Student's Perception on the Various Components of Semester System

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Abstract

The current study involved 823 undergraduate college students who were chosen at random from arts, science and commerce undergraduate colleges affiliated to the Mizoram University to find out their perception towards semester system. Self-constructed perception scale revealing the overall perception on semester system and their perception towards five components of semester system - general observation, course of study, evaluation, method of teaching and choice-based credit system was administered. Results reveled that with respect to overall perception and all components of semester system except evaluation component, the arts students had a more favourable perception on semester system compared to the science students. Findings also show that with respect to overall perception and all components of semester system, the arts students had a more favourable perception on semester system compared to the commerce students.

Keywords: *Perception, Semester System, Students, Components, Colleges.*

Introduction

The semester system is a new system programme that is gradually replacing the previous annual system programme. It is the division of an academic year into two parts or terms, with courses designed separately for each semester and exams administered at the conclusion of each course. According to the Dictionary of Education edited by Carter V. Good, a semester is typically between 16 and 18 weeks long.

The semester system was designed to provide students with opportunities for continuous assessment, evaluation, and feedback. This was the primary motivation

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behind the system's implementation. Throughout the academic year, students are required to participate for a longer amount of time, which helps them develop the habits of regular study, punctuality, and a work ethic.

India's educational system has begun to gradually incorporate the semester system. The semester system was partially or completely implemented by a few affiliated and residential universities following agricultural and technological institutes. In 1967, Meerut University was the first to implement the semester system on a broad basis. The system was implemented at approximately 55 connected institutions with more than 60,000 students. In addition to Meerut University, many other universities in India have adopted the semester system, such as Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University, M.S. University, Madras University, Annamalai University, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, among others. In an attempt to change how higher education is structured, many colleges across the country have instituted the semester system for both undergraduate and graduate students. The instructional framework has changed as a result of several higher education institutions implementing the semester system.

In India, the University Grants Commission announced in the eleventh five-year plan for 2007-2012 that universities would implement the semester system at the undergraduate level by 2012. In response to the mandate from the University Grants Commission, Mizoram University implemented the semester system for all its affiliated colleges beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year.

Review of Related Literature

Haseena and Reddy (2012) examined the attitude of postgraduate students towards the semester system and discovered that, regardless of gender, the majority of students held a more positive view of the semester system. The science students indicated a more favourable opinion towards the semester system than the Arts students.

Chaliha and Gogoi (2019) conducted a study on the attitudes of undergraduate general degree students toward the semester system. The findings found that science students had a better attitude towards the semester system than arts and commerce students. There was no substantial difference between the attitudes of arts and science students towards the semester system. Science students exhibited a better attitude than commerce students in relation to their attitude towards the semester system. The attitude of arts students was more favourable than that of commerce students

Subedi (2019) investigated the perspectives of Tribhuvan University students and faculty regarding the semester system. The findings of the survey demonstrated

that both teachers and students held a favourable view of the semester system's curriculum. The perception of the teaching and learning environment was likewise positive. Students had a favourable impression of the instructors and their instructional methods.

Need of the study

In accordance with University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations, Mizoram university affiliated colleges have also implemented semester system. Since 2011-2012 when Mizoram University implemented the semester system for all of its affiliated colleges, no prior research has been conducted on the perceptions of college students in Mizoram regarding the semester system. In order to obtain a full understanding of the semester system, it is necessary to investigate the perceptions of college students regarding the semester system in Mizoram's undergraduate colleges.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare students' overall perception of semester system in undergraduate colleges of Mizoram with respect to stream of course.
2. To compare students' perception on the different components of semester system with reference to stream of course

Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' overall perception of semester system.
2. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' overall perception of semester system.
3. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' overall perception of semester system.
4. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the general observation component of semester system.
5. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the general observation component of semester system.
6. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the general observation component of semester system.
7. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the course of study component of semester system.

8. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the course of study component of semester system.
9. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the course of study component of semester system.
10. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system.
11. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system.
12. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system.
13. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system.
14. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system.
15. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester
16. There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system.
17. There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system.
18. There is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system

Methodology

In the present study descriptive survey method has been adopted as it is to find out the perception of students on semester system in undergraduate colleges in Mizoram and to compare the differences in the perception of students on semester system in undergraduate colleges in Mizoram with reference to the different streams of course.

Population and sample

All college students of Mizoram consist of the population, out of this, 823 college students from 21 undergraduate colleges were selected as sample for the study. The name of the college and number of selected sample students from different streams is given in the following table.1.

Tools used

Students' perception scale on semester system developed and standardized by the investigator were used to collect data. The perception scale consists of 27 statements categorizes under five components as follows:a

1. General observation component
2. Course of study component
3. Evaluation component
4. Method of teaching component
5. Choice Based Credit system

Each statement in the perception scale on semester system has five response option such as - Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. All the statements in students' perception scale were positive, therefore, for scoring purposes, they were given the scores 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Reliability of the scale

For establishing the reliability of the scale, 'Test-Retest Method' was applied. For this, the developed scale was administered to 90 students and after one week, the same scale was administered to the same students. The scores obtained by the students on the two tests were used to compute the co-efficient of reliability by using the product moment correlation. The co-efficient of reliability of the scale came out to be 0.801 which can be considered adequate for the perception scale.

Validity of the scale

For the present scale, content validity was established by seeking the decisions of experts and professionals in the field of education with the nature of content covered by the statements on semester system. The scale was given to 10 experts and all the experts approved on the validity of the content of items.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Analysis and interpretation of data were done in accordance with the objectives:

Objective No.1: *To compare students' overall perception of semester system in undergraduate colleges of Mizoram with respect to stream of course.*

The three streams of courses namely Science, Commerce and Arts are most commonly offered in colleges in Mizoram. The differences in the students' overall perception of semester system in undergraduate colleges were compared with reference to the three streams of courses. Table 2 shows the comparison of science

students & commerce students, science students & arts students and commerce students & arts students' overall perception of semester system

Table 2

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' overall perception of Semester System

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	105.71	9.016	0.076	0.959	0.080	NS
Commerce students	205	105.63	8.864				
Science students	183	105.71	9.016	3.784	0.851	4.448	**
Arts students	435	109.49	11.024				
Commerce students	205	105.63	8.864	3.860	0.868	4.445	**
Arts students	435	109.49	11.024				

NS=Not significant ****=Significant at .01 level**

Analysis of the result vide Table No - 2 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No. 1 that assumes that there is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' overall perception of semester system is accepted.

Further examination of the result vides Table No 2 reveal that the 't' value for the significance of difference in the overall perception on semester system between science students and arts students is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.2 is rejected, since the two groups differed significantly at .01 level of confidence. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable overall perception of semester system than the science students.

Continuing with the analysis of the result vide Table No - 2 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No. 3 is rejected, since the two groups differed significantly at .01 level of confidence The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable overall perception of semester system than the commerce students.

Objective No.2: *To compare students' perception on the different components of semester system with reference to stream of course.*

The differences in the students' perception on the different components of semester system in colleges were compared with reference to students taking the three streams of course. For this, the mean and standard deviation of the perception

scores of all the three streams were calculated. The mean differences were then tested by applying 't' test and the details are presented in the following tables.

(i) Students' perception on general observation component of semester system with reference to stream of course:

Table No.3 shows the comparison of science & commerce students, science & arts students and commerce & arts students' perception on general observation component of semester system.

Table 3

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' perception on general observation component of semester system

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	23.86	2.377	0.175	0.264	0.663	NS
Commerce students	205	23.68	2.377				
Science students	183	23.86	2.377	0.678	0.225	3.007	**
Arts students	435	24.54	2.943				
Commerce students	205	23.68	2.377	0.853	0.242	3.518	**
Arts students	435	24.54	2.943				

NS= Not significant **= Significant at .01 level

Enquiry of the result vide Table No - 3 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students' perception on general observation component of semester system is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.4 is accepted.

Further investigation of the result of Table No. 3 discloses that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and arts students' perception on general observation component of semester system is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.5 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception on the general observation component of semester system than the science students.

Continuing with the analysis of the result vide Table No – 3 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.6 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception on the general observation component of semester system than the commerce students.

(ii) Students' perception on the course of study component of semester system with reference to stream of course:

Table No.4 shows the comparison of science & commerce students, science & arts students and commerce & arts students' perception on the course of study component of semester system.

Table 4

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' perception in the course of study component of semester system

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	11.39	1.680	0.060	0.171	0.353	NS
Commerce students	205	11.45	1.679				
Science students	183	11.39	1.680	0.496	0.146	3.398	**
Arts students	435	11.89	1.603				
Commerce students	205	11.45	1.679	0.436	0.140	3.110	**
Arts students	435	11.89	1.603				

NS= Not significant **= Significant at .01 level

Examination of the result vide Table No - 4 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the course of study component of semester system is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.7 is accepted.

Further examination of the result vide Table No - 4 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and arts students' perception in the course of study component of semester system is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.8 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the course of study component of semester system than the science students.

Continuing with the examination of the result of Table No. 4 discloses that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the course of study component of semester system is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.9 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the course of study component of semester system than the commerce students.

(iii) Students' perception on evaluation component of semester system with reference to stream of course:

The difference in the students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system was compared with reference to stream of course. Table 5 shows the comparison of science & commerce students, science & arts students and commerce & arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system.

Table 5

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	24.17	2.333	0.365	0.245	1.488	NS
Commerce students	205	23.81	2.499				
Science students	183	24.17	2.333	0.244	0.215	1.131	NS
Arts students	435	24.42	2.687				
Commerce students	205	23.81	2.499	0.609	0.217	2.806	**
Arts students	435	24.42	2.687				

NS= Not significant **= Significant at .01 level

Investigation of the result vide Table No - 5 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.10 is accepted.

Further investigation of the result vide Table No - 5 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.11 is accepted.

Continuing with the investigation of the result of Table No. 5 discloses that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.12 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the evaluation component of semester system than the commerce students.

(iv) Students' perception on method of teaching component of semester system with reference to stream of course:

The difference in the students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system was compared with reference to stream of course. Table 6 shows the comparison of science & commerce students, science & arts students and commerce & arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system.

Table 6

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	31.22	3.701	0.181	0.377	0.481	NS
Commerce students	205	31.40	3.723				
Science students	183	31.22	3.701	1.432	0.327	4.378	**
Arts students	435	32.65	3.739				
Commerce students	205	31.40	3.723	1.251	0.316	3.960	**
Arts students	435	32.65	3.739				

NS= Not significant **= Significant at .01 level

Investigation of the result vide Table No -6 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.13 which assumes that there is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system is accepted.

Further investigation of the result vide Table No -6 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.14 which assumes that there is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the method of teaching component of semester system than the science students.

Continuing with the investigation of the result of Table No -6 discloses that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students is significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis No.15 which assumes that there is no significant difference between commerce students and arts students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the method of teaching component of semester system than the commerce students.

(v) Students' perception on choice-based credit system component of semester system with reference to stream of course:

The difference in the students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system was compared with reference to stream of course.

Table 7 shows the comparison of science & commerce students, science & arts students and commerce & arts students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system.

Table 7

Comparison of science & commerce, science & arts and commerce & arts students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SE_{MD}	t- Value	Sig level
Science students	183	15.07	1.929	0.222	0.196	1.132	NS
Commerce students	205	15.29	1.933				
Science students	183	15.07	1.929	0.934	0.172	5.430	**
Arts students	435	16.00	2.009				
Commerce students	205	15.29	1.933	0.712	0.166	4.295	**
Arts students	435	16.00	2.009				

NS= Not significant **= Significant at .01 level

Investigation of the result vide Table No - 7 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and commerce students is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.16 is accepted.

Further investigation of the result vides Table No -7 reveals that the 't' value for the significance of difference between science students and arts students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis No.17 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system than the science students.

Continuing with the investigation of the result of Table No. 7 discloses that the 't' value for the significance of difference between commerce students and arts students is significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis No.18 is rejected. The result indicates that arts students have a more favourable perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system than the commerce students.

Major Findings:

The following are the major findings of the present study:

1. **Comparing students' overall perception on semester system in undergraduate colleges of Mizoram with respect to stream of study.**

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' overall perception on semester system

ii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than science students in the overall perception on semester system

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than commerce students in the overall perception on semester system

2. Comparing students' perception on the different components of semester system in undergraduate colleges of Mizoram with reference to stream of study.

(A) General observation component of semester system

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the general observation component of semester system

ii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than science students in the general observation component of semester system.

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than commerce students in the general observation component of semester system

(B) Course of study components of semester system

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the course of study component of semester system

ii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than science students in the course of study component of semester system

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than the commerce students in the course of study component of semester system

(C) Evaluation component of semester system

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system

ii) There is no significant difference between science students and arts students' perception in the evaluation component of semester system

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than commerce students in the evaluation component of semester system

(D) Method of teaching component of semester system

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the method of teaching component of semester system

ii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than the science students in the method of teaching component of semester system

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than the commerce students in the method of teaching component of semester system

(E) Choice Based Credit System components of semester system

i) There is no significant difference between science students and commerce students' perception in the choice-based credit system component of semester system.

ii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than science students in the choice-based credit system component of semester system.

iii) Arts students had a more favourable perception than commerce students in the choice-based credit system component of semester system

It was found that with respect to overall perception and all components of semester system except evaluation component, the arts students had a more favourable perception on semester system compared to the science students.

Further, it was also found that with respect to overall perception and all components of semester system, the arts students had a more favourable perception on semester system compared to the commerce students.

Discussion on the Findings:

Students having good results in HSLC often take up the science stream, while arts stream is usually taken by low achieving students. Now, in semester system, if a learner fails in one or more papers, He/she can repeat the particular paper in which they fail. They do not need to repeat all the papers in a given semester. Now, this is very advantageous for many of the students from the arts stream who often fail in one or two subjects. The science students ordinarily do not need to repeat papers since many of them do not fail. Therefore, the reason why arts students favour the semester system more than the science students can be accounted to this.

Commerce as a stream of education is a study of trade and business activities such as the exchange of goods and services from producer to final consumer. Conversely, the study of Arts or Humanities enables a student to develop critical, argumentative

and creative skills. So, one can say that commerce defies comprehension, creativity and analysis while Arts is nothing but a culmination of all those. Now, in semester system, students were given assignments, seminars, project work etc. which really enhances critical and creative skills of the arts students. Thus, the probable reason why arts students had a more favourable perception on semester system compared to the commerce students could be because the method of teaching employed in semester system enhances creativity of the arts students:

Suggestions:

Based on the findings it can be suggested that:

1. Benefits of the semester system such as more time to understand and apply concepts, and better preparation for higher education could be highlighted to the science and commerce students.
2. Inter-disciplinary events and competitions to foster interaction between science, commerce and arts students could be organized.
3. Misconceptions that science and commerce students may have about the semester system could be addressed.
4. Role models from the science and commerce fields who have excelled under the semester system could be showcased.

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