

Attitude of undergraduate veterinary college students towards veterinary education and career aspirations: A socio-psychological perspective

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the attitude of undergraduate veterinary college students towards veterinary education and their occupational aspirations, while identifying socio-personal, academic, and psychological determinants. The research was conducted at the College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Sardarkrushinagar (Gujarat) with 193 respondents. A structured interview schedule was used to collect data, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis. Academic achievement, caste, and attitude towards veterinary education were found to have a positive and significant relationship, whereas age showed a significant but negative relationship with the level of occupational aspiration among veterinary college students. The majority of students (85.00%) exhibited a moderate to highly favorable attitude towards veterinary education. Additionally, 88% of students preferred employment in various sectors over starting their own business, likely due to factors such as job security, a steady income, and the absence of initial investment. The GPSC administrative service was the most preferred career choice. These findings highlight the need to reform educational counseling, promote entrepreneurial awareness, and align the curriculum with market demands.

Keywords: Attitude, occupation, academic performance, social participation, veterinary education, job, career

Introduction

Veterinary education is critical in shaping professionals who contribute to livestock health, food security, and rural livelihoods. Despite infrastructural advancements and curriculum updates, the alignment between students' attitudes and the real-world dynamics of veterinary career opportunities remains underexplored. The preferences of students toward government jobs, private practice, or higher education are shaped by a combination of socio-economic, academic, and motivational factors. Understanding this interplay is crucial for developing educational policies that improve student satisfaction and align training with workforce demands. Despite increasing opportunities in both public and private sectors, undergraduate students often show a skewed preference toward government employment. Past studies (Ashwar, 2004; Ajit, 2004; Patel, 2012) ^[1, 2, 4] highlight the influence of socio-economic background, caste, academic achievement, and attitude on career aspirations. Previous studies (Shingare, 2005) ^[5] have emphasized the role of environment, curriculum design, and student support systems in shaping academic performance and professional readiness. This study explores the

attributes and aspirations undergraduate veterinary students in Gujarat to provide evidence-based recommendations.

Methodology

An ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. Out of 328 enrolled students, 193 were available at the time of the survey. Data were collected using a pre-tested structured interview schedule. The socio-personal variables studied included native place, age, caste, family income and academic performance. Psychological variable studied like Attitude towards veterinary education, which was measured on the basis of scale developed by Ashwar (1993) ^[6]. Career aspirations were categorized on the basis of occupational Preference Inventory developed by Ashwar (1993) ^[6]. Statistical analyses were performed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient to assess the relationship between variables, and multiple regression analysis to identify predictors of career preferences. To better understand both direct and indirect effects of independent variables on occupational aspiration, a path analysis was also performed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of socio-personal and psychological variables of respondents

Sr. No.	Variables	Category	Percentage (%)
1	Native place	Rural	57.51
		Urban	42.49
2	Caste	General	50.26
		Schedule Caste (SC)	4.66
		Schedule Tribe (ST)	10.88
		Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC)	34.20
3	Age	17-19 years	39.38
		20-22 years	48.18
		23-25 years	12.44
4	Academic achievement	Distinction	13.99
		First class	41.45
		Second class	29.53
		Pass	15.03
5	Family income	Low family income (below ₹ 1.10 lakh)	8.29
		Medium family income (₹ 1.10 lakh to 2.10 lakh)	23.83
		High family income (above ₹ 2.10 lakh)	67.88
6	Family type	Joint	53.37
		Nuclear	46.63
7	Attitude	Highly favorable	15.03
		Moderately favorable	69.44
		Less favorable	15.44

The majority of respondents (57.51%) hailed from rural backgrounds. The environment greatly influences educational choices. In villages, students often interact with local veterinarians, gaining insight into the field and its career opportunities. Their close bond with animals and exposure to veterinary practice likely contribute to the higher number of rural students pursuing veterinary education. This finding gets support from the observation of Ashwar (1993) [6] but contrary to the findings of Patel (2012) [4]. More than half (50.26%) belonged to general category castes, while 34.20 per cent from SEBC, 10.88 from ST and 4.66 per cent from SC reserved categories. The better literacy and socio-economic status of non-reserved castes likely enable greater access to higher education, justifying their higher representation in veterinary colleges. Age distribution revealed that most students were young (20-22 years), aligning with the typical entry age into professional colleges. Academic achievement showed that 55.44% of students were in first class or distinction categories, suggesting strong merit. A majority came from joint families, and majority of students (85.00%) had a moderate to highly favorable attitude towards veterinary education. A similar finding was reported by Shingare (2005) [5] and Patel (2012) [4], who found that the majority of students had a high to moderately favorable attitude towards veterinary education.

Table 2: Distribution of occupational aspirations of respondents (n=193)

Sr. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	GPSC Administrative Service	52	26.94
2	State A.H. Department	30	15.54
3	Agricultural University	20	10.36
4	Remount Veterinary Corps in the Military	19	9.84
5	Zoo	17	8.81
6	Private Veterinary Practice/Clinics	11	5.70
7	Abroad jobs	10	5.18
8	Co-operative Dairies	10	5.18
9	NDDB	7	3.63
10	Banks	7	3.63
11	Private Dairies (Service)	3	1.55
12	Private Poultry Farms	3	1.55
13	Private Dairy Farm (Entrepreneurship)	2	1.04
14	Pharma Representative	1	0.52
15	Stud Farms	1	0.52

A majority (88%) preferred jobs in various sectors over starting a business, likely due to job security, steady income, and no need for initial investment. GPSC administrative service was the most preferred career, likely due to its prestige, job security, and social recognition. A similar

finding was reported by Patel, (2012) [4], who revealed that the majority of students (48.33%) aspired to serve and secure employment as Veterinary Officers in the state or central government.

Table 3: Relationship between characteristics of the respondents and their level of occupational aspiration

Sr. No.	Variable	Correlation (r)
1	Academic achievement	0.568**
2	Attitude toward veterinary education	0.431**
3	Caste	0.152*
4	Age	-0.403**
5	Native place	0.013 ^{NS}
6	Family type	-0.084 ^{NS}
7	Family income	-0.017 ^{NS}

**= Significant at 0.01 level; *= Significant at 0.05 level; ^{NS}= Non-significant

Table 3 revealed that correlation between the academic achievement, caste and attitude towards veterinary education had positive and significant relationship, while age had significant but negative relationship with the level of occupational aspiration of veterinary college students. High academic achievers tend to aim for prestigious jobs, as these roles often require strong merit and success in tough

competitive exams like GPSC. This likely leads to higher occupational aspirations among them, aligning with findings of Ajit (2004)^[3] and Bhosale (2011)^[8]. Upper caste students showed higher job aspirations, likely due to their stronger economic, social, and educational backgrounds, which gave them better awareness of career prospects and access to higher education.

Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of respondents' level of occupational aspiration

Sr. No.	Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
1	Academic achievement	7.884	6.35	<0.01
2	Attitude toward veterinary education	0.375	3.41	<0.01
3	Caste	-1.210	-2.08	<0.05
4	Age	-0.524	-1.95	NS
5	Family income	0.115	1.28	NS
6	Family type	-0.084	-0.60	NS
7	Native place	0.013	0.18	NS

The regression analysis revealed that academic achievement ($\beta = 7.884$, $p < 0.01$) and attitude toward veterinary education ($\beta = 0.375$, $p < 0.01$) were the strongest predictors of career aspirations among veterinary students. Caste also emerged as a significant but negative predictor ($\beta = -1.210$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that students from reserved categories tended to report slightly lower occupational aspirations compared to general category peers. Other variables such as age, family income, family type, and native place did not significantly influence aspirations. The model explained 41.9% of the variance in occupational aspirations ($R^2 = 0.419$), indicating a moderately strong explanatory power. These findings emphasize that while socio-economic background plays a role, academic performance and personal attitudes remain central in shaping the career outlook of veterinary undergraduates.

Conclusion

The study reveals that most undergraduate veterinary students in Gujarat prefer government jobs—particularly GPSC services, the State Animal Husbandry Department, and universities—due to perceived stability, financial security, and social prestige. Entrepreneurial interest was minimal, hindered by risk aversion, lack of training, and limited support. Academic achievement and attitude toward veterinary education were key predictors of career aspirations. The findings highlight the need for policy reforms in veterinary education, including entrepreneurship training, skill development, and career counselling, to diversify career pathways and reduce reliance on government jobs.

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