

## A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE VIEWS OF PUNJAB UNIVERSITY STUDENTS REGARDING SEMESTER SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

*In most parts of the world, the semester system is considered more convenient and learning oriented than annual system of education. The present study was carried out to investigate the response of students towards semester system prevailing in various departments and institutes of the University of the Punjab. Overall it was found that the internal system is successful and it meets the international standards. The data confirmed that the semester system has high educative value as far as it satisfies students educational aspiration and develops creative powers in them, broadens their perspective; make the students finish their assignments well in time and keeps the students busy in studies almost all the time. However the study reveals that semester system makes students' workload lighter increases the pass percentage in examination results and some times turns the students into flatters and does not help the students to gain complete mastery over the subject.*

**Keywords:** Investigate, Punjab University, students, semester system, Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

The semester system is measured as beneficial and valuable for the reason of the depth and pace of study it permits (Hook, 1978). The time for study is usually short not only for the absorption of assigned curriculum, subject and textbook coverage, extensive out-of-class assignments, but also for the preparation and evaluation and for sturdy student-faculty interaction than in the annual system. As semester system provides better depth of coverage of ideas in a short time period that it bestow for the mastery of skills, the semester proffer students an extra industrious learning atmosphere (Halls, 1994). Elley in 1982 also appreciated a system of continuous evaluation of progress, aptitude and problem of students by the class teachers in place of single examination.

Historically, Pakistan inherited the British system of University education basically on the pattern of London University established in 1836. Whereas this early British system of high education was developed on the model of Paris University. Institute of Education of Research (I.E.R.) is one of the first establishments in University of the Punjab that adopted semester system. Gradually this prevails and presently it has been adopt in all the institutes and departments in Punjab University. A study was planned to find argues against and in favour of semester system to have an idea about the inclination on students in the university towards semester system.

### MATERIAL & METHODS

The population selected for this study was constituted of 500 male and female students of M.A, M.Sc. and M.Ed. regular classes studying at following ten departments and institutes of University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

1. Institute of Education and Research.
2. Institute of Administrative Sciences
3. Institute of mass communication
4. Institute of Plant Pathology
5. Institute of chemistry
6. Institute of biochemistry and biotechnology
7. Department of Geology
8. Department of Mathematics
9. Department of History
10. Department of Botany

The nature of the tool used for the research depends upon the kind of research being conducted. Therefore a comprehensive questionnaire was constructed after the review of related literature available on the subject and guidance of advisors. The questionnaire comprised of 32 items consisted of close ended questions. The data collected was represented as percentages in graphs using Excel sheets.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To investigate the educative value of the semester system fourteen questions were included in questionnaire. As to whether or not the semester system satisfies the educational aspirations of the students, 70% of the responses were in favour of this, while 20% respondents gave answer in negative (Fig. 1.1). In opinion of the 90% of the respondents, semester system develops creative powers in the students, and 60% affirmed that the semester system helped to broaden the students' perspective. As to whether or not the semester system makes the students finish their assignments in time, 62% responses in favour.

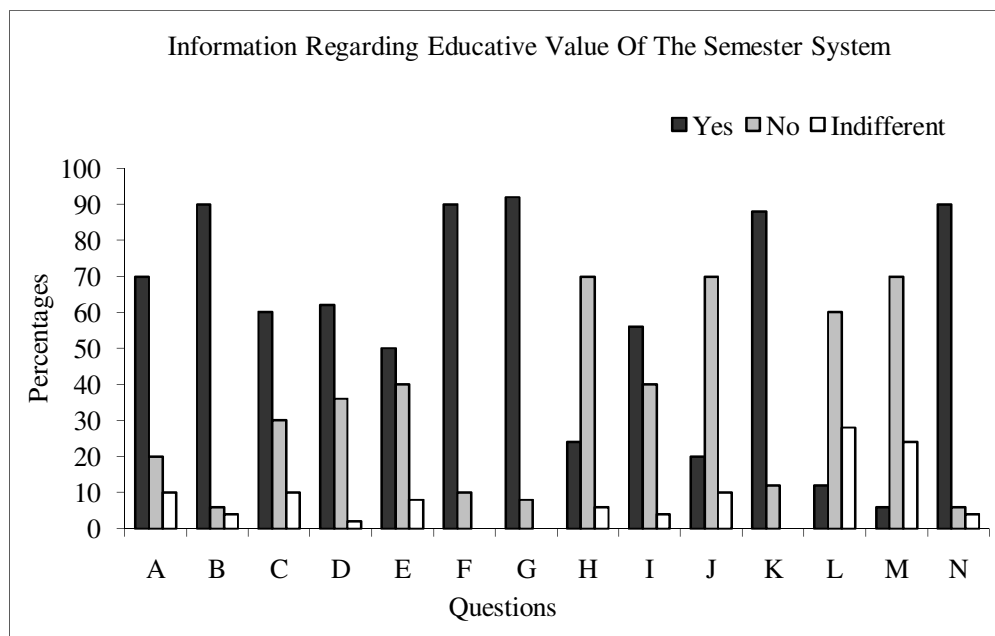


Figure 1.1: Percentage representations of data collected during survey regarding student's opinion about semester system. The survey constituted close-ended questions A – N. Where: A: Does this system satisfy educational aspirations?; B: Does it develop creative power?; C: Does it help to

broaden student’s perspective?; D: Does it make the student finish his assignments in time?; E: Do the students find enough time to prepare for the type of examination offered in Semester system?; F: Does it keep the student busy in studies almost all the time?; G: Does it make-work load lighter?; H: Is it opposed by those only who shirk work?; I: Does it turn the students into flatterers of their teachers?; J: Does it help in complete mastery of the subject?; K: Is the pass percentage greater in this system than the external system?; L: Do the students spend much time in non-academic activities?; M: Do the students spend much time in politics?; N: Does this system raise the standards of education?

One of the questions was whether the students find enough time to prepare themselves for the type of examination offered in semester system or not. Half of the students were in favour of it. Highly significant majority of the students (92%) avowed that semester system made the workload lighter. Majority of the students were not ready to accept that semester system is opposed by those who shirked work. 56% students highlighted the demerit of the semester system as it produces flatterers of their teachers and 70% confirmed that this system do not help in getting complete mastery of the subject (Fig. 1.1). This may be due to the internal system of examination, high pace and short duration available for course completion in semester system. This is important because students can easily gauge the teaching style of their tutors for example how their tests are structured, how their papers/exams are graded, what is the source of their exam questions (e.g. from textbooks or class notes), can they get extra credits, etc (Dhaliwal, 1996). The system thus allows students to approach teachers easily for favours. In present survey 88% students confirmed that pass percentage is greater in semester system (Fig. 1.1). High pace and short duration of semester system do not give enough time to students to cover a course. This also means that one can get really behind on class work and can miss important material that he might get in exams by missing a class or two (Thorndk and Hagen, 1977). Beside all these demerits 90% students confirmed that semester system has increased standard of education by developing creative power in students and making them more active.

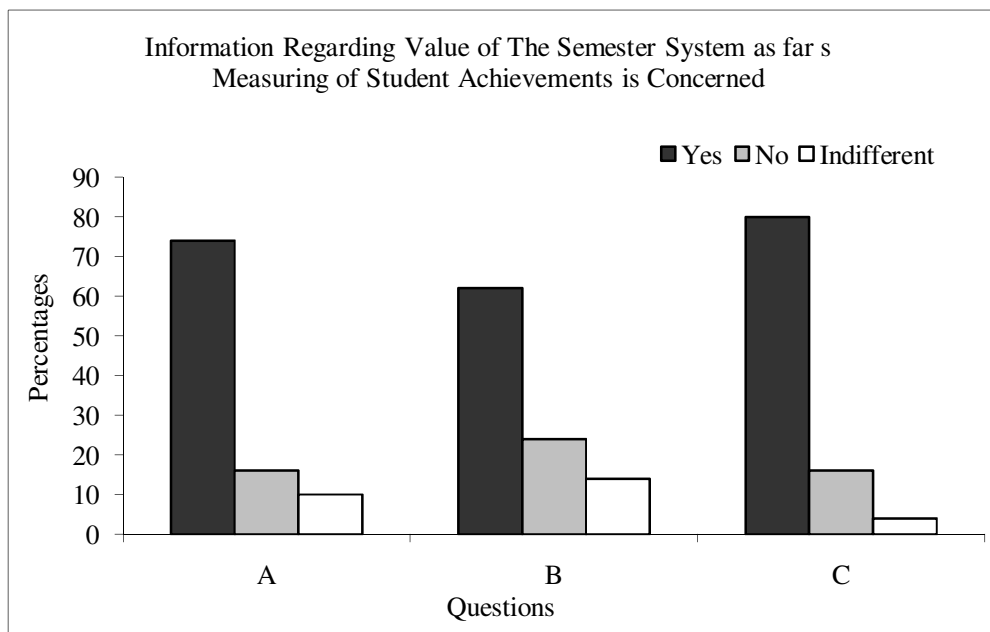


Figure1.2: Percentage representation of data collected during survey regarding value of semester system in measuring student’s achievements. The survey constituted close-ended questions A – C. Where: A: Is semester system appropriate to test students’ abilities? B: Does evaluation in this system generally give the true picture of student abilities? C: Is student labour rewarded properly under this system?

Majority of the outgoing students of the university (74%) supported that the semester system is appropriate to test students' abilities. In opinion of 62% respondents, it gave a true picture of the students' capabilities and 80% respondents opinioned that student labour in this system is awarded properly (Figure 1.2). As the fast pace of the semester system force students to remain active in the class and they get involved in several academic activities at a time throughout the semester.

The designed survey also highlighted some disadvantages of the semester system. Fort eight percent of the students opinioned in the affirmative that semester system can lead to nepotism and favoritism. Seventy percent respondents opinioned that this type of system affected pupil-teacher relationships. Half of the responses were in agreement with the statement that the misuse of the system is likely to strain the pupil-teacher relationships. Majority of the students also confirmed that they get due attention of their teachers in this system and it helps to develop cordial relationship between student and teachers. Students have more freedom to ask the questions and to differ with their teachers in class discussions (Fig. 1.3).

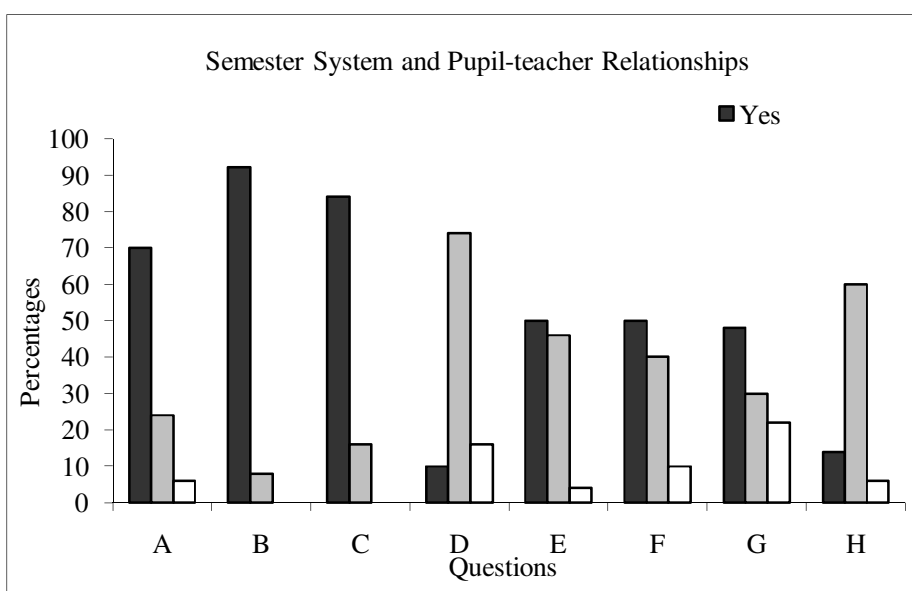


Figure 1.3: Percentage representation of data collected during survey regarding semester system and pupil-teacher relationships. The survey constituted close-ended questions A – H. Where: A: Does it affect the nature of student teacher relationship?; B: Do you think that students get due attention from their teachers in semester system?; C: Does it develop cordial relationships between the students and teachers?; D: Do you think that disagreement in class discussions often leads to negative effect on evaluations on the part of the teachers?; E: Do the students comparatively have more freedom to differ with their teachers in class discussion in this system?; F: Is the misuse of this system likely to strain the mutual understanding between the student and teachers?; G: Does the semester system lead to nepotism and favoritism?; H: Does it deprive the teachers of students respect they aspire for?

Figure 1.4 consists of the opinions about the internal system in vogue in University of the Punjab, Lahore. Majority of the students were found indifferent when they were asked about any credit this system has brought to the institute. However majority of the respondents verified that the students do not leave the institute after getting admission due to semester system. Seventy percent of the students were found against the statement that semester system creates any hatred among the students. Significant majority of the participants declared this system equal to the international standards (Fig. 1.4).

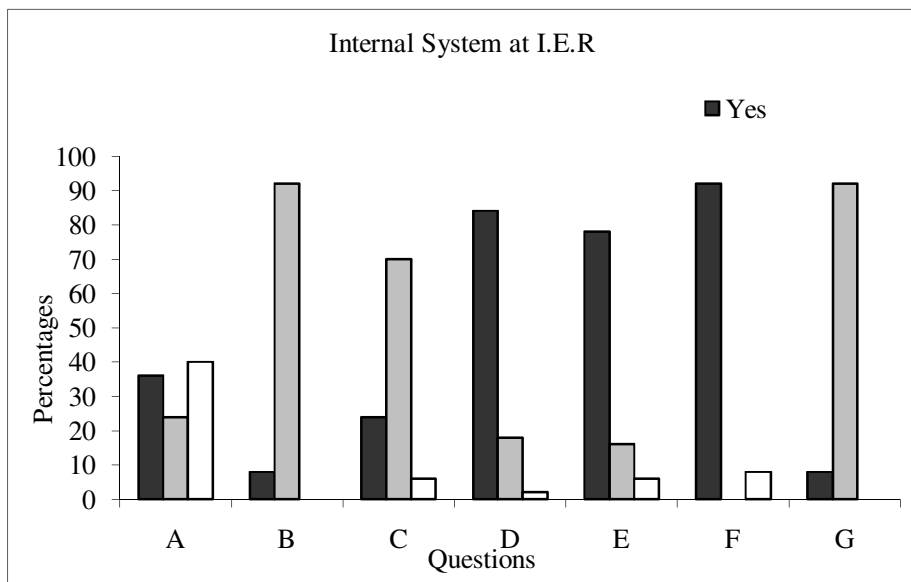


Figure 1.4: Percentage representation of data collected during survey regarding semester system in University of the Punjab. The survey constituted close-ended questions A – G. Where: A: Does this system bring some credit to the institute?; B: Does some students leave the institute after getting admission due to this system?; C: Does the semester system create hatred among students toward the institute?; D: Does this system meet the international standards?; E: Does this system improve discipline among students in the institute?; F: Is it successful in your institute?; G: Do you think that this system should be replaced by the external system?

Literature survey shows that many authors have talked about advantages of semester system over annual and even over quarter system however it is hard to find any statistical data on this subject. In a study conducted by Krohn and Connor (2005) regarding semester system and student performance it was suggested that (1) students respond to higher midterm scores by reducing the number of study hours they subsequently allocate for the course; (2) contrary to results based on semester totals, class attendance and examination scores have no direct relation throughout the semester; (3) although the study time has a diminutive, but statistically very significant negative outcome on student performance; and (4) even though men do better than women in examinations, the difference may reduce over the course of the semester.

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