Using Servqual Model to Assess Service Quality and Students Satisfaction in Al-Azhar University – Palestine

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Abstract:
Higher education plays a unique role in advancing the progress and growth throughout the world and therefore it is important to maintain a high level of quality through greater attention to the recipients of the service of education, particularly students.
Purpose: the purpose of this study is to assess the overall students satisfaction perceptions from al-azhar university – gaze-Palestine with the services provided to them from the university and try to make appropriate recommendations.
Methodology: A SERVQUAL model questioner was distributed randomly among the students at the university in all faculties to assess the quality of service as perceived by students.
Results : The results of this study show that In general, the students' satisfaction about service quality dropped from Expectation to perception of the students' which means that expectations exceeded perceptions and all the dimensions showed higher expectations than perceptions of services

Keywords: *Service Quality, measuring service quality, perceptions, expectations*

1. Background
Higher education plays an important role in enhancement of an individual's quality of life. The quality of higher education is considered as a fundamental factor for the development of a country, because universities are the places where professional people are learned and trained, and then start to work in various sectors within the country,
the high demand and the increasing level of competition on the education service influences the importance of quality in the higher education sector in Palestine, the increasing demand for higher education service has increased the degree of attention of university managers and quality managers So as to ensure the ability of competition and to continue, This can be achieved only by ensuring the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of higher education service, especially students , the idea of the research is to identify the degree of satisfaction of the students at Al-Azhar University for services provided to them by the university in order to reach results that enable the researcher to make appropriate recommendations.

2. Literature Review
Quality in service is very important especially for the growth and development of the service sector and maximizing the significance of the higher education services in the economy; the measurement of education service quality became important. This is true, but there is a problem here which is about lack of knowledge and information about the level of educational services provided to the student, indeed the lack of knowledge about the student perception may lead the university to function without concrete goals and thus will not be able to compete or provide a high level of educational quality.
The significance of this study is to help the university (Al-azhar) in Palestine to improve the educational quality by using (adapting) SERVQUAL model and to benefit from the results of this study.

2.1. Service Quality
Quality in services can be defined as a customer satisfaction index for any service, and this satisfaction can be measured by any criteria (SATOLLO et al., 2005). service quality also can be defined as the overall assessment of a service by the customer (Eshghi et al., 2008, p.121) , landrum mention that Service quality is determined by calculating the difference between two scores of perceptions and expectations(P-E) where better service quality results in a smaller gap (Landrum et al., 2008).

2.1.1. Measuring Service Quality in Higher Education
The measurement of service quality is often a comparison between what customers feel the service should offer and their evaluation and/or perception of the service's actual performance.Actually There are a number of models which try to capture and define "Service Quality". They each have their strengths, and weaknesses , one of these models is: RATER model which was produced by Zeithaml (1990). RATER identifies the 5 key areas which together form the qualities of a service offering from a customer perspective. RATER focuses on the dimensions of customers expectations (Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Tangibles) . another model is the GAP model which was developed by Parasuraman et al. (Zithaml & Bitner 1996).
This model offers an integrated view of the consumer-company relationship. Another model has been used and known as Grönroos' Perceived Service Quality, in this model, expectations are a function of market communications, image, word of mouth, and consumer needs and learning.
My study is mainly based on the discrepancy between expected service and perceived service from the university students' perspective. The ultimate goal is to obtain a better knowledge of how students perceive service quality in the university.

2.1.2. Research Problem
This study aims to answer the following main question: "What is the level of quality of services of Al-azhar university from the perspective of students according to SERVQUAL model?" this question will be stated in the following sub questions?
- What are the students' expectations about the quality of services provided by Al-azhar University according to SERVQUAL model?
- What are the students' perceptions about the quality of services provided by Al-azhar University according to SERVQUAL model?
- Are there any differences in the answers of the respondents concerning the level of service quality due to demographic variables (gender, level of education, specialization)?

2.1.3. Research Hypothesis
There are statistically significant differences at level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the perceptions and expectations of the students of Al Azhar University towards the service quality

2.1.4. Sub-hypotheses

➢ Sub.1There are statistically significant differences at a level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the perceived and expected level of (reliability) of the services for the students of al-azhar University.

➢ Sub.2There are statistically significant differences at a level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the perceived and expected level of (assurance) of the services for the students of al-azhar University.

➢ Sub.3There are statistically significant differences at a level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the perceived and expected level of (tangibles) of the services for the students of al-azhar University.

➢ Sub.4There are statistically significant differences at level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the perceived and expected level of (empathy) of the services for the students of al-azhar University.

➢ Sub.5There are statistically significant differences at a level of significance $\alpha \leq 0.05$ between the perceived and expected level of (responsiveness) of the services for the students of al-azhar University.

A-There are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectation level of the services' quality of the students of al-azhar University due to the demographic variables (gender – age – specialization).

2.1.5. Scope and Limitations
The target group of the study are the students (undergraduate and master students) of al-azhar university in gaza, the study used SERVQUAL model as a Quality measurement tool.

3. Methodology
Research methodology focuses mainly on the quantitative method and while the survey study is considered as a research technique. The SERVQUAL approach of Parasuraman et al 1988, used for measuring service quality in the targeted university. Population and Sample Given that the study is about measuring service quality of higher education in Al Azhar University from Gaza, the students of Al Azhar university is the population for my study, whereas Al Azhar university has a population of (18157) students, Data Analysis technique, Collected data analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools based on SERVQUAL method. – Statistical package for social science (SPSS), Data analysis and results, Analysis of SERVQUAL (Service quality) model, following, the most important results of the statistical analysis for Service quality model dimensions (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy) according to Expectation and Perception of students of Al Azhar University in Gaza. The mean, standard deviation, and the relative important index were calculated for each dimension and each item in each dimension.

3.1. Tangibles

Table 1 show that the relative important index of students expectations of service tangibles is (76.8%) from students point of view, whereas the relative important index of students Perception of service tangibles is (51.6%) from students point of view that indicates that the level of satisfaction of Al Azhar students on service tangibles dropped (25.2%).

Figure 1 illustrate the level of Expectation and Perception for each item in service tangible dimension from students' point of view.
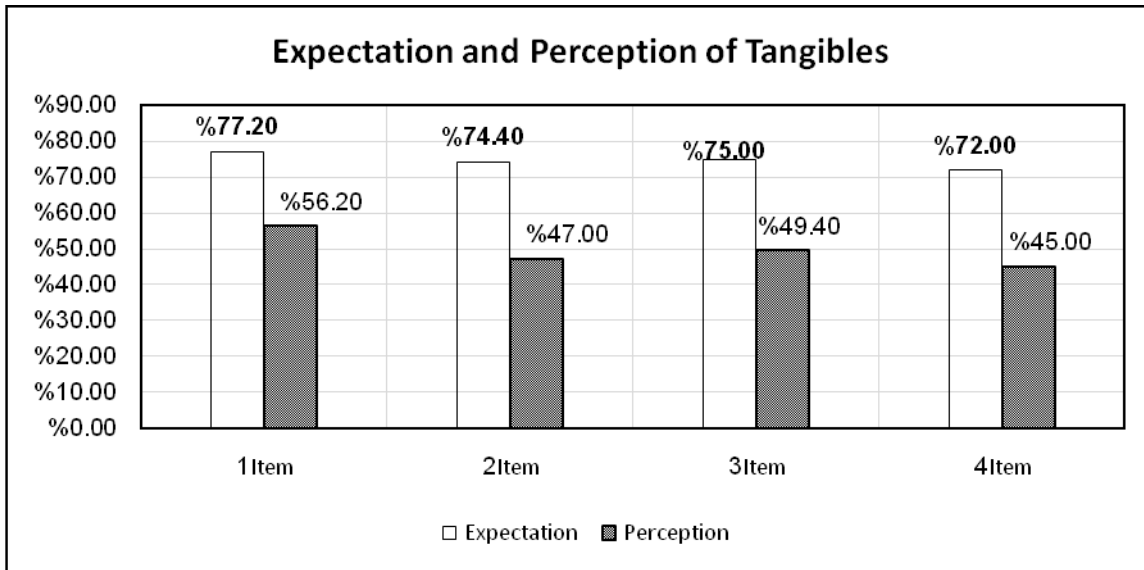

Figure 1: level of Expectation and Perception for each item in Tangibles dimension

3.2. Reliability

Table 1 show that the relative important index of students expectations of service reliability is (73.8%) from students point of view, whereas the relative important index of students Perception of service reliability is (49%) from students point of view that indicates that the level of satisfaction of Al Azhar students on service reliability dropped (24.8%).

Figure 2 illustrate the level of Expectation and Perception for each item in service reliability dimension from students' point of view.
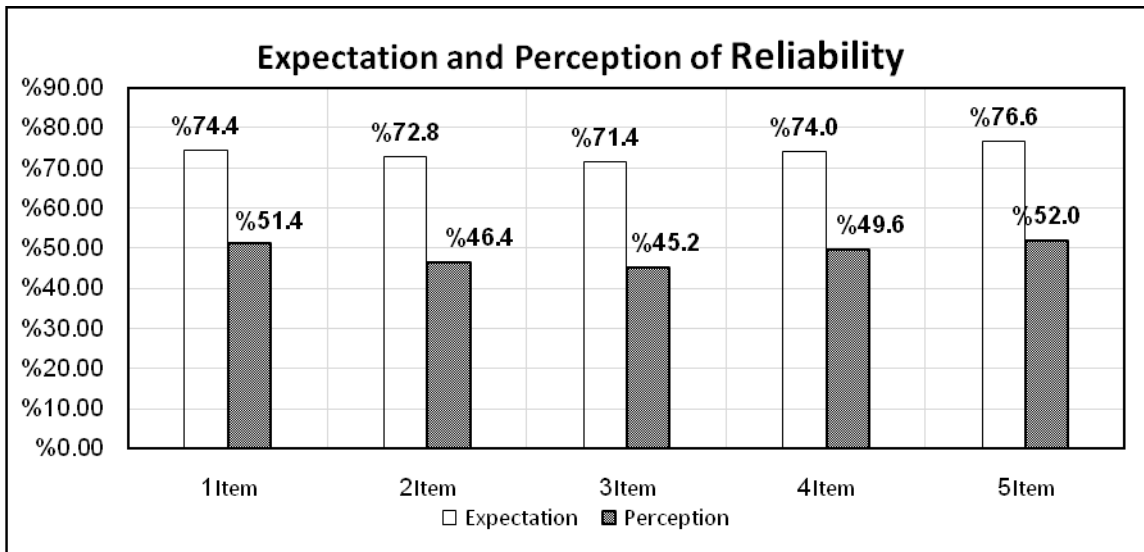

Figure 2: level of Expectation and Perception for each item in Reliability dimension

3.3. Responsiveness

Table 1 show that the relative important index of students expectations of service responsiveness is (74.6%) from students point of view, whereas the relative important index of students' Perception of service responsiveness is (49.4%) from students point of view. that indicates that the level of satisfaction of Al Azhar students on service responsiveness dropped (25.2%).

Figure 3 illustrate the level of Expectation and Perception for each item in service responsiveness dimension from students' point of view.
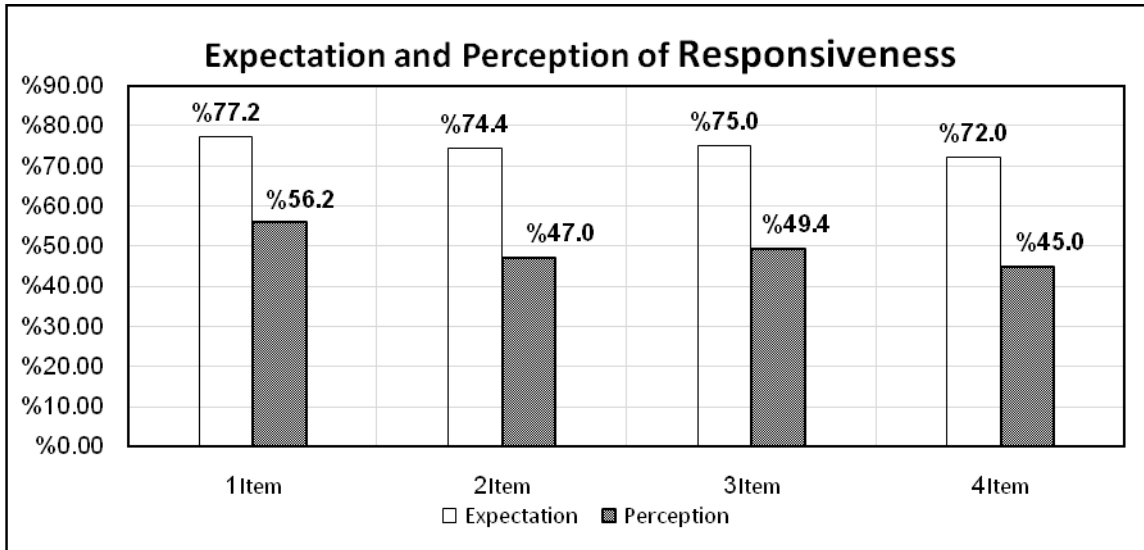

Figure 3: level of Expectation and Perception for each item in Responsiveness dimension

3.4. Assurance

Table 1 show that the relative important index of students' expectations of service assurance is (77.6%) from students point of view, whereas the relative important index of students' Perception of service assurance is (52.2%) from students point of view that indicates that the level of satisfaction of Al Azhar students on service assurance dropped (25.4%).

Figure 4 illustrate the level of Expectation and Perception for each item in service assurance dimension from students' point of view.
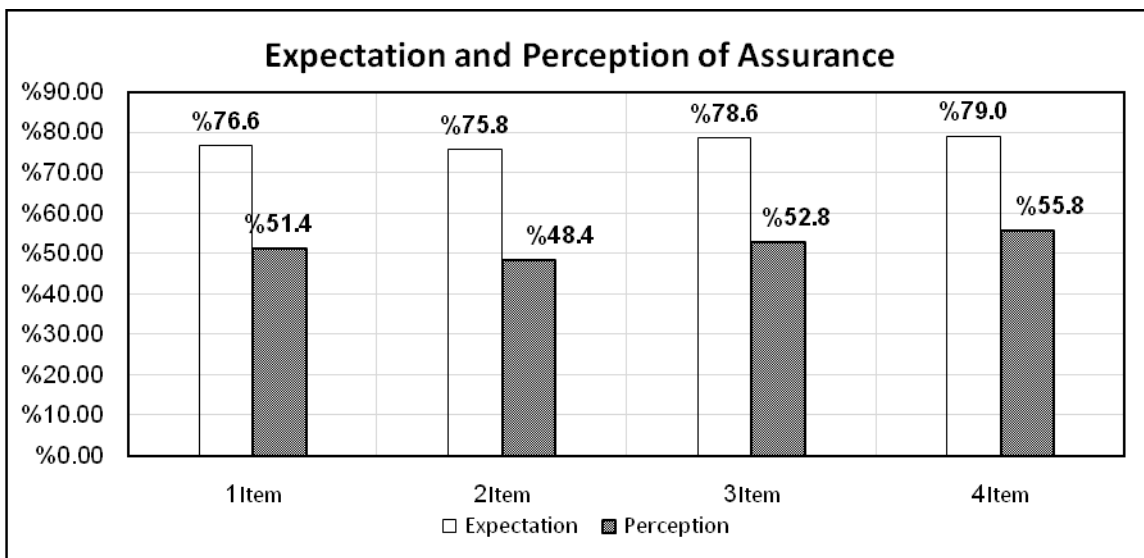

Figure 4: level of Expectation and Perception for each item in Assurance dimension

3.5. Empathy
Table 1 show that the relative important index of students expectations of service empathy is (72.6%) from students point of view, whereas the relative important index of students Perception of service empathy is (47.4%) from students point of view. that indicates that the level of satisfaction of Al Azhar students on service empathy dropped (25.2%).
Figure 5 illustrate the level of Expectation and Perception for each item in service empathydimension from students' point of view.
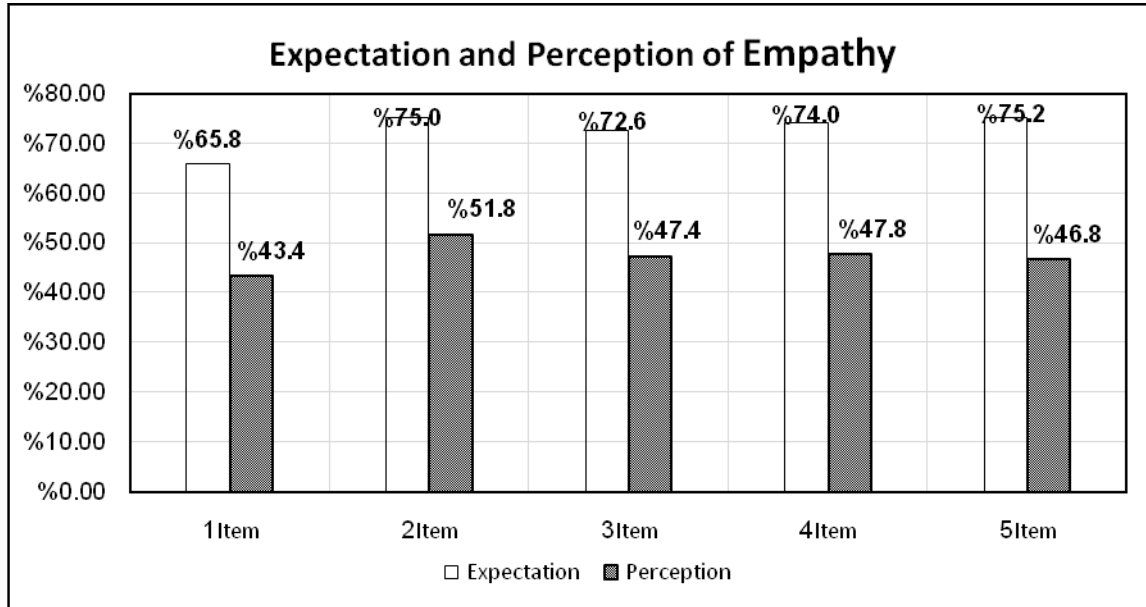

Figure 5: level of Expectation and Perception for each item in Empathy dimension

Expectation of Tangible					Perception of Tangible				
Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII
You Expect that Excellent university will have modern looking equipment.	3.96	1.24	2	79.2%	Your university has modern looking equipment.	2.28	1.07	3	45.6%
You Expect that The physical facilities at excellent university will be visually appealing.	3.75	1.29	3	75.0%	Your university physical facilities are visually appealing.	2.15	1.04	4	43.0%
You Expect that Employees at excellent university will be neat appearing.	4.02	0.96	1	80.4%	Your university reception desk employees are neat appearing.	3.23	1.11	1	64.6%
You Expect that Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) will be visually appealing at an excellent university.	3.64	1.17	4	72.8%	Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) are visually appealing at Your university.	2.65	1.12	2	53.0%
Total	**3.84**	**0.94**		**76.8%**	**Total**	**2.58**	**0.78**		**51.6%**
Expectation of Reliability					Perception of Reliability				
Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII
You Expect that When excellent university promise to do something by a certain time, they do.	3.72	1.36	2	74.4%	When your university promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.	2.57	1.21	2	51.4%
You Expect that When a student has a problem, excellent university will show a sincere interest in solving it.	3.64	1.42	4	72.8%	When you have a problem, your university shows a sincere interest in solving it.	2.32	1.13	4	46.4%
You Expect that Excellent university will perform the service right the first time.	3.57	1.36	5	71.4%	Your university performs the service right the first time.	2.26	1.07	5	45.2%
You Expect that Excellent university will provide the service at the time they promise to do so.	3.70	1.32	3	74.0%	Your university provides its service at the time it promises to do so.	2.48	1.13	3	49.6%
You Expect that Excellent university will insist on error free	3.83	1.23	1	76.6%	your university insists on error free records	2.60	1.15	1	52.0%

records									
Total	**3.69**	**1.17**		**73.8%**	**Total**	**2.45**	**0.89**		**49.0%**
Expectation of Responsiveness					**Perception of Responsiveness**				
Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will tell students exactly when services will be performed.	3.86	1.25	1	77.2%	Employees in your university tell you exactly when services will be performed.	2.81	1.21	1	56.2%
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will give prompt service to students.	3.72	1.37	3	74.4%	Employees in your university give you prompt service.	2.35	1.12	3	47.0%
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will always be willing to help students.	3.75	1.32	2	75.0%	Employees in your university are always willing to help you.	2.47	1.11	2	49.4%
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will never be too busy to respond to students' requests.	3.60	1.31	4	72.0%	Employees in your university are never too busy to respond to your request.	2.25	1.09	4	45.0%
Total	**3.73**	**1.12**		**74.6%**	**Total**	**2.47**	**0.91**		**49.4%**
Expectation of Assurance					**Perception of Assurance**				
Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII
You Expect that The behavior of employees in excellent university will instill confidence in students.	3.83	1.33	3	76.6%	The behavior of employees in your university instills confidence in you.	2.57	1.19	3	51.4%
You Expect that students of excellent university will feel safe in transactions.	3.79	1.29	4	75.8%	You feel safe in your transactions with your university.	2.42	1.20	4	48.4%
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will be consistently courteous with students.	3.93	1.23	2	78.6%	Employees in your university area consistently courteous with you.	2.64	1.24	2	52.8%
You Expect that Employees of excellent university will have the knowledge to answer students' questions.	3.95	1.17	1	79.0%	Employees in your university have the knowledge to answer your questions.	2.79	1.21	1	55.8%
Total	**3.88**	**1.11**		**77.6%**	**Total**	**2.61**	**0.99**		**52.2%**
Expectation of Empathy					**Perception of Empathy**				
Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII	Items	Mean	SD	Rank	RII
You Expect that Excellent university will give students individual attention.	3.29	1.41	5	65.8%	Your university gives you individual attention.	2.17	1.15	5	43.4%
You Expect that Excellent university will have operating hours convenient to all their students.	3.75	1.29	2	75.0%	Your university has operating hours convenient to all its students.	2.59	1.22	1	51.8%
You Expect that Excellent university will have employees who give students personal attention.	3.63	1.32	4	72.6%	Your university has employees who give your personal attention.	2.37	1.15	3	47.4%
You Expect that Excellent university will have their student's best interests at heart.	3.70	1.35	3	74.0%	Your university has your best interest at heart.	2.39	1.17	2	47.8%
You Expect that The employees of excellent university will understand the specific needs of their students.	3.76	1.34	1	75.2%	The employees of your university understand your specific needs.	2.34	1.20	4	46.8%
Total	**3.63**	**1.17**		**72.6%**	**Total**	**2.37**	**0.92**		**47.4%**

Table 1: Mean, standard dev., Rank and Relative important index for each item in each dimension for Service quality model.
SD=Standard Deviation, RII=Relative Importance Index.
*RII = Mean ÷ 5 * 100%*

3.6. Hypotheses Testing

3.6.1. Hypothesis 1
Stated that,"There are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectation of the services' quality of the students in Al Azhar University at 0.05 level". This hypothesis dividedto five sub – hypotheses. $H_{1.1}$: there are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectationlevel of Tangibles of the services' of the students of Al Azhar University at 0.05 level. $H_{1.2}$: there are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectationlevel of Reliability of the services' of

the students of Al Azhar University at 0.05 level. $H_{1.3}$: there are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectation level of Responsiveness of the services' of the students of Al Azhar University at 0.05 level. $H_{1.4}$: there are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectation level of Assurance of the services' of the students of Al Azhar University at 0.05 level. $H_{1.5}$: there are statistically significant differences between the perception and expectation level of Empathy of the services' of the students of Al Azhar University at 0.05 level.

To test these hypotheses Paired samples T-Test used to test if there is differences between the students' expectations and perceptions in Al Azhar University. The following table illustrate this:

Dimensions		Mean	St. Dev	Difference		T-test	Sig.
				M	RII		
Tangible	Expectation	3.84	0.94	-1.26	**25.2%**	24.19	0.000
	Perception	2.58	0.78				
Reliability	Expectation	3.69	1.17	-1.24	**24.8%**	19.14	0.000
	Perception	2.45	0.89				
Responsiveness	Expectation	3.73	1.12	-1.26	**25.2%**	19.91	0.000
	Perception	2.47	0.91				
Assurance	Expectation	3.88	1.11	-1.27	**25.4%**	20.53	0.000
	Perception	2.61	0.99				
Empathy	Expectation	3.63	1.17	-1.26	**25.2%**	19.10	0.000
	Perception	2.37	0.92				
Total	Expectation	**3.75**	**1.00**	**-1.25**	25.0%	**23.13**	0.000
	Perception	**2.50**	**0.76**				

Table 2: Paired samples T-test results

From the previous table, we noticed that there is a statistical differences between the students' expectations and perceptions due to all dimensions (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy); where the significance level of paired samples T-test was (0.000) for each dimension which is lower than 0.05 level. These results supported the first hypothesis.

Figure 6 shows comparison between Expectation satisfaction and Perception satisfaction, where the students' satisfaction level about "Tangibles" dropped (25.2%), the students' satisfaction level about "Reliability" dropped (24.8%), "Assurance" dropped (25.2%), the students' satisfaction level about "Responsiveness" dropped (25.4%) and the students' satisfaction level about "Empathy" dropped (25.2%). In general, the students' satisfaction about service quality dropped (25%) from Expectation to perception of the students' of Al Azhar University.
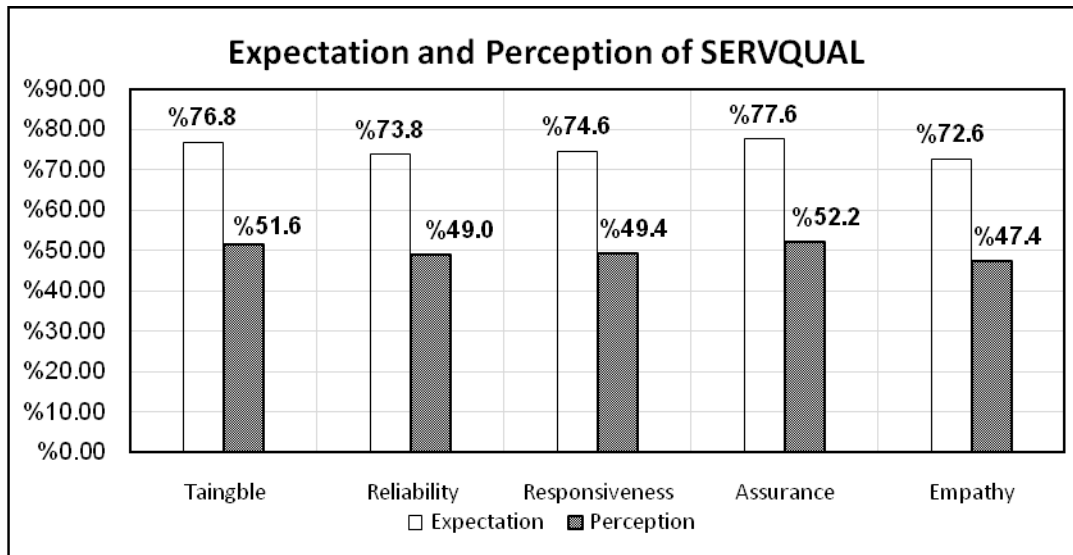

Figure 6: level of Expectation and Perception for dimensions of SERVUAL

4. Recommendations

4.1. First – Tangible
- ➢ I recommend the university to have a modern looking equipment, and try to make it,sphysical facilities are visually appealing.

4.2. Second – Reliability
- ➢ I recommend the university to show a sincere interest in solving the student's problems, perform the service right first time, and to provide the service at the time it promises to do.

4.3. Third – Responsiveness
- ➢ I recommend the university 's employees to never too busy to respond to the students request, be always willing to help them and to give the students a prompt service and to tell them exactly when services will be performed

4.4. Forth- Assurance
- ➢ I recommend the university to make their students fell safe in their transactions in the university,
- ➢ I recommend the university to provide it's employees with enough knowledge to enable them to answer students questions.

4.5. Fifth – Empathy
- ➢ I recommend the university to give the student individual attention, to have operating hours convenient to all its students.
- ➢ I recommend the university 's employees to understand the students specific needs.

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