

Perceptions and practice of tipping amongst domestic tourists in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Tipping is a common practice globally and at times mandatory in some societies, at the same time, some communities regard tipping as taboo. African societies view tipping differently and this poses a challenge among international tourists, particularly those from the west who are used to expressing their gratitude towards a satisfactory service through giving a tip. While it is almost certain that some nationals will always give a tip, do Africans, particularly Zimbabweans subscribe to the tipping philosophy? There is not enough literature in academia on tipping amongst African tourists, particularly those in Zimbabwe. Preliminary review of literature has revealed that there are only two studies published on the tipping practice in Zimbabwe. The one focused on the impact of tipping on waiters' service delivery as well as working relations among waiting staff (Mkono, 2011). The other study looked at the perceptions of hotel employees towards tipping and motivation (Kazembe, Mapingure & Chimutingiza, 2014). It is evident that the published studies were all supply side oriented without considering the demand side. This study seeks to interrogate the demand side by; (i) establishing the perceptions of domestic tourists when it comes to tipping; (ii) expose the nature of tipping amongst local tourists; (iii) establishing the motivation for tipping amongst domestic tourists. The study adopted a phenomenological philosophy, and used a qualitative design to collect and analyze data. The study conveniently sampled forty (40) domestic tourists from four (4) hotels in Zimbabwe and interviewed them. The findings revealed that domestic tourists in Zimbabwe perceive tipping as an appropriate and good practice. The main form of tipping indicated in the study is the monetary. The study also found out that the motivations for tipping are as varied as the people who practice it.

Keywords: Perceptions, Tipping, Domestic Tourists