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Career Preferences among the Undergraduate Final-Year Veterinary Students

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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken with the aim to identify the career preferences of undergraduate final-year veterinary students of College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pookode, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University. The data were collected by convenient sampling method using a semi-structured pre-tested interview schedule from 30 boys and 30 girl students pursuing final year B.V.Sc. and A.H constituted the total sample size of 60. A set of 20 careers options were listed relevant to veterinary students and rated on a 4-point Likert scale (4-Highly preferred, 3-Preferred, 2-Least preferred, 1-Not preferred). The total weighed score (TWS) and weighed mean score (WMS) were calculated for each career choice and based on WMS ranks were assigned by using a simple rank order technique. The job of Government Veterinary Surgeon was identified as the most preferred choice by both the categories of students. Becoming research scientists were the second most preferred career choice by male respondents followed by military service, private practice and administrative service. The female respondents preferred career as doctors in milk plants, food system management, private practices and meat inspection officers in that order. Extension service and political career were the least preferred choice by both genders. There was a significant difference in preference among male and female respondents in administrative service ($p<0.05$) and military service ($p<0.01$).

Key Words: Career preference, Job, Kerala, Under-graduates, Veterinary Surgeon.

INTRODUCTION

Career choice is seen as an important aspect that has a significant impact on a student's life and determines potential future work schedules (Bharadwaj *et al,* 2017). There are several factors that influence the career choices of the students such as the availability of resources, social and cultural identity, personality, gender, interests of the students. The veterinary and animal husbandry sectors have been increased to a greater extent in India, so the role of veterinarians has also evolved to support these developing sectors of India. Since veterinarians are not only involved in animal health care practices, they also provide better managemental practices to the farmers, so it is important for undergraduate veterinary students to select the right career choices as per their field of interest with a promising scope for his/ her better future (Krishna and Sharma, 2016). Improper or poor selection of careers may lead to low job satisfaction for young veterinary graduates and also affect their profession in long term (Tomlin *et al*, 2010). The present study focuses on the career preferences of final-year undergraduate students based on their gender.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The exploratory research design was adopted, and final-year students from the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pookode were purposively selected for this study. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed, and it was pre-tested among the non-sampling study population and necessary modifications were made before actual data collection. Data were collected by convenient sampling method from 30

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boys and 30 girl students of final year B.V.Sc. and A.H constituted the total sample size of 60 students. Data collection was made by using google forms. As per Krishna *et al* (2017) a set of 20 career options were listed as relevant to veterinary students and were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (4-Highly preferred, 3-Preferred, 2-Least preferred, 1-Not preferred). The Total Weighed Score (TWS) and Weighed Mean score (WMS) were calculated. The Total Weighted Score (TWS) was calculated for each career choice as per the standard method and WMS was calculated by using the following formula

$$\text{Weighed Mean Score} = \frac{\text{Highly preferred} \times 4 + \text{Preferred} \times 3 + \text{Least preferred} \times 2 + \text{Not preferred} \times 1}{\text{Total number of responses}}$$

Based on WMS, ranks were assigned by using a simple rank order technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The career preferences of undergraduate veterinary students showed that most respondents prefer government veterinary surgeons as their choice of career by both genders and this might be due to fact that government jobs often offer job security, attractive benefits, stable work hours, pension plans, career advancement and success in life (Table 1). Tanwar *et al* (2022) was also opined that succeed in life by setting a greater goal was most important among undergraduate students. Working as extension agent and political career were the least preferred choice by both genders and this may be as a result that political career demands different lifestyle, ethical challenges public scrutiny. Becoming research scientists were the second most preferred career choice by male respondents followed by military service, having a small animal clinics, administrative service, professor in educational institute, working in farms in abroad, managers in milk plants, eco-jobs like wild life ecologist or zoo veterinarian, working in central government farms, having large animal clinics, meat inspection officers, research in multinational companies, food system management / consulting service officers in food processing and retail companies, technical officers in insurance companies, quarantine units – central government, technical officers/ marketing executive and managers in dairy/poultry/ pharmaceutical industry, technical officers in banks.

Becoming managers in milk plants were the second most preferred career choice by female respondents followed by food system management / consulting service officers in food processing and retail companies, having a small animal clinic, meat inspection officers, professor in educational institute, research scientists, working in central government farms, technical officers/ marketing executive and managers in dairy/poultry/pharmaceutical industry, having large animal clinics, working in farms in abroad, eco-jobs like wild life ecologist or zoo veterinarian, administrative service, technical officers in banks, military service, research in multinational companies, technical officers in insurance companies, quarantine units – central government in the same order as male respondents.

There was a significant difference in preference among male and female respondents in administrative service ($p<0.05$) and military service ($p<0.01$). This significant difference might be due to the reason like stereotypes, historical roles, and societal norms may all relate to gender preferences in the military or in administration positions. Choices can be driven by traditional gender roles. These choices may also be shaped by institutional biases and cultural norms. However, individual interests and motives differ greatly.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that male respondents preferred government's jobs more than the female respondents. Both the genders were less aware about political careers and extension works. So, for proper choosing of career options by the students, colleges must provide career guidance and advices to their students through career guidance cell, Student mentors/ members should be introduced to provide advice and guidance to the students during their undergraduate period. Veterinary incubation centres should be established to convert ideas into commercial products and to promote entrepreneurial ideas of the students.

Table 1. Career choice preferences among final year veterinary students.

Sr. No	Job	MALE				FEMALE				Mann-Whitney U	Z Value
		TWS	WMS	SD	RANK	TWS	WMS	SD	RANK		
1	**Government Careers** Govt. Veterinary Surgeon	110	3.67	0.48	1	106.00	3.53	0.57	1	-0.873^{NS}	0.382
2	Meat inspection officer / (Slaughter houses in municipalities and corporations of state govt.)	85	2.83	0.95	12	90.00	3.00	0.83	5	-0.685 ^{NS}	0.493
3	Administrative services	94	3.13	0.68	5	78.00	2.60	0.93	13	-2.351*	0.019
4	Education – Asst. Prof. – State Vety. / Agri. Universities SAU/ SVUs)	93	3.10	0.88	6	89.00	2.97	0.85	6	-0.801 ^{NS}	0.423
5	Research Scientists in ICAR and other central research organisations.	102	3.40	0.67	2	89.00	2.97	0.93	7	-1.923 ^{NS}	0.055
6	Military service (RVC in Indian army, Indo-Tibetan boarder posts (ITPB) (Assistant Command in SSB)	99	3.30	0.75	3	74.00	2.47	1.04	15	-3.193*	0.001
7	Eco-Jobs – Wild life ecologist or conservation scientists, Zoo veterinarian-state central govt.	91	3.03	0.76	9	79.00	2.63	0.96	12	-1.849 ^{NS}	0.065
8.	Quarantine units – central government	77	2.57	0.77	16	68.00	2.27	0.87	18	-1.358 ^{NS}	0.175
9.	Central Govt. Farms	90	3.00	0.64	10	84.00	2.80	0.96	8	-0.665 ^{NS}	0.506
10.	**Semi-Government / Public sector Undertaking Careers** Managers / Doctors in milk plants (co-operatives)	91	3.03	0.56	8	93.00	3.10	0.66	2	-0.458 ^{NS}	0.647
11.	Insurance companies – Technical officers	80	2.67	0.76	15	70.00	2.33	0.99	17	-1.534 ^{NS}	0.125
12.	Bank – technical / field officers	75	2.50	0.68	18	76.00	2.53	1.11	14	-0.383 ^{NS}	0.702
13.	**Private sector careers** Private practice – small animal clinics	95	3.17	0.70	4	90.00	3.00	0.64	4	-0.929 ^{NS}	0.353
14.	Private practice – large animal clinics	87	2.90	0.61	11	81.00	2.70	0.84	10	-0.986 ^{NS}	0.324
15.	**Private sector jobs** Technical officers/ Marketing executive and managers in dairy, poultry, pharmaceutical industry and ante-mortem inspector in slaughter houses	76	2.53	0.78	17	82.00	2.73	0.74	9	-1.042 ^{NS}	0.298
16.	Extension agents / Technical officers in NGOs	68	2.27	0.87	19	66.00	2.20	0.81	19	-0.143 ^{NS}	0.887
17.	Research in Private and Multinational companies	83	2.77	0.82	13	71.00	2.37	0.93	16	-1.711 ^{NS}	0.087

18.	Food system management / consulting service officers in food processing and retail companies	81	2.70	0.75	14	91.00	3.03	0.72	3	-1.673 ^{NS}	0.094
19.	Other careers Abroad – farm consultants / Scientists	92	3.07	0.74	7	81.00	2.70	0.84	10	-1.669 ^{NS}	0.095
20.	Political career	45	1.50	0.86	20	43.00	1.43	0.90	20	-0.653 ^{NS}	0.514

**significant at 5 % level (p<0.05)*
***highly significant at 1 % level (p<0.01)*
^{NS} *non significant*

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