

Attitude of Post Graduate Students Towards Semester System



Psychology

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

In the new system at the University level, there are four semesters. Every class includes 40-50 students at the post graduate level. It becomes difficult for the teacher to conduct frequent tests. Over-crowded classes sometime pose a more serious problem in conducting seminars and debates. Among these havoc, Semester system seems to be better and sound solution. The present study investigates the attitude of students towards this new innovation Semester System with internal evaluation and tries to excavate their opinions on this issue. The sample for the investigation consisted of 240 students, both men and women from the Science and Arts groups of S.V.University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. The final conclusions of the study are; (1) It is observed that Post graduate students irrespective of their gender have favorable attitude towards semester system. (2) An analysis of attitude scores of arts and science students shows that there is significant difference between the arts and science students, where science students favor the Semester system compared to the Arts students.

INTRODUCTION

In the traditionally rich ancient India, to mark the end of formal education for any individual "Samvartama" ceremony was performed which included a final rigorous evaluation of his accomplishments. The unique method of assessment in those days was oral-aural. The stress was on correct pronunciation of Vedas and other sacred texts.

In the 19th century the old type of educational institutions in India were replaced by the British type of schools. Students were examined at regular intervals. Written examination became the main tool of educational assessment as against oral tests or viva-voice that was prevalent in the Buddhist and Muslim education system, because it could be used on larger number of students at the same time.

The present system of written terminal examination is thus modeled on the western, practically the British pattern and has become the main tool of assessment of pupils school work.

SEMESTER SYSTEM: ITS NATURE AND MEANING

The literal or dictionary meaning of Semester is half year. The academic session in U.S.A., where semester system prevails, is called Semesters. The academic work is divided into two or three sessions of four months duration each, called Semester. Number of credits is the basis for award of the degree (Yeliker, 1971; Pareen Akhthar Hassan, 1981). This pattern seems to be very attractive for meeting new demands on education. In the semester system each department of studies or board of studies would divide the subject matter in its sphere into number of self consistent topics or areas or units.

The semester system is essentially interdisciplinary in character as the old system is so rigid in two respects. Firstly, only two or three disciplines can be combined leaving out a number of important components. Secondly, each discipline has to be studied for at least two or three years by undergraduates. The semester system is based on unitary courses and would make the choices more flexible, which is essential because any undergraduate studying a particular subject in depth requires courses which are given by a number of departments. This flexibility is essential because interdisciplinary courses cannot be specified for all time and for all students. Disciplines develop interconnections with other disciplines in a dynamic sense.

In the Semester System, a candidate failing to reach the qualifying level in any course at an examination would not be branded as detained or 'failed' on the other hand, he would be allowed to undergo instructions prescribed for the next Semester and be required to clear the unfinished courses of the previous half year as "left-over". This process of clearing of 'left-over' may be allowed to go on till the candidate reaches the end of the final examinations. He should not have to repeat the Semester Course simply, because he has failed in some course units. He would be

admitted to the degree only when he has completed the requirements of clearing all courses prescribed for the degree.

This would help in reducing the wastage of human material caused by 'failures' at each examination, will save money and accommodation in educational institutions otherwise filled in by failures, and will also save the student and his family from emotional strain arising from the frustration of times to complete their courses and degree and will thus be enabled to plan their academic career over a period of time.

Somaiah M. (1980) made a study on attitude of teachers and students towards semester system of education and revealed that both the teachers and students (80% and 85%) favored the semester system since it reduced the stress and strain on the mind of the students. But the students felt that the system reduced the opportunities for co-circular activities to which about 45% teachers agreed. A majority of students (78%) and teachers (74%) tended to favor the system as it helped to reduce the uncertainty of one's success by expanding the scope of evaluation based on the performance throughout the semester.

Rajeswari (1981) made an investigation in Madras University, it appears that Semester System has not been successful because students have not been really motivated and teachers have no planned their courses properly. They try to cover the complete portion the texts in a short time at the end of the Semester. The assignments given to the students cannot be completed due to lack of facilities. It appears that both students and teachers are dissatisfied with the Semester System.

Pillai, J.K. and Mohan (1986) in a study viewed that 70% of the men teachers and 81% of women teachers were of the opinion that the Semester system has geared the students to a tight schedule. A 65% of students felt that they were involved in the learning process, learnt more systematically assumed definite responsibility for the progress, and got periodical feedback from the results of session tests to improve their learning and the semester system left them little time for frivolous activities.

High Commission of India (2004) in their report Higher Education system in India says that "Universities following the Semester System have examinations in November-December and March-April. Internal assessment of the work done by the student through out the year carries 10-25% of the total marks at the undergraduate level, 20-40% at the post graduate level in some universities. The Engineering, Medicine, and Management institutions generally adopted the internal assessment system completely, using letter grade and a credit point system.

N. RajyaLakshmi, School Education Minister (The Hindu, Sep 11, 2004 Minister for semester system in schools) opined that school students should not be burdened with examinations and favoured introduction of the semester system to reduce the burden.

Dr. P. Chandra Mohan (International Education Meet, 2006) says that "Credit and Semester System should be continued in the higher education level where it has been already introduced at the post-graduate level in the university departments. The system envisages autonomy and accountability to the teaching staff and multidisciplinary exposure to students". The present study investigates the attitude of students towards this new innovation Semester System with internal evaluation and tries to excavate their opinions on this issue. Thus, the study is planned with the following objectives:

1. To know the attitude of PG students towards semester system.
2. To find out the relationship between arts and science students towards semester system.
3. To investigate the difference between men and women students on the attitude of PG students towards semester system.

SAMPLE:

The sample for the investigation consisted of 240 students, both men and women from the Science and Arts groups of S.V.University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY:

An attitude scale was developed for the purpose of the study to appraise the attitudes of the subjects towards semester system following usual procedure of standardization. It consists of 60 items of which 32 were positive and remaining 28 were negative items. The items were randomized so as to avoid space error. The attitudes scale was administered to the sample of students in small groups of 15-10 at a time under normal class room conditions in their respective departments taking permission by the concerned heads of departments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

VARIABLES	GROUP	N	MEAN	S.D	't'
GENDER	MEN	120	180.17	39.36	0.24 @
	WOMEN	120	178.83	38.46	
NATURE OF COURSE	SCIENCE	120	163.01	23.30	2.57 *
	ARTS	120	173.02	34.87	

*-significant at 0.05 level

@ - not significant

Higher mean value indicates more favorable attitude towards the semester system. The mean values for gender difference, men (180.17) and women (178.83) do not differ much. This reveals that men and women post graduate students favor the

semester system equally. However, post graduate students in the science courses have a higher mean value (173.02) than the Arts group (163.01), which indicates that science students favor the semester system rather than the arts students at the post graduate level.

Table shows that the calculated 't' value of 0.24 for gender differences is not significant, thus there is no difference between attitude of men and women P.G students towards the semester system. Whereas, the computed 't' value of 2.57 for the nature of course is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that Arts and Science post graduate students differ significantly in their attitude towards semester system. Science students show more favorable attitude towards semester system.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. It is observed that Post graduate students irrespective of their gender have favorable attitude towards semester system.
2. An analysis of attitude scores of arts and science students shows that there is significant difference between the arts and science students, where science students favor the Semester system compared to the Arts students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Teaching, learning and evaluation are integral parts of any educational system each of which cannot be separated from the other. Therefore, in a sound system of education the one who teaches should as evaluate as well. Therefore, probably there cannot be a psychologically and pedagogically sounder system of evaluation than internal assessment which is the primary nature of semester system.

Semester System demands basic changes in the teaching-learning process. It is not mere repetition of traditional pattern of teaching with the frequent testing with the traditional type of essay questions.

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