

# Exploring Service Gratuity Motivations from a Cultural Context Aspect and the Moderating Role of Gender

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**ABSTRACT:** *The Saudi consumer, being the focus of this study, is driven by multiple forces and motivations that impact their consumption behavior, where the gender of consumer is another major determinant of those behaviors. While recent macroenvironmental changes were observed to justify the shifts in consumer behaviors, the cultural dimension and gender of consumer are the focus of our research. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between cultural context level and tipping motivations, and the moderating role of gender on this relationship. To assess this research, an SEM model is presented along six hypotheses to uncover the nature of relations among the said variables. With a sample size of 351 participants, respondent's data confirmed that majority of sample do represent features of a high context culture, and the results are only similar with previous findings when assessing service as a dimension for tipping motivation. Social norms and peer pressure were not significant indicators of tipping behaviors for consumers in high context cultures. Furthermore, gender differences were clearly spotted, where females showed higher motivation to tip following motives of social norms and peer pressure. This study adds to the literature of cultural consumer behavior, and the findings represent handful information that can be applied by international managers to better understand and serve their global agenda.*

**KEYWORDS:** Tipping, consumer behavior, cultural context, Saudi Arabia

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## INTRODUCTION

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a developing country located at the heart of the Arab and Islamic region with a population over 32 million (General Authority for Statistics, 2023). Saudi Arabia have long been known as a country characterized with rich and complex culture, in addition

to its global strategic role and its powerful economies (Hall, 1976; Cultural Atlas, 2019). In the recent years, and going through historic reformation and post multiple changes in the economic, environmental, cultural, political and legal atmosphere in Saudi Arabia, spending behaviors have dramatically changed and specifically, the post-service tipping behavior. According to the economic theory, consumers are rational behaviors where they operate financially to maximize utility subject when they are engaged in economic activities. However, tipping is one of the consumer behaviors that doesn't align with economic rationality, and one where such economic exchange of value is affected by the "informal rules of custom" (Lynn, 2015; Landsburg, 1993). From the business side of the equation, tipping is considered a major source of income for many individuals working in the service industry, and a business overall source of income that leads to revenue gains (Whaley & Costen, 2019).

Most research on gratuity is done in western regions, not in the Arab region and specifically Saudi Arabia. This research idea is to provide an insight on the Saudi market from the lens of high-low context culture. Another reason is the environmental, economic and cultural changes occurring in this country which made understanding the market attractive for researchers globally. In addition, and following the roadmap of the Saudi 2030 vision, the past five years has witnessed a dramatic change in the Saudi workforce, where many Saudi's joined the service sector, in addition to the rising numbers of females in the workforce (Saudi Vision 2030; National Transformation Program, 2019).

Previous research on consumer tipping behavior proved the complexity of this phenomenon and how it could extend to be a subject of research for many disciplines such as marketing, psychology, economics, management and sociology. In this study, we aim to explore such behaviors, especially since the vast micro and macro-environmental changes have made it difficult to explain consumer behaviors through the prism of previously developed theories and models. This paper is organized in the following sections; the next section will view the literature related to the consumer behavior and gratuity; cultural dimension and gender; methodology; results and discussion; conclusion; and lastly, limitations and future implications.

### ***Research Objectives***

- 1. To assess whether previous assumptions of consumers tipping motivations will hold in high-context cultures*
- 2. To investigate the role of gender as a moderator in the relationship between cultural context level and tipping behavior motivations*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***The consumer behavior and gratuity***

Consumer behavior is one of the widely researched topics in marketing. It is the "process of choice, purchase, use, management of goods and services, as well as experiences for the purpose of a

satisfactory fulfilment of needs and wants” (Mooij, 2004), and it is “the study of consumers actions during searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs” (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). The study of consumer behavior attends to the decisions they make and how they choose to spend their available resources, it entails the exploration of their needs, wants, motivations, and desires (Cole, 2007; Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). It further extends to the investigation of their personalities, attitudes, habits and other factors that together formulates certain behaviors that reflect on consumers actions (Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013).

Gratuity is something given voluntarily or beyond obligation usually for some service, and it is noted as a fancier and more formal synonym to the word “tip” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The word “TIP” is the abbreviation for “To Insure Promptitude”, originally from England and was used in urns during the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Brenner, 2001).The gratuity behavior can be attributed to economic reasons as it is observed as the way to monitor and reward service employees’ efforts (Bodvarsson and Gibson, 1994), and is in line with equity theory where people are granting service employees the gratuity (or tip) as a reward for their good service (Adams, 1965). Tipping serves as a form of employee monitoring, customer satisfaction and protection, and an organizational function to increase profits (Jacob and Page, 1980; Sisk and Gallick, 1985; Schwartz, 1997). Tipping constitutes of different categories such as reward tipping, price tipping, tipping in advance, bribery tipping, holiday tipping, and gift tipping (Azar, 2007a). Tipping in advance is considered as a form of bribery (inducement tips) usually granted for service level assurance (Rose-Ackerman, 1998).

Previous studies widely explored the different motivations that affect consumers’ tipping behavior. One of the main motivations is the social norms and the associated guilt feelings when consumers do not tip (Lin, 2007), and another one is to avoid negative feelings such as unfairness or embarrassment (Azar, 2007a) and specifically within dining settings (Azar, 2004a; Conlin *et al.* 2003; Segrave, 1998). Furthermore, social pressure is considered as one of the reasons for tipping, and even when the service provided is of low quality, because consumers are aware of the substandard wage that service employees receive (May, 1978). In general, people often tip as a form of reward for service employees for their efforts in the services provided (Speer, 1997) and tips are supposedly granted correspondingly with customer satisfaction (Rose-Ackerman, 1998). Other reasons can be attributed to the environmental determinants of mood (Fisher, 1992) and frequency of visits (Lynn & Grassman, 1990), where regular customers has the tendency to tip and with greater amounts in comparison to non-regular customers. Lynn (2015) introduced a theoretical framework, the Tipping Motives Framework (TMF), which presents motivations for tipping and motivations for not tipping through the lens of individual, national, occupational, situational and historical variations in tipping behavior. Tipping motivations according to TMF include helping servers, rewarding service, keeping preferential future service, gaining or keeping social esteem, and fulfilling a sense of obligation or duty. While non-tipping motivations are to

save tip money and to avoid advocating to status and power differences between customers and servers.

Lynn (2005) researched about the managerial and employees' strategies to increase the amounts of tips received. Tip size varies from being a completely voluntary and optional behavior to approximately 20% of total bill amount, and around 58% of people tip between 15%-20% of the total bill size (Lin 2007). Gratuity when granted to the service provider varies in amount, which can be attributed to multiple reasons such as quality of food, group size, type of food ordered, gender of tipper, server's look, the day of the week, type of customer, timelessness, server's manner and efficiency (Hoaas and Bigler, 2005). Some predictors of tip size, as coined and investigated by Lynn, Zinkhan and Harris (1993) include bill size, server's friendliness, service quality, server's attractiveness, gender of consumer, dining-party size, patronage frequency, and payment method. In addition, perceived service quality is a positive determinant of tip and tip amount (Saunders and Lynn, 2010), where a positive relation between tip amount and higher service quality is found (Conlin *et al.*, 2003). This positive relation is consistent with the Equity Theory, where customers leave larger tips in exchange of receiving quality service to maintain equity in their relationship with service employees (Lynn and Graves, 1996). Another study conducted with similar restaurant data found a negative relation between the tip amount and table size where people tip for reciprocity and guilt aversion reasons (Parrett, 2006). However, and while it is widely assumed that service quality influences tip amount, studies showed a weak correlation between tip size and service quality, a weak correlation between social norms and tipping amount, and therefore a weak prediction of consumer satisfaction (Margalioth, 2010; Lynn, 2001; Saunders and Lynn, 2010).

Consumer intentions behind their tipping behavior can be attributed to multiple reasons, and impressions are one of them. Usually, when consumers have a goal to impress other around them in the service scape, their tipping intentions are higher. This is also evident with increased tip amount in the presence of dining companions, which is considered as one of the impression management goals, regardless of the payment method and more visibly with cash tips (Bluvstein and Raghbir, 2020). Tipping is observed to enhance the consumer psychological utility; people experience positive emotions such as pride, happiness, generosity and satisfaction when they tip and give higher tips (Azar, 2010), and their social image in front of others as generous individuals is considered another benefit people seek when they tip (Azar, 2004b). On the other hands, consumers may experience negative emotions associated with tipping. Some of the reasons for this effect were mentioned as motivations for not tipping earlier; economic considerations and sense of equality and avoidance to status advocacy. Mostly, and in accordance with Brehm's Reactance Theory (1966), consumers might experience an overall negativity just by performing the behavior of tipping itself, which leads to adversely affecting the whole experience, where some consumers may also experience feeling of need for revenge and punishment to the business. Customers may

also experience negative emotions when they receive tipping guidelines and thus, they will develop a negative image of the brand (Cabano and Attari, 2023).

With the vast situations, conditions, factors and the different motivations explored above which provide some explanation of how consumers behave in gratuity context and why they behave, still the phenomena cannot be thoroughly explained. This can be attributed to the psychological nature of consumers, which was explicated in Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991). In this theory, three dimensions are addressed namely attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, which all together determine and shape the individual's behavioral intentions. These three elements are greatly influenced by culture and gender. Therefore, our next section will explore the role of the cultural context and gender of consumer in shaping their gratuity behaviors.

### ***Culture & Gender***

"Because cultures are wholes, are systematic, and are highly contexted as well, it is hard to describe them from the outside". Hall, 1979

One of the well-recognized publications in sociology and cultural studies is Hall's 1979 Book "Beyond Cultures". In his book, Hall explained the origins of cultural context (being a way of handling information overload), differentiating between the different levels including low and high cultural contexts. He further identified forms of irrationality including situational, contextual and cultural irrationalities, in which they can influence the economic rationality, leading the individuals of that culture to be affected by informal rules of custom (Lynn, 2015; Landsburg, 1993). While tipping (or gratuity) is considered a financial component in the service trade, individuals from different cultures expressed gratuity in non-financial means and was illustrated in a previous study that compared the effectiveness of service incentives being financial (tips) and non-financial (compliments) (Lavoie *et al.*, 2021). Establishing that tipping is not purely of a financial nature, we are approaching tips in this study as a non-verbal act of communication between the consumer and the service employee, where consumers grant tips to express their acknowledgement of service, support, appreciation, and more motives as was illustrated in the previous section. In Hall's work (1979, p. 105), the distinction in cultural context communication styles was explained; communication in high context cultures is "one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message". Opposingly, communication in low context cultures is "just the opposite; the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code". Thus, and with regard to an individual's cultural orientation, their cultural values cannot be observed directly (Schwartz, 1994).

Tipping is affected by cultural norms and geographical boundaries, which plays a role in shaping customers' attitudes and behaviors, especially in tipping motivations and expectations (Ferguson *et al.*, 2017). When relying on Hofstede's Cross-Country Differences, tipping was found highly

prevalent in the countries with cultures that regard power and status differences as natural and good, and that cross-country differences when tipping is present reflect differences in the value associated with tipping's consequences. Similarly, tipping had a dominant presence in cultures where achievement of status is of high cultural value (Lynn, Zinkhan and Harris, 1993). In addition, Lynn's (2015) study on Service Gratuities and Tipping revealed that tipping as a behavior and the tip amount is positively associated with cultures where individuals seek social approval, liking and/or status and perception that others' esteem. Further, consumers in different cultures may rely on tipping as a tool for status display and as a form of social norms (Azar 2007b; Lynn 1997). Ample of research acknowledge the national and cultural differences between countries with regard to the tipping behavior, and these differences are named "national values". Therefore, tipping has been approached by researchers through the lens of national differences and cultural dimensions (Ferguson et al., 2017). The observed cultural difference can be traced to what individuals of these cultures deem rational; "what makes sense (or not) is irrevocably culturally determined and depends heavily on the context in which the evaluation is made" (Hall, 1979). From this angle, studying the "irrational" tipping behavior in a different cultural context was one of the aims of this study.

The attempts to assessing gender differences systematically has received much attention in the field of psychology in the 1970's with an aim to reveal some answers, one in particular attends to the gender differences in emotional responses to people and events. Empathy was explored as a major difference, where it was defined as "the emotional response to the others' affective condition, perspective taking and social sensitivity measures", where it was concluded in this measure that females are more empathetic than men (Hoffman, 1977). In addition, it is evident that females hold higher levels of empathy compared to males, where they show greater will in helping other in need (Mestre *et al.*, 2009). Further, gender differences were also captured when measuring cognitive and emotional factors as components of empathic disposition (Davis, 1983). Calvo, González and Martorell (2001) studied the moderating role of gender on the relationship between empathy and social behavior with regard to empathy being non-impulsive vs. emotional instability, and found that gender plays a significant role in these relationships. Aside from the psychological influences of genders, males and females showed differences in their perceptions and reactions toward emotions received. Previous research attended to the different impact of marketing efforts related to emotional expressions such as smiling on the gender of the consumer, where females were greatly influenced compared to males and had different reactions (Trivedi and Teichert, 2019). Therefore, females will naturally be highly influenced by the service employee emotional expressions and attitudes.

The role of gender differences with regard to tipping behavior was explored in previous literature; Gratuity behavior is subject to change based on the consumer's gender (Whaley, 2014), gender of gratuity giver is a factor that is identified to affect the tipping behavior (Hoaas and Bigler, 2005), gender of gratuity giver is one of the predictors of tip size (Lynn, Zinkhan and Harris, 1993), male

consumers usually tip more when dining alone compared to female consumers (Maynard and Mupandawana, 2009), female consumers feel higher obligation to provide a tip especially when they are with friends or family members (Whaley, 2019), and gender differences were significantly recorded in the trust-loyalty relationship (Ndubisi, 2006). In general, previous research in psychology, consumer behavior and sociology suggest the existence of gender differences in the tipping behavior (Whaley, 2019). However, literature on gender behavioral differences in tipping is somewhat limited. Previous research has indulged gender in being a moderator to different behavioral relationships and thus, we recruited gender as moderator in our study in the relationship between the cultural context level and tipping motivations.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Model*

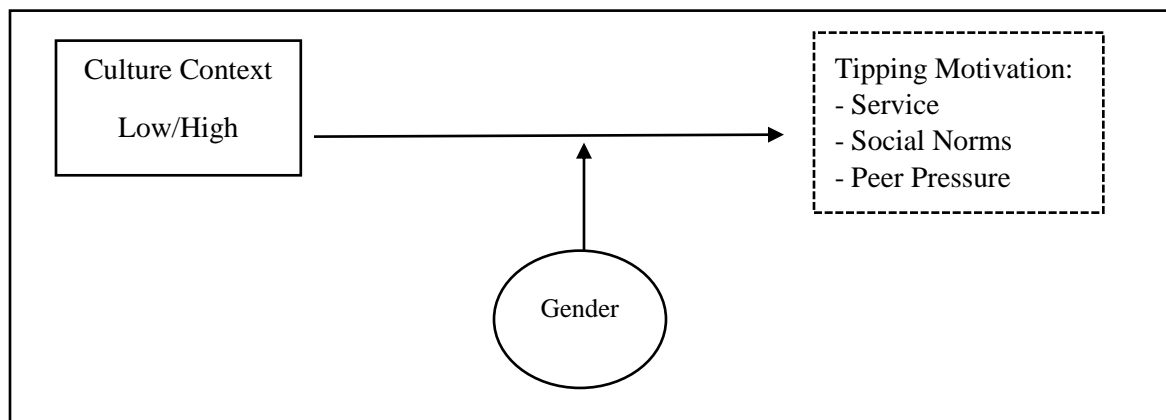


Figure 1: Introduced Conceptual Framework

Where we test the six resulting hypotheses:

**H1a:** The high-cultural context level is positively related with service

**H1b:** The low-cultural context level is positively related with service

**H2a:** The high-cultural context level is positively related with social norms

**H2b:** The low-cultural context level is positively related with social norms

**H3a:** The high-cultural context level is positively related with peer pressure

**H3b:** The low-cultural context level is positively related with peer pressure

**H4:** The gender of consumer moderates the relation between the cultural context level and service

**H5:** The gender of consumer moderates the relation between the cultural context level and social norms

**H6:** The gender of consumer moderates the relation between the cultural context level and peer pressure

To answer the mentioned hypotheses, a quantitative research approach will be adopted to assess the relationships between cultural context, gender and tipping motivations through performing a Structural Equation Model. The model will assess the gender's moderating role on the relation between high-low cultural context levels and three factors of tipping motivations namely service, social norm and peer pressure. In order to do so, data will be collected through an electronic survey designed to capture three dimensions; level of cultural context, tipping motivations and demographics.

### ***Sampling Framework***

As a first step, a convenience sample is utilized in this research, with an exclusion criterion for non-Saudi Arabia's residents and respondents who are in the age group of less than 15 years old. Secondly, a quota sample is performed to direct data collection toward male participants, as data showed a much higher percentage for female respondents, and considering that "gender" is a key variable serving as a moderator in this study. Total responses received was 377, and since we are interested in residents of Saudi Arabia, the responses received from participants outside the country were eliminated from the analysis. In total, the analysis included 351 responses. Given that targeted sample are residents of Saudi Arabia with their main language of communication as Arabic, the survey followed a backward translation approach to ensure that scale items have not lost or changed in their intended meanings.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis Tools***

Data was collected utilizing a survey distribution tool, which is Google Forms, an online tool that allows collecting information from users by using surveys or quizzes. The survey link was shared electronically with potential respondents via a link distributed through social media channels (WhatsApp and LinkedIn) and through official email communications. The researcher used IBM SPSS version 26 software to analyze data, and the SmartPLS4 software to conduct the SEM for the hypothesized model. Data and results are stored safely with the researcher where confidentiality of survey responses is guaranteed.

### ***Instrument***

The instrument utilized for this research consisted of a questionnaire designed to reflect three dimensions under question in this research (Appendix 1); level of cultural context, motivations behind tipping behavior and demographics. In addition, an extra question was included in the survey to reveal if the participants have undergone financial education. The questionnaire was designed in a simplified and a straightforward manner to ensure participants won't be discouraged from participating due to the length of the questionnaire (Frazer Winsted and Patterson, 1998). For the first two sections containing scale items, we rated how respondents felt about each component



on a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with "neutral" being the middle option.

The first section includes a scale inferred from the work of Whaley, Douglas and O'Neill (2014), where they presented a Tipping Motivation Scale (TMS). The TMS is divided into multiple hypothesized domains and encompasses a total of 19 variables (Appendix 2). Cronbach's Alpha for the revised scale is  $\alpha=0.745$ , indicating strong reliability for the factors. The validity of the instrument is supported by the factor loadings and clarity of the underlying factor structure. In their work, the authors conduct EFA-CFA analysis and developed 6 domains for measuring tipping motivations. Three dimensions (server actions, future behavior and others) will be removed due to its incompatibility with the nature of our study. The domains are as follows:

1. Service: composed of dimensions such as the technical (order taking, order delivering, tangible aspects) and functional (friendliness, personal service, eye contact, intangible aspects).
2. Social norm: consisting of dimensions of shame, guilt, regret, equitable relationships, and altruism.
3. Server actions: with the dimensions of touch, body language, and eye contact.
4. Future behavior: which includes the dimensions of gratitude, gratuity, and frequency of visit along with fellowship, rapport building, and self-esteem.
5. Peer pressure: consisting of dimensions of diffusion of responsibility or obligation to others.
6. Other operational processes: which examines the dimensions of restaurant space (physical environment or offerings).

The second section included a scale adopted from Richardson and Smith (2007) to measure the level of cultural context. This scale involves seven questions reflecting communication and understanding and are rated on a five-point Likert scale, where a higher score reflects the tendency of respondent to behave in a high-cultural-context manner. The final section will cover demographic questions including gender, age, job status, salary range, marital status, nationality, country of residence and if the respondent has undertaken a financial education related course.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Instrument Measurement*

Each notion used in the study reflects prior research that was operationalized. The measurement model and structural model were further tested for validity and reliability using SPSS. Factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) results for the model are presented in table 1. CA values, which quantifies the extent to which scale items measure the same underlying construct were found to be above the advised threshold

of 0.7 (Ringle *et al.*, 2022). According to factor analysis utilizing Varimax rotation to assess factor loadings, all factor loadings are greater than 0.70. AVE values are larger than 0.5, and these values ranged from 0.677 to 0.956, which indicates that at least half of the items' variation is explained by the latent variable (Edeh *et al.*, 2023). As for the CR values that indicate how well the item indicators reflect the latent construct, results varied from 0.936 to 0.977, which is above the recommended value of 0.70 (Ringle *et al.*, 2022). All items were deemed to be reliable and demonstrated adequate convergent validity.

Determinant Factors	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE
<b>Service Tipping Motivation</b>		0.910	0.937	0.789
S1: Timeliness of service influences my tipping behavior	0.851			
S2: The service received influences my tipping behavior	0.894			
S3: Poor service influences my tipping behavior	0.892			
S4: A server's attitude influences my tipping behavior	0.916			
<b>Social Norms Tipping Motivation</b>		0.951	0.976	0.953
N1: I feel obligated to tip even when service is bad	0.976			
N2: I feel regret if I do not leave a tip	0.976			
<b>Peer Pressure Tipping Motivation</b>		0.954	0.977	0.956
P1: I feel more obligated to tip when dining with friends and/or family	0.978			
P2: I leave a larger tip when others I have dined with do not tip	0.978			
<b>Cultural Context Level</b>		0.914	0.936	0.677
CC1: It is more important to state a message efficiently than with great detail	0.812			
CC2: Intentions not explicitly stated can often be inferred from the context	0.814			
CC3: A speaker can assume that listeners will know what they really mean	0.868			
CC4: People understand many things that are left unsaid	0.845			
CC5: Fewer words can often lead to better understanding	0.783			
CC6: You can often convey more information with fewer words	0.818			
CC7: Some ideas are better understood when left unsaid	0.818			

\* *CA=Cronbach Alpha, CR=Composite Reliability, AVE=Average Variance Explained.*

Table 1: Instrument Measurements

Next, we compared the average correlations between items to the correlations between items that measure distinct constructs (Table 2). The magnitude of the Pearson correlation coefficient determines the strength of the correlation. Results demonstrate that all correlations values are significant as demonstrated by Cohen (1988). There was a strong positive correlation between service as a tipping motivation and cultural context level,  $r = .726$ , and a strong positive correlation between social norms as a tipping motivation and peer pressure,  $r = .670$ . A moderate negative correlation is found between; service and social norms as tipping motivators at  $r = -.494$ ; service and peer pressure as tipping motivators at  $r = -.397$  and; social norms and cultural context level at  $r = -.391$ .

Variables	S	N	P	CC
S	-	-.494**	-.397**	.726**
N		-	.670**	-.391**
P			-	-.270**
CC				-

S= Service, N= Social Norms, P= Peer Pressure, CC= Cultural Context Level.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Pearson's Correlations

### **General Characteristics of Respondents**

A total of 377 respondents completed the questionnaire successfully, and after data cleaning, we had a total of 351 responses to commence the statistical testing with. Out of the 351, 45.6% were males and 54.4% were females. The majority of respondents age was between 35-44 (39.6%) followed by ages 25-34 (20.2%), ages 15-24 (15.4%), ages 45-54 (13.1%), and ages 55 and above (11.7%). As for the marital status, the majority of sample were married (54.7%), 35% were single, 8% separated and 2.3% widowed. With regard to employment status, the majority of the sample were employed (59.5%), followed by students (22.2%), unemployed (11.1%), and retired (7.1%). Of the sample, 86% respondents were of Saudi nationality, and the remaining were of other nationalities. Over half of the sample declared they have undertaken financial education related courses in their life time (61.8%).

### **Respondents Cultural Context Level**

To assess the respondent's cultural context level, frequency analysis was utilized to review responses for each of the scale items pertaining to the cultural context level, a total of seven items (Table 3). Given that we utilized a 5-point Likert scale, respondents with scored greater than 3 will be considered of a high context culture, and responses of 3 and will count as of moderate level, and respectively, scores below 3 will constitute respondents are of a low context culture. According to the results illustrated in table 3, the sample constitutes of respondents who are categorized as of high context culture with percentages exceeding 70% of all scale items. Those of a moderate cultural context culture ranged in percentages between 4-19.9%, while respondents who present a low cultural context only ranged between 5.7-8.9% in all scale items. Therefore, the sample is characterized with being one with majority of high context culture. Considering that we are utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, the midpoint being at 2.5, therefore, all recorded responses of 2.5 and above will be counted as a high culture context to illustrate the purposes of this research, clearly determining and differentiating between high-low cultural difference. In that sense, 94% of the sample were of high cultural context and 6% of low cultural context. These results are consistent with the findings that Saudi Arabia is one of the nations that hosts individuals of a high context cultural level (Hall, 1976; Cultural Atlas, 2019).

CC Scale Items	High Context Culture	Moderate Context Culture	Low Context Culture
CC1	86.1%	7.1%	6.8%
CC2	81.5%	11.4%	7.1%
CC3	87.5%	6.6%	5.9%
CC4	89.7%	4%	6.3%
CC5	71.2%	19.9%	8.9%
CC6	75.5%	17.9%	6.6%
CC7	84.6%	9.7%	5.7%

CC= Cultural Context.

Table 3: Cultural Context Level Scale Frequency

### ***Respondents Motivations Behind Tipping Behavior***

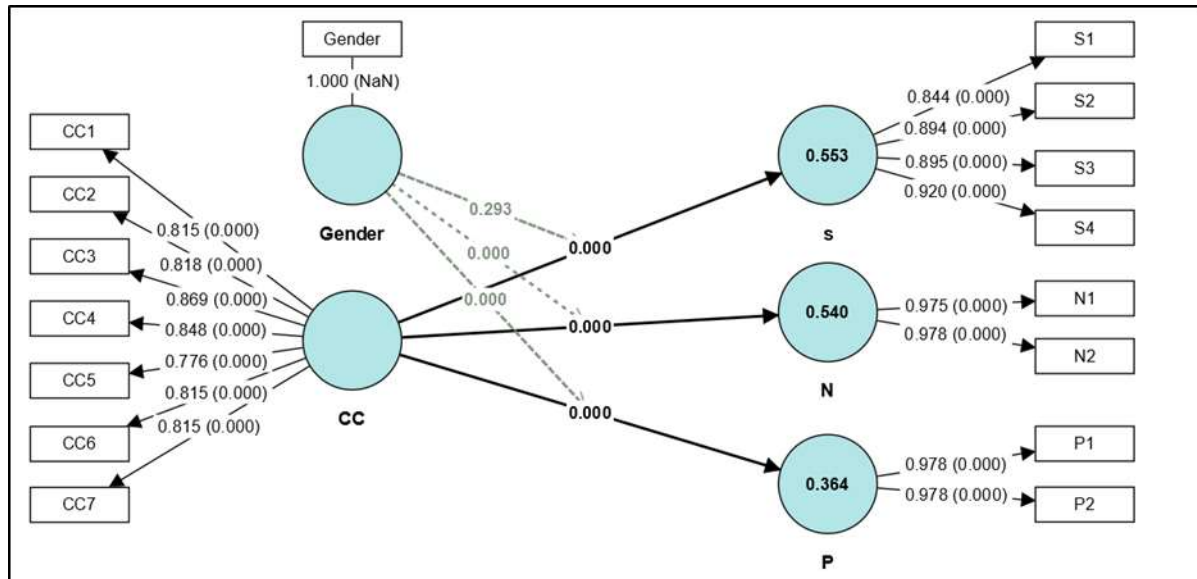
Since we applied a 5-point Likert scale for capturing the items in the tipping motivation scale, a cut-off points of 2.5 will be applied; any score of 2.5 and greater will be considered as high motivation, and all scores lower than 2.5 will be considered as low motivation. Given this structure, and incorporating the culture context level to tipping motivations, results are presented in table 4. Respondents of high context cultures were highly motivated to tip based on the service dimension (95%) in support of H1a, meaning that their tipping behavior is highly affected by the service quality, timelessness, and the serve's attitude. Opposingly, respondents of a low context culture are not motivated by such service elements (.05%), meaning they will tip regardless, therefore H1b is rejected. This can be attributed to their sense of obligation as was illustrated in the literature, where countries of low context culture, such as the United States, considers tipping as part of the employee wage. With regard to social norms and peer pressure as determinants of tipping motivations, respondents of high context cultures were distributed almost equally as it pertains to their motivation level, as there is statistical evidence that there is a negative low correlation between high context culture and social norms with significance of  $P=0.00$ , and a negative low correlation between high context culture and peer pressure with significance of  $P=0.00$ . Therefore, H2a and H3a are rejected. However, this result didn't hold when assessing the motivations level for social norms and peer pressure for individuals of low context cultures, where (92%) respondents were highly motivated by social norms and (87%) were highly motivated by peer pressure. There is statistical evidence that there is a positive low correlation between low context culture and social norms with significance of  $P=0.00$ , and a positive low correlation between low context culture and peer pressure with significance of  $P=0.00$ . Therefore, H2b and H3b are statistically supported. These results are consistent with the findings discussed in the literature (Azar 2007b; Lynn 1997; Lynn 2015).

Scale Items	Motivation Level	High Context Culture	Low Context Culture
Service	Low Motivation	.05%	.95%
	High Motivation	.95%	.05%
Social Norms	Low Motivation	56%	8%
	High Motivation	44%	92%
Peer Pressure	Low Motivation	55%	13%
	High Motivation	45%	87%

Table 4: Tipping Motivations and Cultural Context Level

### ***The Moderating Role of Gender on Tipping Motivations***

Following the results of the relationship between the cultural context level and the tipping motivation items of service, social norms and peer pressure, we applied gender as a moderator to this relationship. Results revealed that when gender is a moderator between the cultural context level and service as a tipping motivator, the effect is not statistically significant at  $P=0.293$ , and thus H4 is rejected. However, when gender moderates the relationship between the cultural context level and social norms as a tipping motivator, the effect is statistically significant at  $P=0.00$ . To illustrate, in high context cultures, females were highly motivated by social norms as tipping motivator with a mean score of 3.32 to a 5-point Likert scale (greater than 2.5 score is considered high motivation), while males scored a mean of 1.44 reflecting low motivation by social norms. Therefore, H5 is supported. Considerably in low context cultures, there were no gender differences. Similarly, when gender moderates the relationship between the cultural context level and peer pressure as a tipping motivator, the effect is statistically significant at  $P=0.00$ . To illustrate, in high context cultures, females were highly motivated by peer pressure as tipping motivator with a mean score of 3.50 to a 5-point Likert scale (greater than 2.5 score is considered high motivation), while males scored a mean of 1.80 reflecting low motivation by peer pressure. This result is in support of H6. In assessing the moderating role of gender on the relationship between low cultural context level and peer pressure, there were no gender differences. These results are expressed in the SEM for hypothesized model (Figure 2) and hypothesis testing results (Table 5).



S= Service, N= Social Norms, P= Peer Pressure, CC= Cultural Context Level.

Figure 2: SEM for Hypothesized Model

Hypotheses	t-Values	P-Values	Significance (p<0.05)
H1a: HCC -> S	10.087	.000	Supported
H1b: LCC -> S	1.388	.183	Not Supported
H2a: HCC -> N	-.699	.485	Not Supported
H2b: LCC -> N	4.716	.000	Supported
H3a: HCC -> P	1.219	.224	Not Supported
H3b: LCC -> P	3.280	.000	Supported
H4: Gender x CC -> s	1.051	0.293	Not supported
H5: Gender x CC -> N	4.565	0.000	Supported
H6: Gender x CC -> P	3.589	0.000	Supported

S= Service, N= Social Norms, P= Peer Pressure, CC= Cultural Context Level.

Table 5: Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing Result

## CONCLUSION

The intention of this research was of two folds; to assess whether previous assumptions of consumers tipping motivations will hold in high-context cultures and; to investigate the role of gender as a moderator in the relationship between cultural context level and tipping behavior motivations. Initially, previous research suggested that service is one of the major determinants of tipping behavior, assuming that the service fluctuating quality will determine the consumer tipping

motivations and behavior. The results yielded that consumers do behave differently in high and low cultural contexts, where respondents of high context culture are highly motivated by the service factor, thus the positive relationship is confirmed. However, consumers of low context culture were not motivated by the service level, suggesting they will tip regardless of the quality of service received, and this is naturally attributed to the expected behaviors of those individuals, especially relying on research results from western countries where servers' salary structure is dependable on consumer tips. As for the tipping motivation according to the social norms and peer pressure factors, individuals of high context culture were not highly motivated as respondents of low context cultures by those factors, which can be attributed to ample of reasons. Cultural differences have a wide span of application when studying consumer behavior, such differences were illustrated mainly by Hall's *Beyond Culture* (1979) and Hofstede's *Cultural Dimensions* (2011). In addition, such difference can also be explained utilizing Brehm's *Reactance Theory* (1966) and is supported in the findings of Dyussebayeva et al. (2022), where experiencing high levels of social pressure at the time of payment processing can lead to a decrease in perceived control, and thus, it will negatively impact the consumer tipping behavior.

Furthermore, previous research established the behavioral gender differences in gratuity and the effects of gender on this behavior (Hooas and Bigler, 2005), and is considered one of the tipping behavior predictors (Lynn, Zinkhan, and Harris, 1993). The findings of our research confirm the past literature, where gender played a moderating role on the initial relationship between the cultural context level and tipping motivations, specifically on the social norms and peer pressure dimensions of tipping motivations. Due to these findings, we can highlight that females in high cultural contexts behaved as if they were individuals representing a sample from a low context culture. This can be explained by the females' attitudes toward social status in their high context cultures, and generally, the influence of emotions in their decision making.

### **Limitations and Future Implications**

While the main objectives of this research and the intentions to assess the role of cultural context and gender on consumer tipping behavior are met, a few limitations are discussed in this section. One limitation is related to the dimension of cultural context level that was applied in this work; we utilized a scale concerned with the communications dimension only, and it is suggested for future research to expand utilizing Hofstede's *Cultural Dimensions*, similar to the work of Lynn, Zinkhan and Harris, (1993), Azar (2007b) and Lynn (1997). A second limitation is related to the Tipping Motivations Scale (TMS) used for this research. The scale was conceptualized and developed in a western context (a low context culture), and since other tipping motivation factors present in high context cultures were not reflected in this scale, the findings might be limited by the selected scale. Furthermore, while the sample represent characteristics of a high context culture, there are related circumstances impacting the sample environment that may have affected the way participants responded. For example, majority of survey respondents are individuals whom spent a good number of years highly socializing with foreigners from low context cultures,

or have spent a few years during their studies in a low context culture, which is expected to have affected their cultural orientation and influenced their survey responses.

Furthermore, the findings of this study provide market cultural information, which are beneficial for businesses operating globally and across different cultures. Such information is also valuable for managers in their training efforts for their front-line employees through service scripts (highlighting the factors that may grant them higher tips for example). Generally, this study adds to the literature of cultural consumer behavior, and the data can be examined in a time series approach to capture tipping motivations' differences, especially with the growing numbers of Saudi workers joining the service work force.

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