

# ***Service Quality Measurement in Retail Store Context: A Review of Advances Made Using SERVQUAL and RSQS***

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*Improving service quality is believed to improve profitability and enhance retail store performance. Such improvements however, require monitoring and continuous measurement of performance along service dimensions that determine standards of service quality. It goes without saying then that reliable and valid tools for measuring service quality are extremely important. Present study provides a detailed discussion of SERVQUAL and RSQS; instruments that have been widely used for measuring retail service quality. A brief discussion of the application of the two instruments in retail context is presented with an objective to determine whether RSQS and/or SERVQUAL provide an effective measure of retail service quality. Review of the empirical researches reveals that the both SERVQUAL and RSQS fail to serve as univocally reliable and valid measures of retail service quality. Modifications for refining the present scales have been suggested. The paper calls for developing improved measures of retail service quality in future.*

**Keywords:**

## **Introduction**

Rapidly changing retail environment along with sophisticated and demanding customers have made it mandatory for the retailers to differentiate themselves for meeting the needs of their customers better than the competition. For competitive survival, retailers are focusing on areas under their control that might give them an edge in the market. Delivering high levels of service quality is an area that is receiving major attention in this regard. Service quality as a tool can help marketers in not only improving their competitive positioning in the market (Mehta et al. 2000) but can also be used as a valuable tool for enhancing consumer satisfaction (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt 2000), retention and patronage (Yavas et al. 1997), and creating customer loyalty (Wong and Sohal 2003). Given its apparent relationship to costs (Crosby 1979), profitability (Buzzell and Gale 1987; Rust and Zahorik 1993), customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew 1991; Boulding et al. 1993), customer retention (Reichheld and Sasser 1990), and positive word of mouth, retailers are keen to adopt service

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quality as a means for improving their performance in the market. Nothing would benefit retailers more than an accurate and valid measure of service quality that helps them in measuring their performance along the key dimensions of retail service. Such a measure would help them in evaluating their performance and taking corrective action wherever required.

Review of literature indicates that SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al. 1988) and RSQS (Dabholkar et al. 1996) are the most extensively used measures of service quality in retail context. In the present paper a detailed discussion of the advances made in the area of retail service quality measurement has been provided with an intention of drawing attention to the pros and cons of using these instruments for measuring retail service quality. Empirical investigations where SERVQUAL and RSQS have been used for measuring retail service quality are discussed individually in the present study to develop a critical understanding of the two scales. Efforts have also been made to identify and suggest modifications that need to be incorporated for improving and refining the present scales. Specifically, the paper is concerned with investigating whether RSQS and/or SERVQUAL are valid measures of retail service quality or is there a need for a new instrument. Can RSQS provide an effective measure of service quality for retail stores or does SERVQUAL serve the purpose. The higher objective of the paper remains to provide a foundation for pursuing further research in the area of measuring service quality of retail stores.

### ***Introduction to SERVQUAL***

A landmark contribution in the field of service quality which has aroused a great deal of research interest is that of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988). As early as 1985 the authors identified ten components of service quality, namely, Reliability, Responsiveness, Competence, Access, Courtesy, Communication, Credibility, Security, Understanding/Knowing the customer, and Tangibles. These ten components were later merged into five dimensions of- Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness in their 1988 work. Of the original ten components only three- Reliability, Tangibles and Responsiveness remained distinct, while the remaining seven components merged into two aggregate dimensions of Assurance and Empathy. The scale thus developed, included a 22-item scale termed SERVQUAL, which evaluated service quality on the five service quality dimensions by comparing customer's expectations and perceptions.

SERVQUAL was developed by measuring the quality of service provided in diverse setting, including that provided by an appliance repair and maintenance firm, several retail banks, a long distance telephone provider, a security broker, and credit card companies, as the authors intended to develop and design a scale which could be used for measuring service quality across service environments. Since its development, SERVQUAL has been subsequently adapted and used in a variety of settings like the quality of service offered by a hospital (Babakus and Mangold 1989), banking (Cronin and Taylor 1992; Spreng and Singh 1993), business school placement center, tyre store, dental school patient clinic and acute care hospital (Carman 1990), discount and departmental stores (Finn and Lamb 1991; Teas 1993; Dabholkar et al. 1996) and others. Though the scale has seen only a limited application in retail store context, it nonetheless

remains one of the many areas where SERVQUAL has been applied for measuring service quality.

### **Measuring Retail Service Quality using SERVQUAL**

A retail store experience significantly differs from a non retail store experience in terms of customers negotiating their way through the store, finding the merchandise they want, interacting with several store personnel along the way, and returning the merchandise, all of which influence customer's perceptions of service quality. The uniqueness of the services offered by a retailer makes it mandatory that care be taken while selecting and using scales for measuring service quality in retail store context. Though the absence of alternate measures of service quality in a retail environment has often meant that SERVQUAL be used for this purpose; researchers (Finn and Lamb 1991) have cautioned that care must be taken when applying SERVQUAL in retail setting. Given below is the review and discussion of some of the instances where SERVQUAL has been applied in a retail context (summarized in Table 1).

#### ***Empirical Researches using SERVQUAL***

*Carman (1990)* was the first to apply SERVQUAL to tyre retailers (a retail setting, offering a mix of merchandise and services). He identified nine factors of service quality, using principal axis factor analysis followed by oblique rotation. On the basis of his findings he concluded that the five dimensions of SERVQUAL were not generic, and suggested that the instrument be adapted by adding new items or factors as pertinent to different situations.

*Finn and Lamb (1991)* tested SERVQUAL in different types of retail stores (department stores and discount stores). Their confirmatory factor analysis was unable to provide a good fit to the proposed five-factor structure of SERVQUAL for either of these commercial formats making them conclude that the instrument could not be used as a valid measure of service quality in retail companies without modifications, although they were unable to provide an acceptable alternative measure.

*Guiry, Hutchinson and Weitz (1992)* modified the original 22 item SERVQUAL to a 51 item instrument by dropping 7 items and adding 36 new items designed to measure service attributes at the retail store level. The exploratory factor analysis carried out by them revealed seven dimensions- Personal service during interaction with employees, Merchandise assortment, Store transaction procedure reliability, Employee availability in the store before interaction, Tangibles, Store service policy reliability and Price. The authors concluded that the number as well as the composition of the dimensions needed to be modified while studying service quality of retail stores.

*Gagliano and Hathcote (1994)* extracted four factors- Personal attention, Reliability, Tangibles and Convenience while investigating service quality in retail-clothing sector. Two of these- Personal attention and Convenience have no correspondence to SERVQUAL. The five determinants did not factor out as expected. The authors concluded that the original

SERVQUAL scale was not an effective tool for measuring service quality in apparel specialty stores.

*Vazquez, Rodriguez and Ruiz (1995)*, identified five dimensions of service quality- Product presentation and shopping convenience, Awareness of promotions, Quality of assortment and of personal interaction, Pricing policy, and Retailers recognition of prestige; using principal component factor analysis. A total of 24 items were identified of which 12 were from SERVQUAL while 12 new items were added by the authors.

**Table 1. Summary of Empirical Researches using SERVQUAL**

Author(s)	Year	Setting	Key Arguments/Findings
<b>Vazquez, Rodriguez and Ruiz</b>	1995	Use of investment banker in acquisitions, US, 1986-1993	Five dimensions of service quality were identified which were not the same as SERVQUAL. A total of 24 items were identified of which 12 were from SERVQUAL while 12 new items were added by the authors.
<b>Gagliano and Hathcote</b>	1994	Apparel specialty stores	Identified four factors two of which had no correspondence to SERVQUAL.
<b>Guiry, Hutchinson and Weitz</b>	1992	Retail store	Original 22 item SERVQUAL was modified to a 51 item instrument by dropping 7 items and adding 36 new items. Exploratory factor analysis revealed seven dimensions.
<b>Finn and Lamb</b>	1991	Department stores and discount stores	Confirmatory factor analysis did not provide a good fit to the proposed five-factor structure of SERVQUAL for either of department stores and discount stores.
<b>Carman</b>	1990	Tyre retailers	Nine factors of service quality were identified using principal axis factor analysis.

As is evident from the review of studies mentioned above SERVQUAL fails to provide an accurate and effective measure of service quality in retail settings such as discount stores, and apparel specialty stores that offer a mix of merchandise and services. An interesting feature that emerges from the above review is that there is a wide variety of empirical factor structures that can be obtained. These factor structures vary in terms of the number of interpretable factors, which consistently differ from the five-factor structure proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988; 1991). The considerable variation in empirical factor structures reported in the literature raises doubts over the use of the SERVQUAL instrument in retail research. Finn and Lamb (1991) found the SERVQUAL model to be inappropriate for measuring service quality in a retail store setting and concluded that retailers and consumer researchers should not treat SERVQUAL as an 'off the shelf' measure for perceived service quality. In their opinion, much refinement was needed while applying SERVQUAL in specific companies and industries. Similar concerns were voiced by Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996) when they

noted that SERVQUAL which was developed primarily to assess service quality for pure service environments, failed to measure service quality for retail stores.

### ***Introduction to RSQS***

The unique characteristic of store retailing implies that parameters that define service quality in retailing differ from any other service (Finn and Lamb, 1991; Gagliano and Hathcote 1994). As such measures developed for measuring service quality in pure service setups would fail to work in retail store context. Realizing the need for investigating the dimensions of service quality in retail stores and developing a scale to measure retail service quality, Dabholkar et al. (1996) conducted -phenomenological interviews, exploratory depth interviews, and used qualitative study techniques for tracking the thought processes of customers during an actual shopping experience at a store. The authors combined the findings from these qualitative investigations with the existing literature and SERVQUAL, to form a basis for developing RSQS. In their opinion five basic dimensions of - Physical aspects, Reliability, Personal interaction, Problem solving and Policy were central to service quality. These dimensions were expected to be distinct yet highly correlated. As an improvement over SERVQUAL the Physical aspects dimension as proposed in RSQS had a broader meaning as compared to the Tangibles dimension of SERVQUAL. The dimension included the appearance of the physical facilities as well as the convenience of store layout and public areas. Reliability dimension on the other hand is similar to the Reliability dimension of SERVQUAL and is concerned with the store's ability to keep promises and do things right. The Personal interaction dimension in RSQS was a combination of the SERVQUAL dimensions of Responsiveness and Assurance and measured customer perceptions of whether or not the store has courteous and helpful employees who inspire confidence and trust. Problem solving was a new dimension proposed by the authors that assesses the store's performance on the basis of its ability to handle potential problems. Problem solving dimension was seen as separate from the personal interaction dimension as service recovery was recognized to be a critical part of good service. The researchers introduced a new dimension of Policy that represented aspects of service quality that are directly influenced by store policy. The dimension incorporated such service aspects as high-quality merchandise, convenient parking, convenient store hours, acceptance of major credit cards, and availability of a store credit card.

Dabholkar et al. (1996) believed that though the customers evaluated retail service quality on the five basic dimensions, they viewed overall service quality as a higher order factor that captured a meaning common to all the dimensions. They contended that retail service quality had a hierarchical factor structure, where overall service quality be viewed as a higher or second order-factor. The proposed measure of retail service quality RSQS included 28 items, 17 of which came from the existing SERVQUAL scale and the remaining 11 items from the researchers' review of literature and qualitative research. Five items from SERVQUAL were deemed inappropriate and dropped.

Dabholkar et al. (1996) tested the RSQS with US department store customers. The scale was found to possess strong validity and reliability. Results of the data analysis showed an excellent fit with the factorial structure proposed by them. To validate their findings, the authors conducted a second study with the same instrument at two store units of a departmental store involved in the first study. Again, the model showed an excellent fit. The authors thus concluded that the scale was suited for studying retail businesses that offered a mix of services and goods, such as departmental or specialty stores. They felt that the scale could also be used for gathering benchmark data regarding current levels of service quality as well as to conduct periodic checks to measure service improvements. The instrument could serve as a diagnostic tool that would allow retailers to determine service areas that were weak and needed attention. The authors also suggested that replicate studies be conducted for other retailers offering a mix of services and goods as an extension of their research. Since the instrument is relatively recent, only a few studies measuring service quality of retail institutions have administered this scale. These are reviewed in the following section and summarized in Table 2.

### ***Empirical Researches using RSQS***

*Boshoff and Terblanche (1997)* investigated the reliability and validity of the RSQS in South African retail environment. Analysis of the data revealed that the instrument was a valid and reliable (Cronbach alpha values ranged from 0.68 to 0.90 for the five dimensions) measure of retail service quality in South Africa. The instrument was found to be suitable for studying the service quality of South African retail industry comprising of department stores, speciality stores and hypermarkets that offered a mix of goods and services.

*Mehta, Lalwani and Han (2000)* explored the usefulness of RSQS as a tool for measuring the service quality of different retail environments in Singapore. The authors tested the reliability of the scale and found the Cronbach alpha values to be ranging from 0.52 to 0.86 and 0.75 to 0.92 for the five dimensions of RSQS in the context of supermarket and electronic goods retailers, respectively. However, strong inter-correlation existed between the various dimensions of the RSQS for both supermarket and electronic goods retailers. For supermarkets, Physical aspects and Personal interaction were significant in explaining the variance of the RSQS scale under stepwise regression, while the dimension of Personal interaction alone was significant in contributing to the overall variance for the RSQS scale for an electronic goods retailer. On the basis of these findings, the authors finally concluded that the RSQS scale was a better measure of service quality for a supermarket retailer than for an electronic goods retailer.

*Siu and Cheung (2001)* used RSQS for studying a well known departmental store chain in Hong Kong. Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation performed on 25 items of RSQS (3 items were deleted in a pretest) failed to identify the five dimensions of - Physical aspects, Reliability, Personal interaction, Problem solving and Policy. Instead six service quality dimensions emerged from their study. These were - Personal

interaction, Physical appearance, Promises, Policy, Convenience and Problem solving. The fact that the original Reliability dimension did not factor out was consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Mehta, Lalwani and Han (2000) in the context of supermarkets in Singapore. Siu and Cheung concluded that though RSQS could be applied for studying retail stores in Hong Kong some modifications were required.

*Kim and Jin (2002)* similarly, tried to determine whether RSQS could be validated in the context of discount stores for US and Korean customers. The authors found the five items designed to measure Policy to be unreliable in both countries. This could have been on account of the fact that the Policy dimension was simply not present in customers' perception of service quality for discount stores (Kim and Jin 2002). Moreover, the research also revealed that consumers in both cultures did not make any distinction between Personal interaction and Problem solving. In fact the customers appeared to view the store's problem-solving ability as an indicator of its ability to give customers' personal attention and confidence about the products being purchased. As such these were combined into a single construct named Personal attention. By using only three dimensions of retail service quality - Physical aspects, Reliability and Personal attention, RSQS appeared to provide a good fit to the data for both the US and Korean samples. However, measurement equivalence did not exist across the two samples even though the factor structure remained the same. The authors therefore concluded that RSQS could not be viewed as a reliable and valid measure for cross-cultural comparisons.

*Siu and Chow (2003)* used Siu and Cheung's (2001) adapted version of RSQS to examine the service quality of a Japanese supermarket in Hong Kong and its impact on customer satisfaction and future consumption behavior. Few items were deleted as the Cronbach alpha showed that they were inconsistent with other items in the same dimension. The remaining 23 items were reduced into five dimensions of Personal Interaction, Trustworthiness, Physical Aspect, Policy and Reliability. The original dimension of Problem Solving as given in the retail service quality scale was integrated into the Personal Interaction construct while a new factor emerged in this study, which was labeled as Trustworthiness. The integration of Problem solving dimension with the Personal interaction dimension is similar to that done by Kim and Jin (2002) in their study of US and Korean customers.

*Kaul (2005)* tested the applicability of RSQS in the Indian specialty apparel store context. Confirmatory factor analysis of the component structures using AMOS 4.0 indicated that the RSQS dimensions were not valid in India. Analysis of the data indicated that the Indian consumer did not distinguish between service attributes related to Reliability and Policy. Findings of the study indicate that RSQS has a four dimension structure in Indian retailing. Authors found that the item 'store gives customers individual attention' (a Personal Interaction item) and the item 'store has clean physical facilities' (related to Physical Aspects) were perceived as policy related matters by the Indian consumers. At the sub-dimensions level, a four factor structure instead of six factors was supported by the data. Except for the sub-dimensions pertaining to 'Physical aspects' dimension, no other

sub-dimensions were supported. Besides this the sub-dimensions are highly correlated not just within the dimension but also across the dimensions of Reliability and Personal Interaction. These findings raise doubts about the validity of RSQS as a measure of service quality in Indian retailing.

Kim and Jin (2002) point out that among the five dimensions of the RSQS, Problem Solving and Policy were the only two new dimensions proposed by Dabholkar et al. (1996), the rest being similar to SERVQUAL. In the study of discount store customers in US and Korea (Kim and Jin 2002), and the study of supermarket customers in Hong Kong (Siu and Chow 2003), the Problem Solving dimension merged with Personal Interaction dimension, as customers failed to distinguish between the two. The Policy dimension had to be dropped in the study of discount store customers in US and Korea (Kim and Jin, 2002) due to low item to total correlation. These findings call researchers to consider whether RSQS (Dabholkar et al. 1996) provides an effective measure of service quality for retail stores or does SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al. 1988) serve the purpose.

**Table 2. Summary of Empirical Researches using RSQS**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Key Arguments/Findings</b>
<b>Kaul</b>	2005	Specialty apparel stores in India	RSQS dimensions not valid in India. Indian retailing found to have a four dimension structure. At the sub-dimensions level, a four factor structure instead of six factors was supported.
<b>Siu and Chow</b>	2003	Japanese supermarket in Hong Kong	Five items deleted due to low Cronbach alpha values. Problem Solving dimension as given in the retail service quality scale was integrated into the Personal Interaction construct while a new factor emerged from the study, called Trustworthiness.
<b>Kim and Jin</b>	2002	Discount stores in US and Korea	Five items designed to measure Policy found to be unreliable in both countries. Personal interaction and Problem solving combined into a single construct named Personal attention. Measurement equivalence did not exist across US and Korean samples. RSQS could not be viewed as a reliable and valid measure for cross-cultural comparisons.

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Author(s)	Year	Setting	Key Arguments/Findings
<b>Siu and Cheung</b>	2001	Departmental store chain in Hong Kong	Three items deleted in a pretest. Five factor structure of RSQS could not be identified; instead six service quality dimensions emerged from the study.
<b>Mehta, Lalwani and Han</b>	2000	Supermarket and electronic goods retailers in Singapore	RSQS scale was a better measure of service quality for a supermarket retailer than for an electronic goods retailer.
<b>Boshoff and Terblanche</b>	1997	Department stores, speciality stores and hypermarkets in South Africa	RSQS found to be a valid and reliable measure of retail service quality.

### Searching for a Valid Measure of Retail Service Quality

Despite the inherent limitations, which mar both SERVQUAL and RSQS rendering them less effective measures of retail service quality, the absence of any credible alternative has resulted in the SERVQUAL and RSQS instruments being widely applied for measuring service quality in the retail environment. It therefore becomes imperative for researchers to either come up with alternative measures of retail service quality or to suggest modifications to SERVQUAL and/or RSQS so as to make them effective tools for measuring service quality of retail stores. Since the development of a new measure of retail service quality is beyond the scope of the present paper, an attempt has been made to suggest modifications that would help in refining the present scales so that they may be pronounced as valid, accurate and acceptable measures of service quality across different retail formats in cross-cultural, cross-national studies.

#### **SERVQUAL**

Although SERVQUAL was originally designed to provide a generic measure that could be applied to service environment, Carman (1990) found that the measure needed to be customized to the specific service in question. Customization of the SERVQUAL scale to a retail context would involve the consideration of some new items being added to the scale and/or changing the wording of some of the items already in the scale to suit the context. Likewise, given the fact that item-factor relationships in SERVQUAL are unstable, with up to nine factors being identified by Carman in his study of tyre retailers, four factors being extracted in Gagliano and Hathcote's (1994) investigation of retail clothing sector, we understand that plausible explanations need to be provided. Parasuraman et al, (1991) explained these differences among empirically derived factors across replications, due to across dimension similarity and/or within dimension differences in customers' evaluations of a specific company involved in each setting. Carman (1990) on the other hand, was of the

view that customers are at least partly context specific while employing dimensions to evaluate service quality. In particular he observed that if a dimension was of grave importance to the customer it was likely to be broken up into a number of sub-dimensions. It may thus be proposed that researchers measuring retail service quality would do well if they started by identifying the dimension/s that play a critical role in measuring service quality of retail stores and moved on to identifying the inherent sub-dimensions that may be involved. It may be appropriate at this stage to mention that though the delineation of the five SERVQUAL factors is not consistent in cross-sectional analysis, the validity of the 22 items of the performance scale of SERVQUAL appear to be well supported by their subsequent use as reported in the literature (Carman 1990).

The paradigmatic flaw of adopting the disconfirmation paradigm (Cronin and Taylor 1992) in SERVQUAL or the use of a 'gap' approach (Babakus and Boller 1992) has been resolved by Cronin and Taylor (1992) who applied SERVPERF (the performance based measure of SERVQUAL) in four industries. It was found that SERVPERF explained more of the variance in an overall measure of service quality than did SERVQUAL. The use of SERVPERF has gained further strength by the observations made by Zeithaml and her colleagues (Boulding et al. 1993) who found that service quality was influenced only by perceptions. We are thus of the view that SERVPERF with due modifications and validity checks can serve as a valid tool for measuring service quality in retail store context.

### **RSQS**

RSQS was put forward by Dabholkar et al. (1996) as a generalized scale for measuring the quality of retail services that could be adapted to specific retail settings. They believed that their instrument would serve as a diagnostic tool for retailers to determine which service areas needed improvement. However, as is evident from the review of literature presented earlier, there are inherent limitations in the use of RSQS as a tool for measuring service quality across retail formats. There is not only a serious lack of agreement regarding the number of items that need to be used while assessing retail service quality; there are doubts even about the universality of the five dimensions of retail service quality as identified and proposed by Dabholkar et al. (1996).

In the light of the many limitations that are inherent in the application and administration of RSQS developed by Dabholkar et al. (1996), it would be right to conclude that different retail settings are perceived as providing different sets of services to the customers. Hence, it would be appropriate to suggest that the RSQS be adapted, modified and validated in the context of the specific retail setting being studied. Researchers can take care of these problems by first identifying the dimensions most important to the customer while evaluating service quality of stores belonging to a specific retail category, identifying the sub-dimensions therein and, adding new items, deleting or rewording some of the old items and so on. Winsted (1999) suggested that service quality dimensions that may be prevalent in other cultures should also be pursued in future research. It is only when RSQS as an instrument for measuring service quality of retail stores has been duly adapted to the

cultural and demographic uniqueness of the population under study that it can provide meaningful insight about the dimensions on which retail service quality should be evaluated.

### **Recent Advancements**

Recent research suggests that culture may play a significant role in determining how customers perceive what constitutes service quality. In countries having cultures very different from the culture in United States of America, RSQS and SERVQUAL may fail to capture the full range of dimensions used by customers to evaluate the service quality of a retail store. Researchers have started exploring the possibility of using RSQS and SERVQUAL for studying differences in customer evaluations of service quality across nations and across cultures. Kim and Jin (2002) in their study of US and Korean customers found that RSQS items measured US customers' perceptions of service quality better than those of the Korean customers. Inequivalence of a measurement model across samples calls for researchers to be cautious about using the means and other measures of association calculated from the scale in cross-cultural research (Mullen, 1995). It is hence advised that RSQS be adapted when studying retail settings across different cultures. This is further corroborated by Imrie, Cadogan and McNaughton (2004) who in their study found that not only did cultural values influence the hierarchy of service quality dimensions but also that the SERVQUAL as proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) failed to capture the breadth of criteria used by Taiwanese customers. In fact the authors found that inter-personal relationships, which are an integral part of the Taiwanese life, were not adequately addressed within the SERVQUAL model at all.

### **Conclusion**

As is evident from the above discussion neither SERVQUAL nor RSQS provide a reliable and valid measure of retail service quality. There are problems regarding the factor structure and sub-dimensions of the two scales. Service quality researchers have suggested scale adaptation to take care of contextual variations both in terms of the industry setting (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller 1992; Dabholkar et al. 1996) and the country of study, given a difference in cultural and environmental factors (Malhotra et al. 1994; Furrer et al. 2000; Mehta et al. 2000; Kim and Jin 2002). Depending on the context, adaptation of the service quality scale may not be simple and the specific application should be examined in considerable detail (Brown et al. 1993). Continued refinement of the SERVQUAL and RSQS on the basis of qualitative research and an extensive review of literature would help in identifying items that need to be considered for inclusion or deletion in both scales. The modified scales could then be subjected to further testing by applying them across retail formats using cross-cultural samples. This would not only help researchers in developing a new, more reliable, culturally bounded and accurate measure of retail service quality, which can then be applied globally but would also help managers in making a more accurate assessment of service quality of retail stores across nations

supporting different cultures. Future research needs to proceed along the suggested guidelines if research in retail service quality is to be rendered meaningful.

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