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The beauty of tipping: customer decision-making during COVID-19 in African beauty salons

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ABSTRACT: Research has been limited to investigating tipping in other hospitality industries, while ignoring beauty salons. The objective of this study is to present tipping behaviours in the context of beauty salons in two ways: first, by examining tip predictors; and second, by looking at the amount customers are willing and able to offer as tips. We employed a binary response strategy and a limited dependent-variable approach to test several factors with the use of STATA 17. Results show that tipping depends on service quality, individual social approval, future expectations, religious beliefs, the educational level of the consumer and a customer's income level. Likewise, the loss of work or sources of income caused by COVID-19 reduces the probability of tipping and, because of health measures and social distancing during COVID-19, people's tipping decisions and tip amounts increase. Thus, beauty salon practitioners (customers, stylists and managers) should keep their services up-to-date to attract more tips, and customers should not feel embarrassed when they do not have the ability to tip.

KEYWORDS: behavioural study, consumer tipping behaviours, service and hospitality industry, tip amount, tip predictors

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Introduction

The service and hospitality industry cuts across a wild range of occupations, such as restaurants, snack bars, hotels, beauty salons and financial institutions. Both local and international tourists need the services of restaurants, local food sellers, tour guides, hotels and beauty salons, in one way or the other. Beauty salons offer customised services to customers that makes it possible for them to evaluate (Lynn, 2016). Unlike other service occupations where customers can be served by several persons, the case of beauty salons is different in that, there is a one-on-one contact and delivery of service. For instance, in restaurants, several workers are involved in service, ranging from kitchen workers to frontline waiters. Meanwhile, in a beauty salons, a single individual serves a single customer at a time (Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). According to Lynn (2016), such customised service encounters increase tips.

Post (1984) proposed that 15%–20% of customers' bill size should be given to beauty salons as a motivation (tip). To Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), those who tip more in beauty salons are the poor compared to the rich, while Seiter and Dutson (2007) examined the effect of complimenting customers' tipping ability. According to Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), three distinct types of beauty salons exist: (1) a beauty shop that caters solely for female customers; (2) a barbershop that specialises in attending to male customers only; and (3) a beauty salon that is a complex studio that attends to both male and female customers (Schwer and Daneshvary, 2000). During the

COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization and the Cameroonian government enforced certain measures to curb the spread of the virus. One of the measures included social distancing which meant avoiding public crowding and closeness between persons. This could easily be implemented in other service occupations such as restaurants and hotels where a worker can prepare and serve a table while maintaining a certain distance, but this is not easily applied in beauty salons since a stylist must touch the hair of their customer (Lynn, 2023).

However, tipping is less dominant in beauty salons despite the quality of service they offer (Lynn, 2016). There is a lack of scholarly attention regarding tipping and hospitality in beauty salons as other occupations have received greater focus (see Lynn & Latane, 1984; Brewster, 2013; Azar, 2020). Besides, research on tipping in beauty salons is almost absent in the literature. To the best of our knowledge, only the work of Schwer and Daneshvary (2000) and Seiter and Dutson (2007) have looked into this issue. Tipping practices are mostly investigated and examined in the context of developed countries, while scholarly work is scanty in developing countries, and Africa in particular. For instance, research from South Africa (Saunders & Lynn, 2010; Saayman, 2014; Saayman & Saayman, 2015; Kruger & Saayman, 2016), Kenya (Were & Miricho, 2020; Were et al., 2021), Zimbabwe (Mkono, 2011; Clotildah et al., 2014), Egypt (Jahan, 2018) and Cameroon (Wung & Nanfosso, 2023) can be identified in the literature. Thus, examining both the factors that influence people to tip and customers' tip amounts have been greatly neglected in the context of beauty salons.

Studies have argued that people do not tip to ensure good future service, but rather that tipping is mainly based on current service quality as evaluated by the customer (see Ben-Zion & Karni, 1977; Azar, 2003; Saayman, 2014; Lynn, 2015; Lynn & McCall, 2016). Thus, customers tip when service quality is evaluated to be good and do not tip when services are poor (Saayman, 2014). Azar (2003; 2020) has demonstrated that tipping does not depend on future services, as there are one-time customers (non-patronage customers) who also tipped. Their assertions may be correct, as customers may be seated in different corners of a restaurant and served by different waiters, just like cleaners, doorkeepers and servers in a hotel have different functions. However, in the case of tipping in a beauty salon, this study is based on the theoretical background that a customer has a high probability of meeting or returning to the same hair stylist in the future, and tipping may be based on future service expectations (Strischek & Duff, 1989; Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000). Just as explained by Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), when customers are well served by a particular stylist, they tend to return to the same beauty salon for that stylist. Beauty salon patrons are often regular customers of a particular stylist, which may be due to professional hairdressing or haircutting skills, therefore tipping for future quality services may be useful. Overall, due to customer preferences (haircut, dress style, colour), a customer may prefer a particular type of stylist.

Hence, the intimacy, closeness and peculiarities of beauty salon services are part of this study. First, in this investigation, we want to empirically identify the factors that influence beauty salon patrons to tip in a developing country such as Cameroon; and second, to uncover the factors affecting the tip amount offered to hairstylists, which is unlike the tip percentage used in most studies (Parrett, 2006; Azar, 2011; Jahan, 2018). Considering only the tip amounts (the second objective) may lead to sample bias since those who do not tip would be exempted. To correct for such possible biases, the Heckman (1976) selection criterion is used following Schwer and Daneshvary (2000).

Third, this study hopes to create nuance in the literature by describing up-to-date factors that are predominant in the context of this study. These factors include socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the patrons, such as the gender, income, educational attainment, place of origin, language of patrons and the social class, i.e. subjectively rich, poor, or found in the middle income group. We used a limited dependent-variable technique to account for non-tipping and to examine this technique with the use of Heckman selection criteria (Heckman, 1976; Wooldridge, 2015). Tipping because of future service quality is captured using three items: (1) whether patrons tip to ensure good future services; (2) they tip to ensure that the hairstylist becomes more committed; and (3) it is to ensure a good subsequent hairstylist-patron relationship. We call the combination of these three items the "expectation returns". COVID-19 measures are also examined from two perspectives: first, whether there was a drop in service quality in beauty salons during the COVID-19 pandemic or not; and second, whether the indirect effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on patrons' incomes that might have affected their tipping behaviours. To the best of our knowledge, this is the very first examination of tipping in a beauty salon with COVID-19 measures and with an elaborate limited dependent-variable econometric technique, especially in the context of a low- to middle-income economy.

Consumer tipping behaviours

Theoretical background

In almost all fields and human actions, we often rely on consumer rationality theory by affirming that all people are "self-centred beings". But tipping is mainly a voluntary action which shows a certain degree of altruism from consumers. The social norm of tipping is not uniformly practiced around the globe. In countries where service charges are not implemented, consumers are expected to tip 10 to 20 per cent of their bill (Jahan, 2018; Azar, 2020; Conlisk, 2022). According to Jahan (2018), people rarely tip in Australia because the minimum wage rate is high (AU$13 per hour) and tipping is therefore viewed as an unusual practice. While a tip in other countries is looked upon as an insult to service quality (or service providers) and therefore is not welcome. Examples of such countries, according to Jahan (2018) and Lin (2007), include China, Denmark, Japan, Iceland, South Korea, Georgia, Spain, Peru, Thailand and Kazakhstan.

In the context of this study, aside from paying for the hairstyling services, consumers leave additional amounts with the stylists as a tip. This is influenced by several factors as highlighted in the previous section. Although, tipping is anomalous and seemingly an irrational act since it is at the expense of those who tip and who can easily avoid tipping, it is felt that consumers tip because of good service quality, social approval, to positively impress others, religious background and future expectations from the stylist, among others (Seiter & Dutson, 2007; Saunders & Lynn, 2010; Azar, 2011; Brewster, 2013; Alexander et al., 2021).

Saunders and Lynn (2010) discuss the lack of a theoretical underpinning that links consumers' tipping behaviours with factors influencing them to tip. Were et al. (2021), Conlisk (2022) and Wung and Nanfosso (2023) argue that tipping phenomena are theoretically based on behavioural theories drawn from the field of sociology, psychology, economics and anthropology. Adams' (1965) equity theoretical foundation is mainly used in the literature to support the rationale behind service consumers' tipping behaviours (Conlisk, 2022; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). With this theory, when a stylist offers their services to a customer, they are evaluated by the service receiver (customer) who decides to tip when they deem it necessary that certain attributes of the server (e.g. service quality) were good. But when the customer evaluates that services are below a certain quality, they end up not tipping (Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). The theoretical background by Saunders and Lynn (2010) show that people tip to gain or maintain a certain social status. In situations and contexts where tipping is a social norm, not leaving the stylist with a tip may lead to feelings of embarrassment, shame and guilt in customers. Thus, tipping provides a certain socio-psychological utility to the tipper, and dissatisfaction to those who do not tip (Azar, 2004). Table 1 provides a summary description of other theoretical underpinnings that support the behavioural norm of tipping and their effects.

A tip from a customer to a stylist may be seen from several perspectives: first, as a signal of good service quality, while not tipping may signal poor service delivery (Azar, 2011). Thus, customers express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with service quality by tipping or not tipping accordingly. Therefore, the social norm of tipping helps service occupations improve service delivery. Second, this norm serves as a monitoring device used by managers or consumers to evaluate the performance

TABLE 1: Summary of the theoretical background and effects on consumers

Theory & supporting authors	Effect on consumers' tipping behaviours
Consumer choice theory Gowdy & Mayumi, 2001; Hands, 2010; Saayman & Saayman, 2015	• Consumers aim to maximise their pleasure by consuming various baskets of goods and services constrained by their income level. • Tipping may seem irrational, but consumers' tipping still maximises a certain level of satisfaction by maintaining their social status and securing better future services, among other issues.
Equity theory, reciprocity Adams, 1965; Lynn & Grassman, 1990; Conlisk, 2022	• People will tip to reciprocate services. This means that a server offers (input) an intangible good, i.e. services, and consumers in return offer (output or result of the input) a tip that is equivalent to the service received based on the subjective judgment of the consumer. • Nonetheless, this theory shows how much consumers desire equal relationships with the server while despising unequal exchanges.
Rational economic theory, contract theory Spence, 1978; Hoaas & Bigler, 2012	• Every economic agent seeks to maximise utility while spending less. However, the case of tipping is that such agents are instead spending (tipper) more than was requested by the seller (server). • The rationale behind this is not irrationality, but glaring aspects of rationality, as the tipper may be doing so to maintain a certain social status (peer pressure, to avoid embarrassment, feelings of guilt, etc.). This becomes more rational when the agent tips high when they evaluate services to be high, or even nothing when services are poor.
Theory of hospitality and catering Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000; Foskett & Paskins, 2011; Were et al., 2020	• The main aim of people being hospitable is to create a more conducive and better working environment where both agents can be better off. • Tipping initially is an act of hospitality from consumers to servers (especially in countries like Cameroon where tipping is not a legal obligation, but a pure act of generosity and hospitality.

of servers (Azar, 2011). Workers who are not tipped may be considered less proficient in service delivery, while those who are tipped are considered to be efficient workers.

Behavioural factors influencing tipping behaviours

Several factors influence consumers' behaviour of tipping or not tipping (Kruger & Saayman, 2016; Azar, 2020; Conlisk, 2022; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). Good service quality has been discussed as the predominant motive behind consumer tipping behaviours (Lynn, 2016). However, people also tip to help servers (stylists), to keep a social status, avoid embarrassments, adhere to standardised social norms and gain preferential treatments from servers (Saunders & Lynn, 2010; Lynn, 2016). According to Saayman (2014), tipping in restaurants is influenced by the server's knowledge of what a consumer orders, their ability to introduce themself as this establishes working relationships, the ambiance of the service occupation, its location, the payment method, bill size, the gender and attractiveness of the server, group size and weather conditions, among others (also see Parrett, 2006; Saayman, 2014; Alexander et al., 2021; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). This means that the ability (skills or knowledge) of a stylist to provide customers with their desired hairstyles will caused a client to tip.

Moreover, in experiments of tipping scenarios between men and women, Parrett (2006) found that male customers tip more, and female servers receive more tips than male servers. Azar (2020) discusses the fact that tipping practices do not lead to sexual harassment, while Parrett (2006), Lynn (2009) and Brewster (2013) discuss the fact that servers can distinguish between customers who tip and those who do not. Servers have the tendency of paying more attention to customers who tip and attending to their orders first before those who do not (Lynn, 2009; Brewster, 2013). This is a common attribute in the context of this study where service delivery is done according to social status and attributed to the fact that a customer usually tips. For instance, a customer who usually tips and is rich may be served before those who arrived before. According to Azar (2005), such acts are mainly caused by a form of tipping called "tipping in advance" or "bribery tipping", where a customer is attended to

first before others in a waiting line because they tip, or are found in a higher social class. Moreover, not tipping may be attributed to poor personal services, rudeness of servers to consumers, delays or no responses when consumers place orders, wrong orders being delivered, servers not being neat, many servers serving a single table or consumer at a time, and the fact that servers are paid a minimum wage (Saayman, 2014; Jahan, 2018).

Most of these predictors depend on a customer's subjective judgement and social sense of belonging. For instance, it is a customer who evaluates service quality to be satisfactory before tipping, or unsatisfactory before not tipping. Similarly, it is the customer who tips that can better give information on why they tip: to have better future services, show-off (social status), or enjoy special treatment from the stylist.

Other recent predictors that may affect the tipping behaviours of customers have not yet been explored in the context of developing economies, such as the effect of COVID-19 people's tipping behaviours. Only a few studies have been carried out in the context of developed countries (Lynn, 2021; 2023; Conlisk, 2022; Ravula, 2022). According to Lynn (2021), COVID-19 had a significantly positive effect on people's tipping behaviours in the context of restaurants in the USA. These findings were also confirmed by Conlisk (2022) in the case of the taxi industry in the USA. According to Conlisk, passenger tip amounts in the taxi industry of USA increased 2% during the pandemic. However, by looking at 86 million taxi rides in New York City between 2019 and 2021, Ravula (2022) carried out a comparative study of consumer tipping behaviours before and during the pandemic, and found that there was a drop in the likelihood of tipping in New York, and concluded that the effect of the pandemic varied according to the type of market. This market could be the country and type of service occupation where tipping scenarios are observed or examined.

This study looks at the effect of the pandemic on consumer tipping behaviours in African beauty salons from two perspectives. First, we argue that during the pandemic, many people became unemployed due to a loss of income, which has the potential of reducing the ability and willingness in consumers to tip, thus negatively affecting tipping behaviours.

Second, to reduce the spread of the virus, the Cameroonian government and the WHO put several regulations in place, such as hand washing, social distancing, and the closure of public places, among others. We argue that this might have affected service quality and consumer behaviours in the context of tips. However, the few studies involve only Western economies where individual income levels may not have a great influence on the decision to tip. In the case of Africa, and in the context of this article, little was known about people's altruism during the COVID-19 period in terms of tipping.

Consumer tip sizes (amounts)
A large portion of studies have examined the motives behind consumer tipping behaviours, but what influences consumers to leave a particular tip amount has been neglected (see, for instance, Saunders & Lynn, 2010; Brewster, 2013; Azar, 2020; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). This study equally examines certain factors that may influence customers' tip amounts. Scholars have examined the tip size of customers as a percentage of the total amount paid (Jahan, 2018, p. 21):

$$\text{tip size \%} = \frac{\text{tip}}{\text{bill size} - \text{tip}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Thrane and Haugom (2020) document the effect of peer pressure on tipping and tip amounts in a Norwegian restaurant. Their findings show that consumers tend to tip high when they are with friends, colleagues, or family than when they are alone. This means that the presence of third parties plays a psychological role in the minds of consumers, leading them not only to tip, but also to tip a larger amount than when they are alone. This confirms the theories of Saunders and Lynn (2010) and Azar (2020) that people tip to avoid embarrassment, or gain a social approval from servers and other people who are observing.

Thus, consumers tip more when they are in the presence of others than when they are alone. They do this to maintain a certain social status in society or to conform to a standardised social norm (Saunders & Lynn, 2010). However, tipping, according to the consumer choice theory, depends on the income level of the consumer, and is influenced by many factors (Gowdy & Mayumi, 2001; Hands, 2010). From a logical, psychological and economic perspective, individuals with a higher income would tip more than those with a lower income. The only existing studies on tipping in beauty salons have shown that those in a lower income group tip more in beauty salons than those from a higher group, while complimenting customers increases tip amounts (see details in Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000; Seiter & Dutson, 2007).

On the axes of gender and ethnicity, Parrett (2006) reported that male consumers tip more than female consumers, while Lynn (2009) found that black consumers tip less than white consumers in the context of US restaurants. This reveals that tipping is one thing, but tipping a certain amount that is different from others is another issue. However, Kruger and Saayman (2016) paid particular attention to the findings of Lynn (2009), and investigated the tipping phenomenon in the context of South African restaurants using a 549-person sample. Their results showed that tipping is not uniform across the world as tipping in developed countries cannot be the same in developing countries. Kruger and Saayman (2016) argued that

the income level of people in developing countries may hinder them from tipping monetarily, but that they tip in other ways. For instance, while in a restaurant or snack bar, a client may tip by telling the worker to have a drink and put it on the bill. This is a common practice in the African context and aligns more with "gift tipping", as explained by Azar (2005).

More recently, the pandemic has been discussed to have had both positive and negative effects on tip percentages and the likelihood of tipping in developed countries (Lynn, 2021; Conlisk, 2022; Ravula, 2022). Nonetheless, people who have high self-esteem and want to maintain or gain social status from a stylist end up tipping more than those with low self-esteem (Saunders & Lynn, 2010). Similarly, those who expect better future treatment from the stylist will tip more, just as a customer who is more religious will have to tip more than those who are not (Lynn & Katz, 2013). According to Lynn and Katz (2013), in the USA, non-Christians tip more (in amount) than Christians; and those who frequently go to church give less than to those who do not frequently go to church. These findings support those of Palmer (2013) who found that Christians would not want to tip any amount above 10% because they claim to offer 10% of their income to God as tithes. Offering tips above 10% to a server who is being paid is therefore not rational. We summarise the theoretical background in Figure 1.

Methodology

Data
To achieve the objective of this study, a questionnaire was used based on pre-existing and up-to-date items sourced from the literature. These items were contextualised for the study area and beauty salons. This survey took place in an African context because little is known about tipping behaviours in Cameroon in particular, especially in beauty salons. The survey covered eight out of ten regions in Cameroon, making the study's sample generalisable. The cities and towns that were covered in these regions were based on several factors such as the population size, level of openness to touristic activities, the degree of economic activities and the qualities of beauty salons.

Pre-existing survey items included socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the participants such as gender, level of education, respondents' origin, social class, religion, language, etc (Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000; Brewster, 2013; Azar, 2020; Conlisk, 2022; Lynn, 2023; Wung & Nanfosso, 2023). Respondents' levels of agreement with five Likert scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) were obtained, which included items such as "friendly and familiar hairstylists cause a client to tip", "tipping brings forth good luck to tippers", "keeping a good reputation with hairstylists leads to tipping", etc. In the last section of the survey, items about COVID-19's effect on employment and income, the effect of COVID-19 on service quality and the peer pressure that affects consumer tipping behaviours were captured. All these items were sourced from the literature, including but not limited to Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), Azar (2007), Alexander et al. (2021), Warren and Hanson (2023) and Wung and Nanfosso (2023). See Tables A1 and A2 in the appendices for details. After a review of existing work, the building of the survey items with pre-testing was carried out, and 12 field agents were used in the data collection process. To assist the field agents and make the field work easier and simpler, they were motivated both financially (e.g.
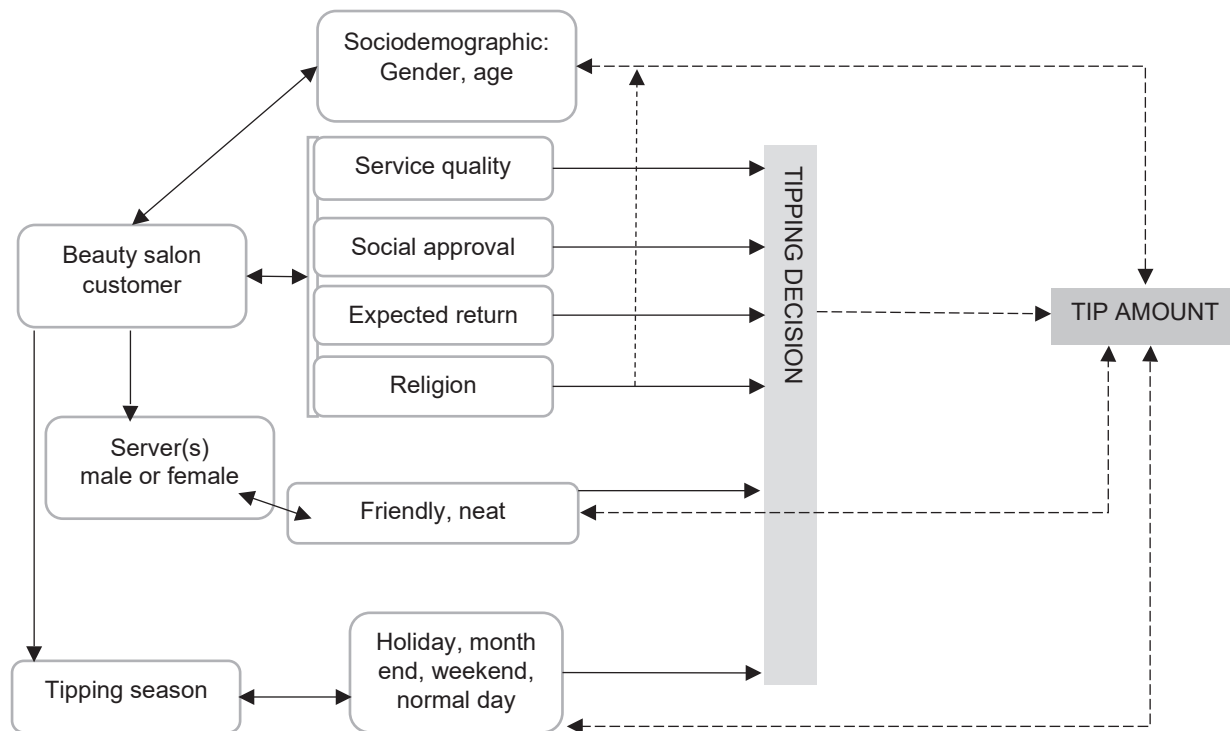
FIGURE 1: Conceptualised tipping framework, consumer tipping behavioural factors, tipping decision and tip amount

transportation and daily expenses) and psychologically by word of mouth. A fieldwork supervisor visited some of the regions and made visits to some of the beauty salons to ensure adequate fieldwork and to ensure data quality. Data collection was carried out over a period of four months (January to April 2023).

Sampling and sample size
Data was collected with the help of a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI survey). That is, the survey questionnaire was embedded in an online application (kobocollect) and used on smartphones and tablets to administer to respondents (patrons in beauty salons). According to Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), a beauty salon is defined as any service attending to male or female clients, and/or a service that is more complex with both male and female customers. A hair salon can be part of a beauty salon that attends only to female clients, and a barber studio is a salon that attends only to male clients.

Sampling was performed based on the availability of respondents, and participants were randomly selected at the beauty salon based on convenience. Given the nature of beauty in the study context, with a massive inflow of patrons each day, especially over the weekends, surveyors met in each randomised beauty salon with the customers who participated in the survey. As a filter, only those who were inside a beauty salon and had styled their hair were eligible to participate in the survey. Using Fisher (1935)'s survey method of sample calculation, we targeted 1 599 beauty salon clients, but only 1 361 questionnaires were found to be acceptable, giving a sample response rate of 0.85 points. This is far above the required threshold of 0.60 points proposed by Stehlik-Barry and Babinec (2017), Were and Hanson (2021) and Wung and Nanfosso (2023) for a better fit minimum rate for cross-sectional studies.

Measurements and study variables
Two dependent variables were used in this study. The first was binary response tip variable captured during the survey by asking beauty salon clients the question, "have you tipped the hairstylist?". Respondents could answer with either a 1 = yes or 0 = no. The binary nature of this variable permitted us to use a probit modelling technique. The second form of this dependent variable is continuous in nature, where we sought to examine the tip amount actually given by clients who have tipped. They answered the question, "how much have you given as a tip to the hairstylist?" in local currency (FCFA). This is similar to Schwer and Daneshvary (2000) who studied consumer tipping participation in beauty salons in the context of a developed economy. Because tip amounts were only examined for clients that tipped, this created a sample bias in the analyses that could only be corrected with the use of a limited dependent-variable technique such as a truncated Tobit approach.

Regarding the variables of interest, four main measures were given particular attention. First, as explained in the literature, service quality in beauty salons was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Close to 98% of the respondents rated service quality as good. Second, a contextualised expected return measure was captured in the survey to examine whether a client tipped because they expect better future services, special treatment, a close relationship with their stylist and/or the expectation that their stylist should become more committed to them or their job. Third, social approval is another predictor of individual tipping behaviours in other contexts. The survey included this measure to investigate whether study participants in this context also tipped because they wanted to maintain a certain social status, not to be seen as

a greedy person, to be generous in the presence of others and to maintain a certain reputation with stylists.

Finally, a moral or religious background measure was captured to further strengthen the findings of Lynn and Katz (2013) and Palmer and Brian (2013). Most of these items were sourced from the literature, as discussed in the data section and reported in Table A1. Other controls were included systematically at each stage of analysis. These included the gender of the clients, educational level, income level, effect of COVID-19, financial social class of clients, origin of clients, national status, seasons: holidays, week days, weekends, month ends, etc. The empirical techniques used are supported by Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), and Jahan (2018). The probit model investigate the factors that influence beauty salon clients to tip, and a truncated Tobit model was employed to accounts for non-tipping in the sample.

$$\text{Tip}_i = \begin{cases} 1 & p_i = F(x_i\beta) & \text{If a consumer tips} \\ 0 & 1 - p_i = 1 - F(x_i\beta) & \text{If not} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Tip}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i \sum_1^4 x_i + \alpha_i \sum_1^n y_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

Where is the constant term, and are the coefficients under estimation and and are the vectors of variables of interest (four of them) and control variables, respectively, while is the error margin. From the binary response model (2), we obtain an estimate of the limited dependent-variable technique model given as follows:

$$\text{Tip amount}_i = \beta_0 + \alpha_i \sum_1^n y_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

The results of Equations (1) and (3) are presented and discussed in Tables 3 and 4 respectively. Regarding descriptive statistics, Table 2 gives details on the observations and mean and standard deviations of the study variables. The average amount tipped in beauty salons was found to be 831 francs, with

a non-logarithmic standard value of 1 027, indicating disparities in the tip amount of customers across the sample. Overall, the standard deviations of all variables of interest are quite low, indicating strong closeness with the mean values. This is the same with all the other controls.

Results and discussion

Describing beauty salon tipping

When describing the dataset of beauty salons, we found no significant disparities in the mean values of most measurement items, as shown in Table A2 in the appendices and Table S1. However, there were certain disparities among the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. For instance, those who tip and those who do not indicated a positive and statistically significant difference of 1% confidence interval in terms of higher education level. These findings complement the theoretical discussion of Kruger and Saayman (2016) that tipping is based on the tippers' educational level, knowledge, and/or awareness of what a tip is, especially in the African context where tipping has not been internalised (Saunders & Lynn, 2010). Overall, 28.43% of the sample (both male and female) tipped the hairstylist. According to this percentage, men are more prone to tipping than women. These findings are consistent with existing studies that men generally offer tips more than women, just as female workers receive more tips than male workers in the context of restaurant tipping (Parrett, 2006; Jessica, 2015; Azar, 2020; Conlisk, 2022).

Similarly, descriptive statistics highlight a strong correlation between various items and tipping decisions in beauty salons. First, only 25 clients strongly disagreed with tipping in beauty salons due to friendship and familiarity, while 317 strongly agreed about tipping because of familiarity and friendship. This gives a significant contribution of 11.100 chi-square value which is significant at a 95% confidence interval. Similarly, the desire to maintain a good reputation with the hairstylist, the presence of other people (i.e. third parties leading to peer pressure),

TABLE 2: Definition and description of variables

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
TIP	1 361	0.292	0.455	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Tip amount	387	831.912	1 027.256	50	10 000
Service quality	1 361	3.94	0.431	1 (very low)	5 (very good)
Social approval	1 361	26.613	6.813	8	40
Expected return	1 361	19.244	3.577	5	25
Religion background	1 361	30.622	6.046	8	40
Gender (male)	1 361	0.517	0.500	0 [female]	1 [male]
Never schooled	1 361	0.046	0.210	0[no]	1 [yes]
Primary education	1 361	0.056	0.230	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Secondary education	1 361	0.386	0.487	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Higher education	1 361	0.512	0.500	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Christian	1 361	0.721	0.449	0 [no]	1 [yes]
National	1 361	0.975	0.156	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Foreigner	1 361	0.025	0.156	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Monthly income*	1 361	1.050	0.583	0[+]	1.946
Social class (rich)	1 361	0.213	0.410	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Social class (poor)	1 361	0.204	0.403	0 [no]	1 [yes]
Foreign language	1 361	0.005	0.072	0 [no]	1 [yes]

*Log monthly income measured in thousands of FCFAs
[+]Some respondents never had a specific monthly income, such as full-time students and apprentices

the desire to reduce server revenge and embarrassments, the hairstylist's knowledge of the consumer's desired haircut/hairstyle, and the cleanliness or neatness of the beauty salon spur consumers to tip. These findings are in accordance with extant work such as that by Post (1984), Parrett (2006), Schwer and Daneshvary (2000) and Thrane and Haugom (2020) on the social norms of tipping. All these descriptions can be found in Table S1.

Binary response modelling: Tipping decisions in beauty salons

The analyses of Equations 1 and 2 are presented in Table 3. The probability coefficients are presented in Table S2 because their interpretations are not econometrically feasible. Table 3 presents the marginal probability effects of a change in each determinant on tipping decisions (to tip or not). Following the theoretical discussions of Ben-Zion and Karni (1977), Saunders and Lynn (2010), and Azar (2020), consumers in beauty salons indeed engage in tipping due to good quality service. However, we verify whether tipping is linked to any form of better future service by consumers in beauty salons. Recalling the strong affirmations and disparities mentioned in the literature review on how service delivery in beauty salons is different from that in any other type of service occupation (see Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000), this empirical verification was necessary.

Results in Table 3 shows that people tip in beauty salons because of good service quality. A significant positive change in service quality will lead to a 0.7% probability of a customer tipping a stylist. Similarly, the more people expect stylists to be more professional, be closer to them, and have a working relationship with them (i.e. expected returns), the greater the chance of tipping. This significant value in expected return might be due to the fact that a stylist's knowledge and skills

may attract a customer who will return to the same beauty salon or stylist in the future. Thus, tipping in beauty salons might be attributed to future expectations. Likewise, consumers' desire to maintain a certain social status with stylists is positively correlated with tipping. From Table 3, there is 0.5% significant probability chance of tipping because of social status.

In addition, a customer's religious beliefs influence tipping behaviours. The more people value their culture, ethnicity, traditions, beliefs and norms, the more they tend to tip a hairstylist. These findings align with those of Schwer and Daneshvary (2000), Lynn (2016) and Azar (2020) on service quality and social approval. Our findings contradict those of Lynn and Katz (2013) that non-Christians tip more than Christians. From our results, the likelihood of Christians tipping remains significantly and consistently positive from model (2) to (5). Our results also show that the likelihood of people who have a higher education level to tip is better than people who do not. These findings are confirmed in Table 4 on the amount that both less educated and educated people offer as tips. These findings align with those of Parrett (2006), Kruger and Saayman (2016), Lynn and McCall (2016) and Wung and Nanfosso (2023). Moreover, COVID-19 had two effects on consumers' psychological decision to tip. First, a fall in consumer income caused by a loss of income during the pandemic led to an 11.1, 12.8, 11.7, and 12.2 percentage point drop in the chances of consumers tipping stylists due to service quality, social approval, future expectations and the religious background of consumers, respectively. Second, a fall in service quality in beauty salons due to the outbreak of the pandemic indicated that there was a significant probability of consumer tipping during the COVID-19 period in beauty salons. For instance, there is a significant probability of tipping less than 17% due to better service qualities, social approval, future

TABLE 3: Determinants of tipping in beauty salons

Variable	Dependent variable: tip				
	1	2	3	4	5
Service quality	0.005 (0.002)**	0.007 (0.002)***			
Social approval	0.006 (0.002)		0.005 (0.002)***		
Expected returns	0.003 (0.005)			0.014 (0.004)***	
Religion background	0.009 (0.08)				0.008 (0.002)***
Gender (male)		−0.001 (0.025)	0.003 (0.025)	0.003 (0.025)	0.002 (0.025)
Education (higher)		0.065 (0.026)**	0.059 (0.026)**	0.062 (0.026)**	0.068 (0.027)**
Monthly income		0.024 (0.023)	0.018 (0.023)	0.018 (0.023)	0.019 (0.023)
Social class (Poor)		−0.064 (0.031)**	−0.072 (0.031)**	−0.067 (0.030)**	−0.057 (0.032)*
Fall in service quality COVID-19		0.180 (0.027)***	0.172 (0.027)***	0.184 (0.027)***	0.180 (0.027)***
Loss of job COVID-19		−0.111 (0.029)***	−0.128 (0.028)***	−0.117 (0.028)***	−0.122 (0.027)***
Religion (Christian)		0.056 (0.028)**	0.052 (0.028)*	0.055 (0.028)**	0.049 (0.029)*
Social class (rich)		−0.023 (0.033)	−0.017 (0.033)	−0.019 (0.033)	−0.014 (0.032)
Language (French)		0.044 (0.028)	0.027 (0.028)	0.041 (0.028)	0.047 (0.028)*
Education (never)		0.073 (0.066)	0.062 (0.065)	0.074 (0.066)	0.066 (0.065)
Origin (national)		−0.121 (0.088)	−0.135 (0.089)	−0.168 (0.090)*	−0.156 (0.090)*
Observations	1 361	1 361	1 361	1 361	1 361
rank	−812.5	−812.5	−812.5	−812.5	−812.5
ll	−799.7	−767.6	−774.4	−770.3	−771.6
ll_0	25.57	89.91	76.33	84.43	81.82
df_m	4	11	11	11	11
pbar	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.284
xbar	−0.579	−0.602	−0.597	−0.602	−0.600

Standard errors in parentheses
***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.01$. Significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

expectations, and the religious beliefs of consumers. This means that, consumers were more likely to tip during the pandemic than before the pandemic, for which the probability was less than 17%. These findings agree with recent findings by Lynn (2021; 2023) and Conlisk (2022), who have empirically tested positive and statistically significant increases in consumer tipping behaviours in other contexts.

Empirical evidence of beauty salon tip amounts
Post (1984) builds on the recommendations that customers should leave 15–20 per cent of the overall bill as tip with employees in beauty salons given that their efforts are easily evaluated. Schwer and Daneshvary (2000) empirically tested this phenomenon in beauty salons by making use of several determinants and found that poor customers tip more than the rich. From our findings, both the rich and poor leave small tip amounts compared to average income earners. Consistently, the results in Table 4 affirm tipping amounts by men (Parrett, 2006).

Table S3 shows that tip amounts left my men are consistent across all the models used. For instance, without accounting for any bias in the ordinary least square and/or simple Tobit models, our results show a statistically significant drop in men's tip amounts of 6.15 francs. But when we control for sample biases by using a lower truncation, results show that the tip amounts continue to reduce, i.e. from 58.66 francs to 79.90 francs in decreases. However, with regard to tipping peak periods, tip amounts are liable to increase in Cameroon's beauty

salons during week days and holidays, but reduces during month ends and over weekends. That is, customers in beauty salons will tip more during holidays and week days (19.89 FRS and 24.48 FRS increases in tip amounts, respectively) compared to 7.52 FRS and 5.03 FRS decreases respectively during month end and weekends. Greenberg (2014) found that during holidays people tip more compared to any other period of the year. Likewise, having conversations with passengers during taxi rides, sunny and rainy weather are factors that increase the tip amount of clients (Aydin & Acun, 2019; Thrane & Haugom, 2020; Conlisk, 2022).

This is a clear indication that in beauty salons tip amounts increase more during holidays when the economy is filled with many business activities as students are all working and preparing for the next academic year. However, tip amounts may drop during month ends in beauty salons because many customers feel that their expenses should be controlled and that employees of the beauty industry are not motivated. However, Post (1984) emphasises that customers should verify from door keepers whether tips are accepted in a beauty salon before entering because some employees refuse tips (Hoaas & Bigler, 2012; Were & Miricho, 2020. Equally, the outbreak of the pandemic shows a positively significant effect on service quality that led to a 24.76 franc increase in customer tip amounts. Meanwhile, a loss of income led to a 16.47 franc drop in tip amounts in beauty salons. These findings further strengthen those of Lynn (2021) and Conlisk (2022) on the positive effect

TABLE 4: Determinants of tip amount in beauty salons (*N* = 334)

Variable	Dependent variable: tip amount		
	Lower limit (1)	Upper limit (2)	Both limits (3)
Peak tipping periods			
Week day	23.58 (10.80)**	2.921 (0.774)***	19.89 (4.928)***
Week end	−19.23 (10.84)*	−0.303 (0.784)	−5.030 (8.284)
Month end	−13.69 (9.816)	0.223 (0.817)	−7.520 (6.916)
Yearly	−672.3 (0.120)	−5.872 (3.401)*	−98.25 (9.021)***
Holiday	45.12 (17.29)***	1.952 (1.258)	24.48 (10.37)**
Football	5.973 (10.91)	−0.090 (0.871)	2.696 (9.620)
Financial social class			
Social class (rich)	−27.35 (11.82)**	−1.680 (0.874)*	−23.28 (7.089)***
Social class (poor)	−58.57 (21.03)***	−2.916 (0.963)***	−33.73 (7.906)***
Monthly Income	34.60 (10.25)***	1.360 (0.675)**	25.84 (6.311)***
Effect of COVID-19			
On service quality	24.64 (10.17)**	22.86 (0.774)***	24.76 (6.205)***
On job, income and tipping	−14.59 (9.716)	−0.360 (0.759)	−16.47 (6.603)**
Service quality before COVID-19	−107.6 (32.99)***	−5.500 (2.996)*	−50.94 (30.25)*
Tip beneficiaries			
Hairstylist	28.10 (14.60)*	2.854 (1.053)***	31.27 (6.903)***
Complete stranger	12.76 (15.98)	0.732 (1.229)	16.92 (8.624)**
Third parties			
Friend/colleague	−13.26 (9.264)	48.62 (73.51)	−47.25 (62.92)
Fiancé, husband/wife	17.19 (1.366)	89.44 (11.67)	13.16 (9.133)
First language of client			
English	74.42 (29.85)**	5.276 (3.581)	83.80 (24.17)***
French	2.150 (8.689)	0.282 (0.766)	−1.146 (5.971)
Gender (male)	−79.90 (18.38)***	−4.581 (0.664)***	−58.66 (6.370)***
/sigma (σ)	2,253 (224.4)***	579.2 (22.11)***	2,152 (156.0)***
Constant	893.4 (3,116)	937.0 (351.0)***	−3,963 (3,469)

Standard errors in parentheses
***p < 0.001; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.01. Significant at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

of the pandemic on consumer tipping behaviours, as well as its negative effects (Ravula, 2022).

Conclusion, implications and way forward

Our findings show some pertinent practical implications for the stakeholders involved in tipping phenomena: tippers (consumers), employees and the managers of beauty salons. We note that tipping is an incentive for consumers that is caused by several factors, such as service quality and the degree of consumer altruism. Overall, among the variables influencing people to tip in beauty salons in the study context, service quality (including the effect of COVID-19 on service quality), social approval, expectations of future services or expected return from tipping and religious background based on the beliefs of the respondents and level of consumer education, particularly higher education, are all found here. These are consumers who have been exposed to certain ways of life and understand certain social norms such as the importance of motivating servers. Similarly, consumers' loss of income during COVID-19 affected their income level, leading to a decrease in tipping behaviour. This differs from the findings of and Conlisk (2022) and Lynn (2023) in Western economies. However, our findings show that holidays, week days and monthly income are factors that influence consumers more toward leaving higher tips. Theoretically, these results agree with those of Greenberg (2014) on tipping and consumer behavioural psychology. The use of these variables strengthens Schwer and Daneshvary's (2000) theoretical weakness (noted in their concluding section).

This study's pertinence lies in its scope, theoretical framework, empirical strategies and timing by investigating novel determinants such as COVID-19. An implication of this study is that it sheds light on how managers can better understand certain consumer behaviours and be better informed about what boosts tips from consumers. Expanding the theories of reciprocity and equity in any business encounter, we realise that tipping decisions (to tip or not to tip) and tip amounts depend on the input (efforts, service delivering, neatness of the employee, etc.). This informs the management of service occupations, especially those of beauty salons who desire improvements in tip amounts for their employees to pay attention to the equitable distribution of economic resources, by giving the best of services and being neat.

The aim of this study was to add nuance to the literature by examining tipping in beauty salons in an understudied African context. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is one of the first studies to analyse tipping practices in beauty salons in an African context. Apart from the studies by Post (1984), Schwer and Daneshvary (2000) and Seiter and Dutson (2007), who did pay attention to tipping in beauty salons, others have been mainly focused on restaurant tipping. Thus, the beauty industry is limited and neglected in regard to empirical works on human behaviours regarding tipping. With varied theoretical foundations drawn from psychology, economics, sociology and anthropology, we tested the determinants of tipping and the factors that influence the tip amounts of consumers in the beauty industry in the study context. The main findings from this study therefore point stakeholders in the direction of service quality, levels of education, social approval and expectations of better future service as the factors that push people to tip in beauty salons. While creating in the minds of stakeholders, especially employees and managers, the fact that consumers will not tip under high economic hardships such as losing a job or a source of income during COVID-19 (Adams, 1965; Schwer & Daneshvary, 2000; Alexander et al., 2021). However, future research could examine the behaviours of consumers and/or hair stylists around tips to better compare tipping behaviours in beauty salons with those in other service and hospitality industries.

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Appendices

TABLE A1: Measurement construction

Service quality: How do you evaluate service quality in this beauty salon (1 = very poor; 5 = very good)

Expected return
- I will tip in order to ensure good future services in beauty salon (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- I tip to promote the commitments of hairstylist to jobs (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- I tip to strengthen relations with hairstylist (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Servers knowledge of what I order will influence me to tip (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

Social approval
- Tipping contributes to my social status (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Tips would cause me not to be seen as a greedy person (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Tipping limits servers ill luck toward me (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- I become more generous in the presence of others (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Keeping a reputation about myself with hairstylist would cause me to tip (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Tipping gives me a certain utility/satisfaction (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- I tip out of a sense of duty (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Being generous is something I grew up with (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

Religious background
- My religion teaches me to be kind hearted (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- I have compassion on those who serve me (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- Tipping is an act of expressing morally character (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- It is good to help people even when you don't know them (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)
- People with good moral characters are often generous (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree)

TABLE A2: Mean comparison tests of items with tip behaviour (N = 1 361).

Item	No	Yes	Gap	t-test
	(1)	(2)	(1)–(2)	
Friendly and familiar servers	3.876 (0. 037)	4.015 (0.060)	−0.138 (0.070)	−1.974
It is out of a sense of duty that I tip	3.167 (0.043)	3.198 (0.075)	−0.031 (0.083)	−0.378
Tipping is an act of moral character	3.818 (0.035)	4.012 (0.053)	−0.194 (0.065)	−2.967
Number of people around	3.117 (0.044)	3.348 (0.075)	−0.231 (0.084)	−2.736
Tips leads to job commitment	3.701 (0.034)	3.919 (0.055)	−0.218 (0.065)	−3.363
I have compassion, reason I tip	3.440 (0.041)	3.653 (0.066)	−0.213 (0.078)	−2.727
I earn more, reason I tip	3.419 (0.042)	3.620 (0.069)	−0.200 (0.080)	−2.483
Tips reduces servers ill-luck	2.929 (0.045)	3.103 (0.075)	−0.174 (0.086)	−2.024
Tips builds good industrial relations	3.788 (0.034)	4.036 (0.052)	−0.247 (0.063)	−3.872
Tipping brings good luck to tipper	3.465 (0.041)	3.627 (0.068)	−0.162 (0.079)	−2.056
I am not greedy, reason I tip	2.881 (0.043)	3.105 (0.078)	−0.224 (0.084)	−2.636
Servers' knowledge of orders	3.821 (0.038)	3.832 (0.068)	−0.010 (0.074)	−0.142
Keeping a reputation with server	3.362 (0.042)	3.542 (0.070)	−0.180 (0.080)	−2.241
I tip due to my social status	2.991 (0.042)	3.198 (0.074)	−0.207 (0.082)	−2.506
Tipping is a good social norm	3.868 (0.034)	4.015 (0.058)	−0.146 (0.065)	−2.248
Socioeconomic & demographic characteristics of clients				
Gender (male)	1.486 (0.016)	1.475 (0.025)	0.011 (0.030)	0.372
Age (in range)	2.184 (0.028)	2.229 (0.042)	−.045 (0.052)	−0.862
Higher education	0.548 (0.016)	0.423 (0.025)	0.126 (0.029)	4.237***
Secondary education	0.348 (0.015)	0.479 (0.025)	−0.131 (0.029)	−4.546
Religion (Christian)	0.741 (0.014)	0.670 (0.023)	0.072 (0.027)	2.684***
Monthly income (log income)	1.110 (0.018)	0.903 (0.032)	0.207 (0.034)	6.047***
Social class (rich)	0.250 (0.014)	0.123 (0.017)	0.127 (0.024)	5.232***
Social class (poor)	0.584 (0.015)	0.579 (0.025)	0.005 (0.029)	0.159
Language (English)	0.267 (0.014)	0.181 (0.019)	0.086 (0.025)	3.387***
Language (French)	0.725 (0.014)	0.819 (0.019)	−0.093 (0.026)	−3.649

Standard errors in parentheses
***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05
Chi square test results are presented in Table S1