minimum wage can keep their prices and costs down, but servers who rely on tips for income can get insufficient salaries. If restaurant owners pay their staff the regular minimum wage, it is on the cards to increase the prices of their goods and services to balance labor expenses.

Tipping itself encourages workers to provide their best service to increase their tips, but a lot of answers were related to the fact that the waiters' should not work for the extra money, but should be paid better.

In many cases, tips are not mandatory, and guests have the option to customize how much they tip, but it can be an embarrassing moment as well to leave tips for goods or if restaurants have a digital tipping system to "force" you to tip or if guests do not even know about the

given tipping culture. Digital tipping feel guests bad because it stresses them out, sometimes they do not know how to react to it without seeing and tasting the food or experiencing the service, and make them tip more than usual (What is their overall opinion and reaction are in the world of tipping fatigue?).

Definitely, it is worth diving into this topic deeper, because it is part of everybody's life. The research can be extended to different types of restaurants within Central Asia and make a comparison with this paper. Also if different nations would be asked about the tipping, can be interesting.

6. Appendix

6.1 Survey

6.1.1 Demographic data

6.1.2 Habits to eating out

How often do you visit restaurants?

How was your last experience in a restaurant? What affected this score?

6.1.3 Leaving a tip in a restaurant

Which country comes to your mind first about tipping?

Do you check how the tipping culture is in a destination when planning a trip?

How do you think knowing in advance about the tipping culture in your next destination before arrival?

How much was the biggest amount you tipped in a restaurant? Please write the amount and the currency.

What is the main reason if you leave a bigger tip than usual?

Why do you leave a tip in a restaurant?

6.1.4 Tipflation

If when paying the bill, the restaurant provides you options with different amount of tips, how does it influence you?

If when paying the bill, the restaurant provides you options with different amount of tips, do you tip more than usual?

If when paying the bill, the restaurant provides you options with different amount of tips, in what percentage of the the bill do you tip?

6.1.5 Effects of tipping culture

How do you think tipping culture effects tourism?

How do you think tipping culture effects restaurants?

How did tourism and hospitality change after tipping?

6.2 Interview

1. Tell me some words about the history of your restaurant (foundation, number of employees, guests, tipping culture).
2. What is the mission of your place? How do you function?
3. How can the guests leave a tip? (screen, leave it on the table)
4. What's your reaction if the guest leaves a tip or doesn't leave a tip?
5. After leaving a tip by a guest, can you see their satisfaction/dissatisfaction/any concerns about the meal/the quality of the food/the performance of the waiter/the whole culinary experience? If yes, are you interested enough to ask them to share it with you?
6. How do you consider the tip? (showing off, appreciation, complete the salary)
7. How is the general guest experience at your restaurant?
8. What do you do with the tips? (give it to the worker, split it equally between the staff, improve something in the restaurant)
9. Do you let the workers take the tip? What's its reason?

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