

## ANNUAL VS SEMESTER EXAMINATION SYSTEM IN PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PAKISTAN: A STUDENT PROSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Student learning is more important as compared to their marks, position holding learning plays an important role to get what they desire to use it in their education career and farther in professional life. The purpose of the study was to assess the quality of learning of doctor of physical therapy students at the graduate level by considering marks obtained, knowledge retention, concentrated learning or deep conceptual learning, mastery of practical/clinical skills, participation in curricular & extracurricular activities.

**Materials and Methods:** Data was taken from different DPT program offering institutes & universities of Punjab province (Pakistan), 1000 DPT students (N=500 semester system & N=500 annual system) from 1<sup>st</sup> year to final year. Self-administered Open and close-ended questionnaire were used to collect data about quality learning on basis of evaluation in semester system and annual system examination.

**Results:** The annual system provides quality learning in terms of conceptual knowledge due to long duration academic year, retention of knowledge, the involvement of curricular & extracurricular activities, acquisition of practical skill, on other hand high marks, concentrated short quick learning study.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that annual system provides quality learning as assessment process for annual system provides god criteria for student learning capacities.

**KEY WORDS:** Quality Learning, Annual Examination System, Semester Examination System, DPT Students.

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### BACKGROUND

Education is described as a process of facilitating learning, acquisition of knowledge, reorganization, construction & reconstruction of values, habits, attitude, Perception & actions [1-3]. Learning or knowledge acquiring mainly concerned with the experience of a person as a whole not imposing one characteristic or habit, also focusing on individual social, intellectual, moral, emotional & physical growth in life [1].

Examination system is a systematic process to create pillars for society, conjures up an image of fear and dread. different examination system was used all over the world [4, 5] mainly semester & annual systems were in focused with their unique characteristics used to evaluate student and quality of education as students had to grab knowledge concepts of in short duration of time in semester as compare to annual system, but at same time students felt convenient

in semester system as course divided & learnt in short form as compare to annual system whole course learnt & evaluated at end of year became master of course. so quick picking and screening more in semester exams put intellectual challenge as well improve intellectual learning in the semester system [4, 6, 7].

Each examination system has its own importance in different regards; as the annual examination system gives an opportunity to grasp concepts and in the study of texts. In this system, students get enough time to do mastery over subjects, but in semester system students built concepts in short duration. For cognitive learning semester system moves to the higher level of learning and student is evaluated on both intellectual and behavioral basis. Proper training of teachers, however, can help the students to pass through examination in the Semester system. [8, 9] Generally, the examination means testing and estimating one's academic ability and performance by oral or written Examination which was based on the prescribed syllabus provided for the test within a specified period of time [8, 10].

Annual system of Examination is the one which conducts one Examination at the end of year in which papers are set by external professors and are checked by external examiner under the supervision of the concerned University, little or no role for internal assessment and examiner, so there are little chances of biases for students evaluation of students [4, 6, 11, 12] Annual system allows teachers to teach student while taking help from not only books but also by using modern technologies, multimedia, internet facilities to help students to get into the depth of any topic and to improve knowledge as, students get enough time in annual system to make his grip strong on tough subjects by revising them, again and again, that help him in making strong concepts [11, 12], that will improve not only his theory but also his skills can be improved practically[11].

In semester system students had the advantage of appearing in exams after the short interval after almost every 6 months, marks are divided into separate categories in term of assignments, presentations, midterm and final terms. Students get more chances to improve their

grading & final exams. [11, 13, 14] The greatest advantage in Semester system in Universities is that students get evaluated about their progress through continues feedback and tests.[15] previous data determined that students motivation is an important factor in their performance and most students get motivation from their final results, and positions in exams & to achieve such satisfaction can be achieved by proper planning & management through the academic year. [16, 17]. Semester system provides flexibility to their students regarding improving their learning quality by decreasing their workload but it does not allow students to do mastery over subjects involving in their course and making concepts [9, 15, 18, 19].

Previous studies concluded that Semester system of examination is accepted by the students and teachers in terms of marks obtained, personality development and flexible environment for learning[20] while such system disagrees in terms of making concepts[15], doing mastery over subjects[6], and taking part in extra-curricular activities [15]. Semester system has a disadvantage in making students overburdened in their studies as well as financially [13, 14, 21].

This study submitted the importance of proper examination system in improving learning skills (including both theoretical & practical skills), further this study showed different problems faced by DPT students under different examination system in Pakistan as for Doctor of Physical therapy students appear in both examination system under different universities; & ultimately study provided guidelines to improve education system for DPT students under different examination system to help in making policy in choosing system which provide better learning strategies to improve quality of learning(concept building, retention of knowledge, curricular & extra-curricular activities) rather choosing one which only focuses marks obtained, or completion of syllabus.

The study which was conducted had its merit as a 1st study in Pakistan in DPT students regarding their judgment about the importance of examination system for quality learning in the field of physical therapy. in Pakistan, students were evaluated under two examination system,

semester & annual exam system. a large number of students were confused about quality of learning in which type of system is best acquired, as we observed the flaws in both exam system as well found little data about merit & demerits of both systems in DPT examination system. we tried to observe both systems on basis of few characteristics that depicted quality learning and the main concern of student's satisfaction about quality education.

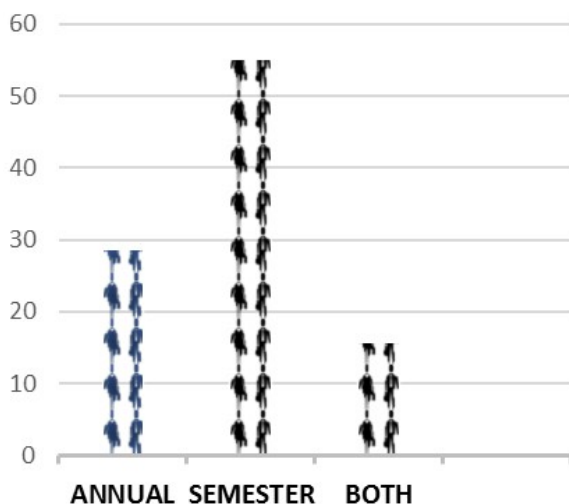
**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A prime study conducted in Punjab (Pakistan) for DPT students to focus on which types of examination system provide good student assessment and quality learning based on marks obtained, knowledge retention, conceptual learning, expertise in clinical skills, participation in curricular & extracurricular activities.

A comparative cross-sectional survey was conducted in which 1000 DPT students (N=500 semester & N=500 annual examination system) were surveyed from both semester & annual examination system, using convenience sampling technique. Further inclusive criteria included 2<sup>nd</sup> year to final year DPT students & their teachers from both government & private sectors. We had personally collected data by a face-to-face meeting with students as well contacted them telephonically/emails. This data was free from any bias and misinterpretation. It included students of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year DPT students studying in various universities of Punjab.

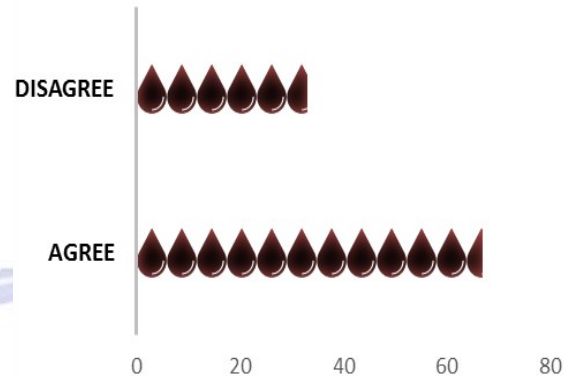
**RESULT**

**Fig. 1:** A Which Examination System provides good grading/Marks criteria?.

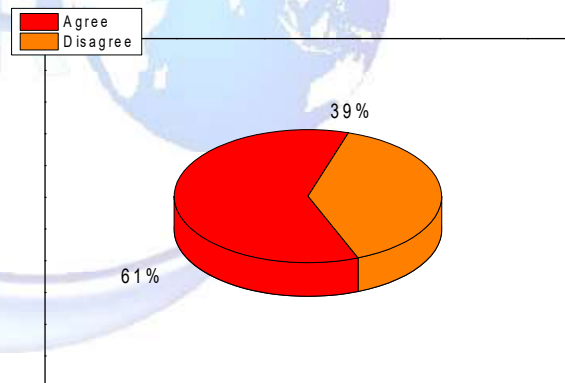


In this study, most students perceived that semester system is a better way for obtaining good grades or marks and concentrated learning (Fig. 1, 2). Whereas mostly student thinks that annual system provides retention of knowledge as compared to semester system (Fig. 3).

**Fig. 2:** Do you agree that Semester system is a kind Of concentrated learning.



**Fig. 3:** Do you agree that Annual system provides retention of knowledge.

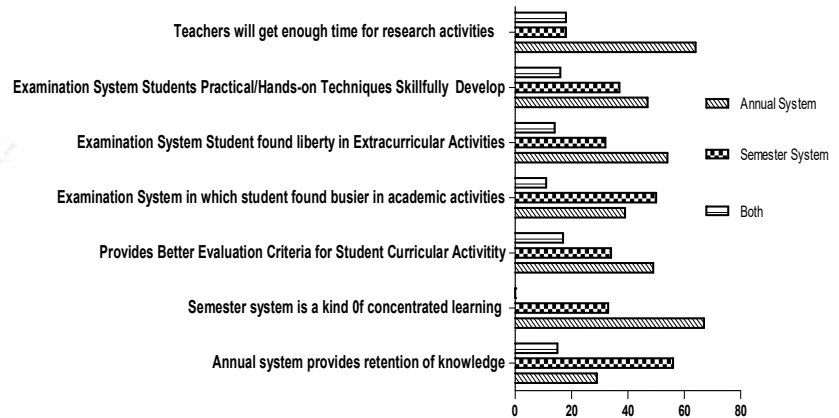


Mostly student believes that annual examination system provides better evaluation criteria for student curricular activities, a system where they can learn better practical skills in addition to the provision of enough time for research activates. However, they believe that in the semester system students remain busier as compared to the annual system.

**DISCUSSION**

The main focus of this study was to find out the system of examination whether it's annual or semester regarding personality grooming, learning qualities, education status and to know which system should be implemented in Pakistan for DPT students, as a lot of studies had done in other disciplines in Pakistan but no study is done on topic that which examination/evaluation





**Fig. 4:** Perception of Students about usefulness of annual and semester system.

system provide quality learning. Doctor of physical therapy degree is awarded to students appear in both type of examination, Students of physical therapy in Pakistan were confused about their evaluation, knowledge gain & retention concerns.

A structured questionnaire was used including a different question about both exam system and filled by both exam system bachelor students showed that students efficiency not only depend upon theory output as well practical skill learning. It was considered that as prolong the time of annual system provides satisfaction in term of theory and practical learning. But some students were convinced that semester short duration also provides same opportunities.

The comparative analysis was conducted in different universities degree programs in Pakistan conducting semester & annual systems for student evaluation to provide quality education. Both systems are useful for proper students education assessments but each system has its merits & demerits.[12, 22] Self-administered questionnaire attempted to identify the system which provides good quality of education to the students to make them better professionals, and group discussions using a semantic differential scale. The questionnaires were distributed randomly among students. It was found that majority of student’s favored annual system [22] & semester system as both provides an opportunity to do mastery over subjects, ease in coverage of syllabus and constraints of concepts [12, 14, 18, 22].

A comparative study was conducted in Govt. College of Management Sciences, Peshawar and among other universities and their staff between

Annual and semester system regarding marks obtained and the passing ratio of students. They took 216 students of B.COM and 265 students of B.BA in 2010 and took 75 students of B.COM and 72 students of BBA in 2011. They did qualitative research, collected data through questionnaires and face to face discussions with the students as well as staff in that university. They concluded that students agreed with Semester system as it provides good marks in Exam as compared to the Annual system[11].

A study was conducted in five dominant Universities of Pakistan, faculty of Islamic universities, Bahawalpur Pakistan including both Bahawalnagar and Rahimyar Khan Campus and 10 departments of Punjab University with the objective to rule out student’s consummation about semester exams who in different universities. [16] previous data consider student’s gratification in the context of coursework, teachers & teaching methods, time of coursework.

They distributed self- administered questionnaires among students randomly and 5-point scale respectively. Results favored the semester system in providing a flexible environment for improving marks obtained and make a student less burdened as they had to go through short course, not whole and previous one [17, 21, 23].

Learning quality is judged by marks obtaining criteria, knowledge retention, acquisition of concentrated learning, theoretical and practical skills development, the involvement in curricular and extracurricular activities in both examination system. Present study results showed Semester system provides better marks to their students as compared to the annual system.

Second is knowledge gaining criteria to judge the learning quality, according to our results 61% students' favored annual system while 39% students favored semester system, semester system is kind of examination system in which time of learning is very short for each subject or topic so students had to pay attention what they are taught and learn those skill quickly and limited way so they had to adopt concentrated learning that provides opportunity to develop quick learning skills as compare to annual system in which students had long year time to learn and explore. next criteria is theoretical and practical skill acquisition, according to our results 47% students favored annual & 37% favored semester system and 16% agreed with both and the last criteria to judge learning quality is involvement of curricular and extracurricular activities and results showed that students remain busier in curricular activities in semester system as compare to annual system, at same time annual system provide students an opportunity to involve in both activities. Beside marks obtaining criteria annual system provides better opportunities to students for extra-curricular activities. According to our research results taken from 1000 students, it was found, 47% students agreed with practical techniques skillfully develops in the annual system while 37% students agreed that such techniques develop in semester system and 16% students agreed with both systems.

Findings of results of research demonstrated that there was a visible difference of students of annual and semester system in terms of marks obtained, extra-curricular activities and learning qualities but as there should be one kind of examination system used for all DPT students for their assessment criteria. The purpose of the study is to find out which types of examination system provide quality learning on the base of assessment criteria.

## CONCLUSION

Findings of research demonstrated that there was the difference between Annual and Semester system of Examination. Both the system shared their merits and demerits. However, the Annual system provided better Education quality as it helped its students in having strong grips

on concepts and meanwhile got enough time for their extracurricular activities like sports, research, festivals etc. Semester system, on the other hand, had got one big advantage of getting high marks as depicted from result but the students relied on no or little extracurricular activities. The annual system provides a better quality of learning in all its included criteria except marks obtained.

**Recommendations:** It was recommended that Annual system of Examination should be promoted in Universities as student satisfaction is important regarding the system in which they were studying and positive attitude and excellent achievements were also considerable. Therefore, the policymakers, administrators, and teacher need to co-operate for developing a positive attitude among students through ensuring availability of all the required resources. Few steps can be taken in this direction as— organizing workshops, seminars and conferences etc. by the authority focusing on different mechanisms of annual system and their benefits for the students' community; reducing the student-teacher ratio to a reasonable size; mobilizing local resources; providing all the required information and resources such as study material, facilities for co-curricular activities, feedback, adequate library and laboratory facility, computer and internet facility.

**Conflicts of interest: None**

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