

# **A Comparative Study of Student's Preferences between Semester and Annual Examination System at D.A.V.V., Indore**

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## **Abstract**

*The present research paper seeks to critically analyse Semester and Annual examination systems from student's point of view, to evaluate its importance and to distinguish annual and semester systems according to its merits and limitations and to know students preference between the two systems.*

*This study was conducted on 200 students of various institutes affiliated to the D.A.V.V, Indore, who appeared in examinations in semester system from the university. The primary data was drawn from the students with the help of Questionnaire, which was intended to know students view about annual and semester system examination and to compare both systems.*

*The research paper revealed that the semester system of examination is significantly better than annual system of examination in all respect and that is why the annual system of examination is replaced by semester system of examination.*

**Keywords:** *Semester System, Annual Examination System, DAVV, Higher Education, Preferences*

## **Introduction:**

There has been a change in overall educational scenario and innovations in education are continuously taking place. Educationists constantly explore the possibilities in all possible manners and improve the current system and disclose new ideas and concepts. As stated by Myron Tribus (1994), there are innumerable proposals in educational system and there are countless number of good ideas and the target is not just to pick one of them; rather it is to have comprehensive approach to combine all good works.

Generally, the examination means testing and estimating one's academic ability and performance. It also means to test the knowledge of a student through written or oral questions based on the prescribed syllabus provided for the test within specific period of time (Collins & O'Brien, 2011). According to Hill (1982), examination is both a subject of research and the basic data for research. It is a very important aspect of the teaching, learning process, and educational development which determines the future of students, as the whole life of students depends upon it.

The value of an education system, basically, depends upon the usefulness and effectiveness of its examination system which is normally conducted by educational institutes as collective evaluation, which includes not only students' performance but also teachers' performance and the curriculum etc as a whole.

According to Page and Thomas (1978), the examination is a tool to measure student's calibre in any area. It is also considered a mechanism for decision making about teachers and students. An ideal examination system evaluates both the teaching and learning process as well (Duncan, 2012; Gay, 1985). According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, & Schmidt, 2010-2017), any procedure for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance is called examination. Examination, in this sense, is a comprehensive term.

Now, defining Annual Examination system, it is a system of examination which conducts one final examination at the end of one year session. In the year 2008, annual system was replaced with semester system by D.A.V.V for various traditional courses like B.Com and M.Com etc. Since then lot of changes has taken place in terms of examination methodology. Semester system divides the academic year into two large blocks called Semester. One semester is usually 6 months long. Oxford Concise Dictionary defines semester system as "a half-year term in a University". It has a logical and systematic division of syllabus extended to six months. According to Ballantyne, (2003) [10], Semester system is the latest and futuristic system, which is based on the division of curriculum on equal importance in each semester. It is based on semester which is usually timed from 16 to 18 weeks. It omits the annual studied course. It distributes one and two year's courses into two and four semester. According to Daka (2008) in semester system performance of student is evaluated at the end of each semester, two semesters combine and forms one academic year.

Aggarwal (1997) argues that only that system of education is good which ensures effective learning. The important factor for success is effective learning. So some precautions or some details about the semester system must be informed to students before switching from annual to semester or from semester to quarter system.

Despite various efforts by a number of commissions and committees under the supervision of top educationists the quality of examination is still defective and in doubt (Aggarwal, (2003))

### **Review of Literature:**

Umair (2013) has divided the education systems of the Universities into two types. They are: i) semester system and ii) annual system. Semester system divides the academic year into two terms. It is regarded more advanced, accurate and interactive than the annual system. It examines the student performance every six months. According to Abro (2014), semester system provides opportunity for students to learn more through the presentations, mid-term examinations, group discussions and submission of assignments etc with regular intervals. Hashim (2012) cites that an annual system is a traditional method that gives students an ample chance of two years to

understand and grasps concepts, and sits for a comprehensive exam at the end of two years. This exam includes both subjective and objective portions but it predominantly tests on subjective and comprehensive exam.

Rana Muhammad Dilshad in 2004 on “Students' Perceptions about the Quality of Semester System and Annual System” concludes that semester system is better as compare to annual system.

Allah Nawaz et al (2009) mentioned main drawback of Annual system, absenteeism, Leakage of papers, Impersonation of students, high absenteeism External assistance during examination, Smuggling of unauthorized material especially in annual exam, Copying from a nearby candidate setting in close rows, Intimidation, and Irregularities of supervisory staff by allocating more time to some students. Asfandiar and Hashim (2012) compared annual with semester system, absenteeism, presentation and assignments value learning process

The annual system of examination is replaced with the semester system but the semester system still has many deficiencies. There are numerous chances of favoritism and subjectivity. This system may not be fruitful due to the lack of professional training for teachers. Teachers also feel relax in completing the prescribed syllabus within a stipulated time period successfully (Fallows & Symon, 2000).

The findings of Cates and Monk-Tutor (2010) revealed that the semester system has made the system of examination irregular. Additionally, this system of examination is tougher, time consuming and more expensive. Taking teachers into consideration, they become more commanding in semester system; their personal liking and disliking affects the students marks also. The students are confined to their courses in the semester system. They do not bother to spare time for extensive studies. As a result, their gain limited knowledge in a very narrow viewpoint. Another fault of this system is that courses are much shorter.

The effective and successful implementation of semester system depends upon a number of conditions as stated by Jadoon, Jabeen & Zeba (2012). These are: Well designed curriculum, Course coverage within specific time, Regularity of classes, Timely and constructive feedback to students by the teachers; Accessibility of teachers outside the class; Availability of information resources to students such as state-of-the-art library and computer facilities; Highest level of secrecy and confidentiality in examination; Transparency in evaluation and grading system; Timely declaration of semester results etc. Semester system has its own pros and cons however the quality learning takes place on the part of students', as one cannot escape of the burden. The greatest advantage of learning under semester system in universities is that each student remains informed about his productivity and progress through continuous feedback and the students are frequently tested so there is no way of taking study as the second priority (Bidani, 2010).

Ali (2001) cited Kotler and Keller, (2006) elaborated that for the effectiveness of system, satisfaction is necessary. Students' satisfaction is highly imperative because if they are fully satisfied with the facilities provided by the universities, their ultimate achievement will automatically be excellent. Douglas, Douglas and Barry (2006) stated that universities should provide such facilities to their students' that satisfy them completely. Aggarwal (2003) suggested effective method for learning process which is not possible in current system.

**Objectives:**

The study had been conducted to explore semester system and annual system programs with the following objectives:-

1. To find out student's preference for either Semester or Annual system of examination.
2. To compare and distinguish the semester system and annual system of higher education.
3. To critically evaluate the pros and cons of semester and annual system.
4. To invite opinions of the students about semester and annual system of examination.

**Methodology:**

1. Research Design and Sample- The present study aimed at the comparative analysis of student's preference for Annual and Semester system, so for this purpose the researchers have adopted Survey research design to undertake the study. The random sampling method was used in this research study. The data have been collected from a group of 200 undergraduate and post graduate students of various colleges and various courses like B.Com, B.BA and M.B.A as the convenient sample of the study. Questionnaire basically focuses on student's preference as to which system annual or semester is preferred by them. The questionnaire was personally administered to the sample; therefore, the return rate was 100%.

2. Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis- The primary data for the research study was collected with the help of Questionnaire consisting of 18 close-ended questions. As the study follows descriptive method and the data collected were mainly of quantitative type, the descriptive statistics like 'Frequency', 'Percentage', 'Mean' and Standard deviation was used to analyse the data using SPSS 15.0 and the results were presented in a consolidated table to determine student's preference towards semester or annual system. The secondary data used in this research investigation was collected by referring various research papers and books. Some of the research papers were collected from the internet, which were cited with proper addresses. The analysis consists of pros and cons, apart from some description of past findings and projections.

**Research Findings and Interpretation:**

Through the analysis of questionnaire and interpretation of data, the researcher has drawn verified findings. All the findings are discussed in detail as under, with the help of easy tabulation and the use of Bar chart and Pie chart gave a conceptual understanding of the result:

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Students' responses on Annual System**

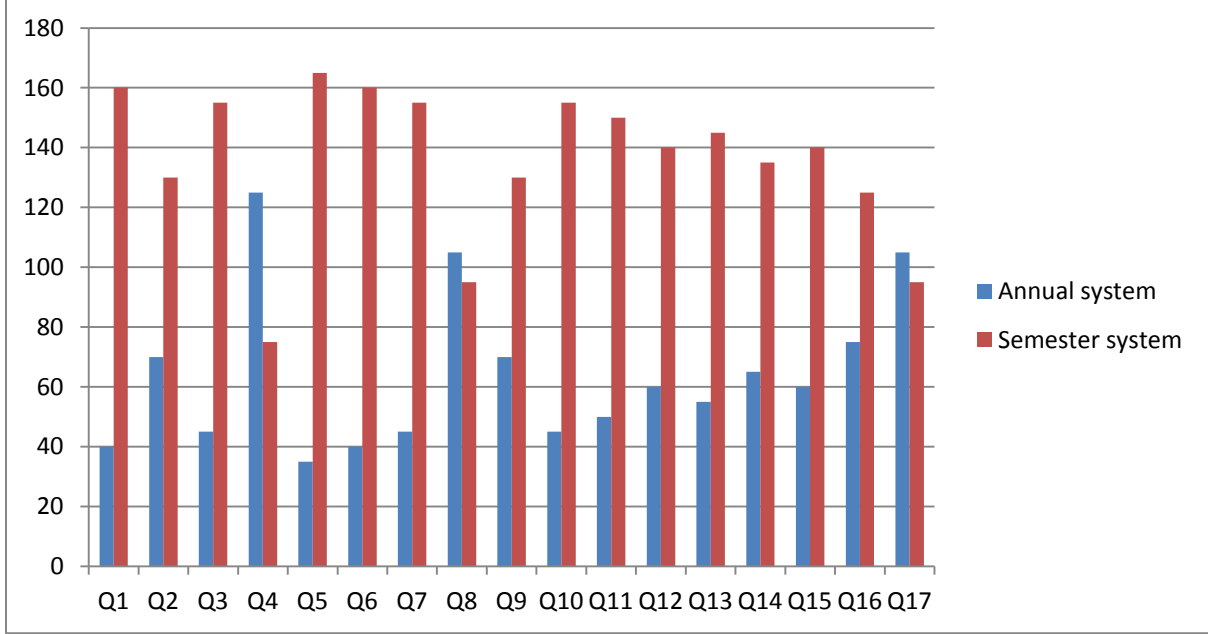
STATEMENTS	TOTAL	FAVOURABLE	%
1. Which system provides comprehensive understanding of concepts?	200	40	20
2. In which system of examination, students are found more engaged in academic activities?	200	70	35
3. In which system of examination, students can obtain better marks?	200	45	22.5
4. In which system, Students are academically overburdened?	200	125	62.5

5. Which system is better for learning?	200	35	17.5
6. Which system shows better presentation skills?	200	40	20
7. In which system, Students perform better in interviews.	200	45	22.5
8. In which system of examination, Students get better job opportunities?	200	105	52.5
9. Which system has most cost burden on parents?	200	70	35
10. In which system, students develop their confidence level and improve communication skills?	200	45	22.5
11. In which system, students get better practical knowledge?	200	50	25
STATEMENTS	TOTAL	FAVOURABLE	%
12. Which system provides a better college life?	200	60	30
13. Which system enhances the overall personality and grooming of students?	200	55	27.5
14. In which system, students have good interaction with teachers and their friends?	200	65	32.5
15. Which system keeps the students updated about the current corporate scenario?	200	60	30
16. Which system gives students a chance to participate more in other activities and learn from them?	200	75	37.5
17. In which system, exams are conducted timely and results are declared on timely basis?	200	105	52.5

**Table 2: Descriptive analysis of Students' responses on Semester System**

STATEMENTS	TOTAL	FAVOURABLE	%
1. Which system provides comprehensive understanding of concepts?	200	160	80
2. In which system of examination, students are found more engaged in academic activities?	200	130	65
3. In which system of examination, students can obtain better marks?	200	155	77.5
4. In which system, Students are academically overburdened?	200	75	37.5
5. Which system is better for learning?	200	165	82.5
6. Which system shows better presentation skills?	200	160	80
7. In which system, Students perform better in interviews.	200	155	77.5
8. In which system of examination, Students get better job opportunities?	200	95	47.5
9. Which system has most cost burden on parents?	200	130	65
10. In which system, students develop their confidence level and improve communication skills?	200	155	77.5
11. In which system, students get better practical knowledge?	200	150	75
12. Which system provides a better college life?	200	140	70
13. Which system enhances the overall personality and grooming of students?	200	145	72.5
14. In which system, students have good interaction with teachers and their friends?	200	135	67.5
15. Which system keeps the students updated about the current corporate scenario?	200	140	70
16. Which system gives students a chance to participate more in other activities and learn from them?	200	125	62.5
17. In which system, exams are conducted	200	95	47.5

**Table 3: Students Response for Annual and Semester System according to the Questionnaire**



**Table 4: Findings of Overall Students Preferences**

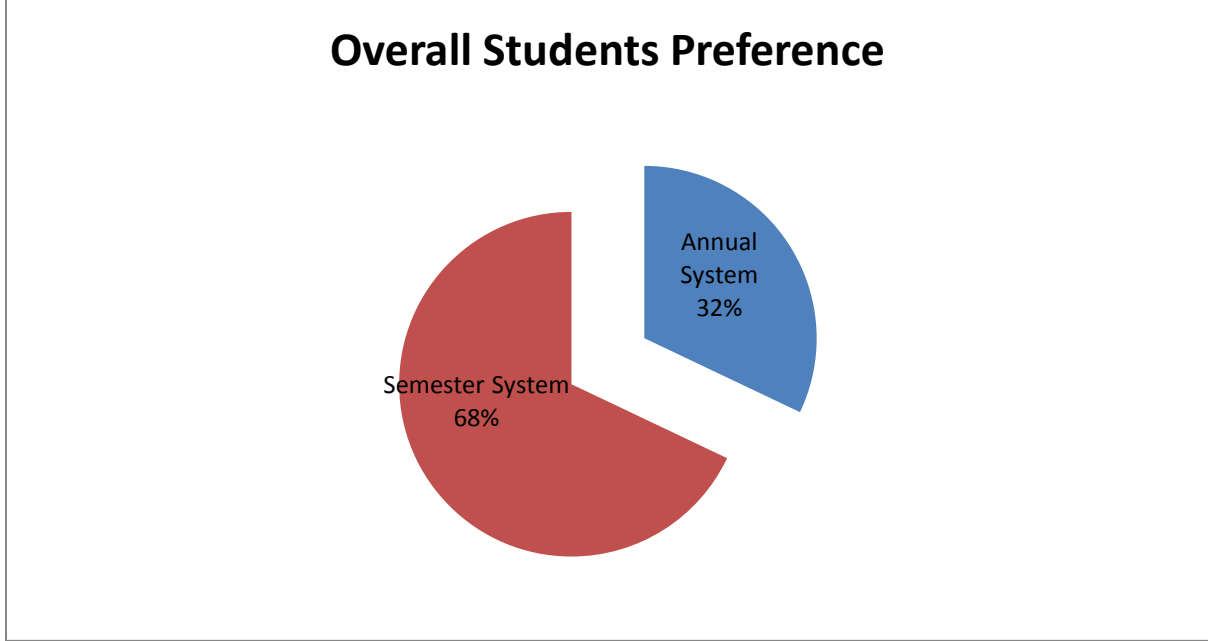


Table 1 and Table 2 shows the following results regarding the Annual system and Semester system of examination:-

1. Majority of the students (80%) supported the statement that Semester system provides comprehensive understanding of concepts. It means that semester system is much more knowledge-oriented than that of annual system.
2. According to the majority of students (65%), it is true that in semester system students are found more engaged in academic activities. In this regard, 35% students have given negative views about semester system.
3. Most of the respondents i.e. 77.50% were of the view that students can obtain better marks in semester system as different techniques are used for testing and judging the students' performance
4. According to 62.50% respondents, annual system increases the workload / burden for students as the annual examination is held at the end of each session /year, therefore most of students feel overburdened academically. In semester system, examination held at the end of each semester, as the course is divided into semesters, therefore students performs comparatively better.
5. Nearly 82% of the respondents were in favour that semester system provides better learning environment, it means that teachers are fully prepared during their teaching. Students consider that in semester system students' goes through different techniques of learning, which are presentation skills, group discussions, assignment etc. On other hand 18% said that annual system of examination is best source of learning.
6. According to 80% of respondents, semester system does enhance presentation skills in students. It means that in semester system students are motivated for presentation. It can be clearly observed that the students who are studying under semester system are better in presentation and management skills than of annual system students.
7. The data collected through this questionnaire reveal 77% students perform better in interviews in semester system and the rest 23% students answered with annual system. They said that under semester system students could get jobs comparatively easily because students are up to date and secured better marks as well.
8. The questionnaire result shows that, 47.50% students agree that students get better job opportunities in semester system, whereas 52.50% students feel that they have better job opportunities with annual system of examination.
9. 65% students agree that semester system have more cost burden as the fee per semester is more costly as compared to annual system and students also have to bear extra cost in semester system. In short, students' tendency showed that semester system of education is most costly one.
10. Vast majority of respondents (77.5%) agree that semester system provides students ample opportunity to develop their confidence level and improve communication skills through group discussions, presentations, midterm examinations, submission of assignments, research projects, training sessions etc with regular intervals.
11. 75% of the total students consider that they get better practical knowledge in semester system as they are continuously engaged in various activities like presentations, competitions, on-job-training, projects, guest lectures etc.



12. Majority of students (70%) are on the view that semester system provides a better college life, making the attendance compulsory and offering the students to participate in many activities and functions and seminars organized by the college.
13. From the analysis table, it seems that lot of students (72.50%) have a view that semester system enhances the overall personality and grooming of the students, as Semester system involves continuous and comprehensive evaluation which includes examination of academic and non-academic achievement in all dimensions of personality of students.
14. 67.5% students have agreed that in semester system students have good interaction with teachers and their friends. This statement is true with the fact that the attendance of the students would be more in semester system and teachers and students have very close relationship because teachers have to provide material for the study, in these way students and teachers have very close ties among them.
15. A majority of 70% students agreed that semester system keeps them updated about the current corporate scenario as the students have access to plenty of information resources like library and reading room facility, books and journals in library, and audio-visual aids, computer and internet facility etc.
16. 62.5% of students supported the statement that semester system provides them a chance to participate more in other activities and learn from them like organizing and participating in quizzes, workshops, seminars and conferences.
17. Only 47.50% of students have given their positive views about the semester exams conducted timely and results are declared on timely basis. It shows that the students are not satisfied with the semester system in case of timely conduct of exams and result declaration.

### **Conclusion:**

As the data analysis revealed, the semester system of examination is significantly better than annual system of examination in all respect as stated above that is why semester system of examination is replaced by the annual system of examination. The semester system is rather better than an annual system of examination, but both the systems have their own pros and cons.

However the Annual system gives students ample of time to understand the concepts and command over the subjects through in-depth study of texts. It also helps students stimulate their long term memory and recollecting things which will go a long way in their career and life. Since the exams are conducted at the end of the year, university gets enough time to prepare question papers and value answer papers. Number of examiners and examinations also can be reduced, which become more economical for Universities. Results can be announced in time and the schedule can be kept. Annual system also has few limitations like, in this system students have less interest because of less academic and co-curriculum activities that leads to communication gap between students and teachers, assignments, personality development, grooming, presentation skills are completely ignored in annual system. Moreover the students are academically over burdened in annual system, also absenteeism is more and the students don't get practical exposure. Only annual examination is conducted at the end and the students are deprived of the chances to improve, realize and build confidence through continuous feedback.

While, in the annual system once the student enters the college he feels free and thinks about studying only during the exam time. Semester system not only involves students more throughout the year but also reduces examination burden. Furthermore, the evaluation of students in semester system remains continues throughout the semester. The learning environment in semester system is very conducive and disciplined. The main objective behind replacing annual system with semester system is to provide regular and constructive feedback of performance to the students so that they make correction without losing time.

Moreover, in this study, 68% respondent favoured the semester system of examination and remaining 32% were in favour of annual system. So the research shows that students are more satisfied with the semester system as compared to annual system.

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### Questionnaire

**Dear Students,**

This questionnaire is regarding a research paper on topic, “A Comparative Study of Student’s Preferences B/W Semester and Yearly Examination System at D.A.V.V., Indore”. **Your response will only be used for survey purpose and the information provided by you will be kept confidential. In case you have any questions, please ask. Thank you very much for your time.**

Name: .....

Course .....

Semester.....

Contact No.: .....

Completion Year.....

Email ID: .....

Gender:

Male

Female

Q1: Which system provides comprehensive understanding of concepts?

a) Annual system

b) Semester system

Q2: In which system of examination, students are found more engaged in academic activities?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q3. In which system of examination, students can obtain better marks?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q4: In which system, Students are academically overburdened?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q5: Which system is better for learning?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q6: Which system shows better presentation skills?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q7: In which system, Students perform better in interviews.

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q8: In which system of examination, Students get better job opportunities?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q9: Which system has most cost burden on parents?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q10. In which system, students develop their confidence level and improve communication skills?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q11. In which system, students get better practical knowledge?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q12. Which system provides a better college life?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q13. Which system enhances the overall personality and grooming of students?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q14. In which system, students have good interaction with teachers and their friends?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q15. Which system keeps the students updated about the current corporate scenario?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q16. Which system gives students a chance to participate more in other activities and learn from them?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q17. In which system, exams are conducted timely and results are declared on timely basis?

- a) Annual system                      b) Semester system

Q18. What is your preference Semester System or Yearly System, and why?

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