

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE VETERINARY STUDENTS IN AP**

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**Abstract:** A study was undertaken with the main objective of evaluating the factors that influence the career choices of undergraduate veterinary students in Andhra Pradesh. A 13-question instrument was administered to veterinary students in each of the professional years. The results were tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20. Majority (83.00%) of the students opined that veterinary and animal science as a career course was the best choice ever made by them and the most important factors considered for influencing the career choice were love for animals and to earn more. Specific factors influence veterinary students' career goals and identifying these factors may provide insights to faculty members in planning the experimental curriculum and assist prospective employers in increasing job retention among new veterinary graduates and improving their overall job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Veterinary students- Career choice.

### **Introduction**

Primary role of veterinarian and the scope of veterinary and animal science have been evolved to greater extent. Nowadays veterinarians are involved in variety of animal health care settings. However, with the advancement in veterinary practicing areas like other health care professions, fields of veterinary practice have also been modified and encompass wide range of activities. As veterinary and animal science is a multi disciplinary profession, different areas of employment like government veterinary officer, assistant professor, research scientist, wild life ecologist, assistant command in SSB, managers in co-operative milk plants, bank- technical officers, extension agents in NGOs and consulting service officer in food processing and retail companies etc., it is necessary for veterinary students to be aware of all these opportunities for achieving success in future. However, there is a fact that students usually do not make their preferences until they are graduated from their institutions (Wright *et al.* 2004). There are different factors which contribute the young veterinarians in joining the veterinary and animal science area. These factors may include: their passion to serve rural community, satisfaction towards job security, flexibility of working hours and

availability of good opportunities in the future. Sometimes influence of any personality (i.e. family member, friend, teacher or relative) also contributes in career initiation (Rascati, 1989). Thilakar *et al.* (2014) reported that job satisfaction was considered as the important factor for veterinary students in their professional life. The present study was conducted to evaluate the factors that influence veterinary graduates' career choices.

### **Materials and methods**

A total sample size of 150 students was selected through random sampling from three veterinary colleges (50 from each) under Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University. The pretested questionnaire consisting of 13- question instrument was used for data collection, the data was tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20. Thirteen factors aptly influencing veterinary students' career choices were considered and the respondents were asked to rank them accordingly. Based on the extent of their opinion total scores were arrived for each factor. Depending on the scores the rank order was assigned to each factor that has been expressed by the students.

### **Results and discussion**

The results from Table 1 reveals that 83.00 per cent of the students opined that their choice of veterinary and animal science as a career course was the best ever made while 17.00 per cent said they regretted their choice. This is a very positive outcome of the curriculum offered at this university. The students must have come to appreciate the subject after getting exposed to a number of opportunities in veterinary and animal science.

### **Factors that influence the veterinary students career choice**

Table 2 reveals that love for animals was the major factor revealed by veterinary students influencing career choice and achieved the highest total score (530). To earn more was the second factor revealed by students. Work environment, advice from seniors, job security were found to be the important factors for deciding the career choices. Job satisfaction, interest in nature of the work, family issues, interest in subject, career advisors, love for rural farmers, guidance from staff and life style were the several factors revealed by the students. It could be noted that in all colleges, there was a lacunae in guiding the students with specific career advisors in the selection of career choices after graduation. Hence it would be better if college administration establish a separate functioning placement cell for career guidance and advice.

### Summary

Majority (83.00%) of the students opined that veterinary and animal science as a career course was the best choice ever made by them. The most important factors considered for influencing the career goals were love for animals and to earn more. Hence, students should be encouraged to organize career days in order to enhance their knowledge of available work opportunities. This would minimize the negative peer influence from class mates or the need to depend on a friend or relatives to find jobs.

### References

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**Table 1: Student's current opinion about their choice of veterinary as a career course**

Student's current opinion of veterinary as a career course	Response	
	Frequency	Percent
Best choice ever made	124	83.00
Some regrets about the course	26	17.00
Total	150	100.00

**Table 2: Distribution based on the factors that influence the student's career choices**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	Interest in subject	70 (46.66)	48 (32.00)	08 (5.33)	24 (16.00)	464	<b>IX</b>
2	Job satisfaction	44 (29.30)	96 (64.00)	10 (6.66)	00 (0.00)	484	<b>VI</b>
3	Family issues	48 (32.00)	84 (56.00)	16 (10.66)	02 (1.33)	478	<b>VIII</b>
4	Job security	72 (48.00)	56 (37.33)	16 (10.66)	06 (4.00)	494	<b>V</b>
5	To earn more	84 (56.00)	60 (40.00)	06 (4.00)	00 (0.00)	528	<b>II</b>
6	Life style	38 (25.33)	40 (26.66)	64 (42.66)	08 (5.33)	408	<b>XIII</b>
7	Work environment	86 (57.33)	40 (26.66)	18 (12.00)	06 (4.00)	506	<b>III</b>
8	Love for animals	108 (72.00)	20 (13.33)	16 (10.66)	6 (4.00)	530	<b>I</b>
9	Love for Rural farmers	64 (42.66)	36 (24.00)	20 (13.33)	30 (20.00)	434	<b>XI</b>
10	Advice from seniors	84 (56.00)	36 (24.00)	30 (20.00)	00 (0.00)	504	<b>IV</b>
11	Guidance from staff	44 (29.33)	56 (37.33)	30 (20.00)	20 (13.33)	424	<b>XII</b>
12	Career advisors	52 (34.66)	36 (24.00)	60 (40.00)	02 (1.33)	438	<b>X</b>
13	Interest in the nature of work	64 (42.66)	56 (37.33)	28 (18.66)	02 (1.33)	482	<b>VII</b>

*@Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage; SA-Strongly agree, A-agree, DA-disagree, SDA-strongly disagree.*