

## TRENDS IN PERSONAL BOOK COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND READING HABITS AMONG VETERINARY OFFICERS OF PUNJAB

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### ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to understand the personal book collection and reading habits of veterinary officers of the Punjab state. A well-structured online questionnaire was created using Google Forms and was provided to 100 veterinary officers randomly (appointed during 2005-2014) of the state of Punjab, India. Of these, 70 veterinarians participated in this study. The study found that veterinary officers acquired most of their books by the purchase method. Textbooks and handbooks/manuals dominated the type of books owned by veterinarians. In addition to subject related books, respondents also had literature books for leisure reading. English language led the way with maximum number of books. Clinic had been considered as the first preferred place for reading/consulting books by 60% of the respondents. Diagnosis and treatment of diseases were found to be the main purposes for reading/consulting books. The study concluded that the majority of the veterinary officers were partially satisfied with their book collection to meet day to day professional needs. About 94.28% of the respondents favoured financial assistance from government to purchase books.

**Key words:** Books, personal book collection, Punjab, reading habits, veterinary officers

Lifelong learning has been defined as “All learning activity undertaken through-out life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (European Commission, 2014). The type of book collection owned by individuals differs from person to person. It depends on one's personal interest, and academic and professional needs. Owning a good book collection becomes one of the pre-requisites for the success and development of all kinds of professions. Veterinarians, the specialists for the welfare of animal's health, contribute significantly towards the development of a nation by promoting the animal health and production. They need to consult various information resources to get information related to nutrition, causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment of diseases, surgery etc. of animals.

Book collection owned by veterinary officers plays a key role in the accomplishment of the objectives laid down by their noble profession. Studies have been conducted at national and international levels to assess people's book buying and reading habits (Panigrahi, 1998; Pearson, 2012). Keeping the above facts in mind, the present study was undertaken to explore the personal book collection aspects and reading habits among veterinary officers of Punjab.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Veterinary officers appointed by the Government of Punjab during 2005-2014 were chosen as sample to analyse the personal book collection of veterinary officers of Punjab. An online survey was conducted using Google Forms. A well structured online questionnaire was constructed after careful examination of relevant literature. Respondents were asked about their age, sex, qualification and length of service. Four options i.e. 21-25, 26-30, 31-35 and more than 35 years were given to indicate age. For length of service two options i.e., <5 years and 6-10 years were given. Respondents were asked whether they had only Bachelor's degree i.e. basic qualification for the post of veterinary officer or they had specialization in any field with Master's degree.

The questionnaire included questions related to number of books possessed, book acquisition pattern, method followed to purchase books, type and language of books, frequency and place of reading books, purpose of reading books, satisfaction with book collection and requirement for financial support to purchase books. For all the questions related to possession of number of books, respondents were asked to choose options from 1-5, 6-10, 11-15 books and so on. Invitation to the survey was sent through email to a random sample of 100 veterinary officers of the state of Punjab. In total 70 veterinarians responded to the request.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Demographic Details:** The respondents comprised of about 82.85% male and 17.15% female veterinary officers. Of the total respondents, 57% respondents were aged between 26-30 years and 40% veterinary officers were 31-35 years old. Only 2 veterinary officers were above 35 years of age. Nearly 1/5<sup>th</sup> respondents had Masters' degree in Veterinary Science and the remaining 81% had only Bachelors' degree. A total of 57% and 43% respondents had experience of 6-10 years and 0-5 years, respectively.

**Total Number of Books:** About 28.57% veterinary officers possessed a collection of 6-10 books. Nearly 1/5<sup>th</sup> (21.43%) respondents had 11-15 books (Table 1). Ten users (14.29%) had a meager collection of 1-5 books. Thirteen (18.57%) respondents had a good collection of books, each having more than 25 books; seven of these 13 veterinarians owned more than 50 books.

More than half of the veterinary officers did not arrange their books in any order and about 75% respondents did not maintain record of books.

**Acquisition Pattern:** It is evident from Table 2 that purchase was the most common method of acquisition of books. A total of 23 and 19 veterinary officers purchased 6-10 and 1-5 books, respectively to develop their book collection. Ten veterinarians (14.29%) had purchased more than 25 books, including three respondents who had purchased more than 50 books. The results were parallel to the study of Laloo and Thabab (2013) who found that majority of the politicians and bureaucrats had acquired books through purchase. About 60.00%, 84.29% and 60.00% users had not received even a single book through gift, exchange and membership of associations/organizations, respectively. Gifts was termed as a source of acquisition

**Table 1**  
Total number of books possessed by veterinary officers of Punjab

Sr. No.	Total number of books possessed by veterinary officers	Number of respondents
1.	0	0 (0.00%)
2.	1-5	10 (14.29%)
3.	6-10	20 (28.57%)
4.	11-15	15 (21.43%)
5.	16-20	8 (11.43%)
6.	21-25	4 (5.71%)
7.	26-30	2 (2.86%)
8.	31-35	2 (2.86%)
9.	36-40	1 (1.43%)
10.	41-45	0 (0.00%)
11.	46-50	1 (1.43%)
12.	>50	7 (10.00%)

of 1-5 books by 31.43% veterinary officers. Nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> respondents had received 1-5 complimentary books being member of different associations/organizations.

**Method Followed to Purchase Books:** Purchase from book shops was the most preferred way to build repository of books by veterinary officers (Table 3). Nearly 44.29% veterinarians had purchased 1-5 books from book shops. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (32.86%) respondents had purchased 6-20 books and 10.00% veterinary officers had purchased more than 25 books from book shops (Table 3). Book exhibitions by book sellers/ publishers at academic institutions was also a popular mode to purchase books, during which half of the veterinarians had purchased 1-5 books. With the easy availability of the Internet even in rural areas of the state, online purchase of books had also got an impetus with more than 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the veterinary officers purchasing 1-5 books from online bookstores. Six of the 70 respondents had made an online purchase of 6 to 15 books.

**Table 2**  
Acquisition pattern of books by veterinary officers of Punjab

Number of books*	Number of veterinary officers acquiring books through				
	Purchase	Gift	Exchange	Membership of Association/Organisation	Other
0	0 (0.00 %)	42(60.00%)	59 (84.29 %)	42 (60.00 %)	54 (77.14 %)
1-5	19 (27.14 %)	22 (31.43 %)	9 (12.86 %)	23 (32.86 %)	11 (15.71 %)
6-10	23 (32.86 %)	6 (8.57 %)	1 (1.43 %)	4 (5.71 %)	4 (5.71 %)
11-15	9 (12.86 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43 %)	1 (1.43 %)	1 (1.43 %)
16-20	4 (5.71 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)
21-25	5 (7.14 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00 %)
More than 25	10 (14.29 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)

\*Number of books indicates only the books acquired through particular method by veterinary officers , not to be taken as total book collection.

**Type of Books:** Table 4 depicts that textbooks dominated the total collection owned by veterinary officers with half and about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the veterinary officers owning 1-5 and 6-10 textbooks, respectively. Ten veterinarians had 11-25 text books and 3 respondents had even more than 25 textbooks. More than 10% of respondents had 6-25 books of literature with 3 veterinarians having even more than 25 literature books. This good collection of literature owned by the veterinary officers showed that they read literature to relax and refresh their minds after exhausting working hours. Books on general knowledge and competitive examinations added a feather to the book collection owned by veterinary officers. Nearly 50% respondents each had 1-5 books on general knowledge and competitive examinations while 5-6 veterinarians had

more than five books on these aspects.

**Language of Books:** Majority of the books owned by veterinary officers were in English. Of their total book collection about 40.00% veterinarians had 6-10 books in English. Thirteen veterinarians possessed more than 25 books in English including 4 veterinarian shaving more than 50 books in English. This supports the fact that most of the literature in the subject of veterinary science is being published in English language. It draws specific attention that 47.14% and 87.14% veterinary officers did not possess even a single book in Punjabi and Hindi, respectively.

**Book Reading Habits:** Reading books is the basis of lifelong learning and for professions like veterinary one need to consult books frequently to meet routine

**Table 3**  
**Method followed by veterinary officers of Punjab to purchase books**

Number of books *	Number of veterinary officers purchasing books through						
	Book shop	By post	Book exhibition	Online book store	Sales representative	Through library	Other
0	0 (0.00%)	51 (72.86%)	33 (47.14%)	49 (70.00%)	59 (84.29%)	62 (88.57%)	56 (80.00%)
1-5	31 (44.29 %)	18 (25.71 %)	35 (50.00 %)	15 (21.43 %)	10 (14.29 %)	6 (8.57 %)	8 (11.43%)
6-10	23 (32.86 %)	1 (1.43 %)	2 (2.86 %)	3 (4.29 %)	1 (1.43 %)	2 (2.86 %)	4 (5.71 %)
11-15	5 (7.14 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	3 (4.29 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	2 (2.86 %)
16-20	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)
21-25	3 (4.29 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)
More than 25	7 (10.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)

\* Number of books indicates only the books purchased through particular method by veterinary officers , not to be taken as total book collection.

**Table 4**  
**Type of books**

No. of books	Number of veterinary officers possessing different types of books									
	TB	HM	ATL	MR	CP	DE	GRA	LIT	GK	CE
0	0 (0.00 %)	11 (15.71 %)	47 (67.14 %)	39 (55.71%)	49 (70.00%)	23 (32.86%)	52 (74.29%)	45 (64.29%)	31 (44.29 %)	30 (42.86%)
1-5	35 (50.00 %)	46 (65.71%)	20 (28.57 %)	27 (38.57 %)	17 (24.29 %)	45 (64.29 %)	16 (22.86 %)	14 (20.00 %)	34 (48.57 %)	34 (48.57%)
6-10	22 (31.43 %)	6 (8.57 %)	2 (2.86 %)	2 (2.86 %)	2 (2.86 %)	2 (2.86 %)	2 (2.86 %)	6 (8.57 %)	5 (7.14 %)	4 (5.71%)
11-15	4 (5.71 %)	5 (7.14 %)	1 (1.43 %)	1 (1.43 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43%)
16-20	4 (5.71 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43%)
21-25	2 (2.86 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)
More than 25	3 (4.29 %)	1 (1.43 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)	3 (4.29 %)	0 (0.00 %)	0 (0.00 %)

TB= Textbooks ; HM= Handbooks/Manuals ; ATL= Atlases (related to veterinary science) ; MR= Monographs/Research based books; CP= Conference proceedings; DE= Dictionaries/ Encyclopaedias ; GRA= Grammar ; LIT= Literature; GK= General knowledge ; CE= Competitive examination

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information requirements. Of the respondents, 45.71% consulted books 2-3 times a week to meet their information needs. Nearly 1/4<sup>th</sup> veterinary officers sought information from books once a week. Only nine veterinarians used books daily. Books were being consulted fortnightly and rarely by 6 veterinarians each. Similar results of overall regular usage of books were also noticed by Tharumaraj and Noordin (2011) in a survey of English language teachers.

Veterinary officers consulted books at different places like clinic, home, library, on travel, etc. About 60.00% of the veterinarians considered clinic as their 1<sup>st</sup> preference for consulting/ reading books. Information required to meet day to day professional needs may be the reason behind this high share for clinic as the 1<sup>st</sup> preferred place. More than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents (37.14%) termed home as their 1<sup>st</sup> preference for referring to books. Almost the same number of respondents (36.67%) were observed terming home as their favorite place for reading in a study conducted by Vellaichamy and Jeyshankar (2014). Consultation/ reading of books while travelling and in the library had been considered as 1<sup>st</sup> preference by one veterinarian each.

**Purpose of Reading Books:** As shown in Table 5, about 95.71% veterinary officers consulted books to know about the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Books were being consulted by about 57.14% users to know about surgical procedures. More than 45% veterinarians referred books to know the meaning and scope of certain terms/words. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the veterinary officers read books for leisure and entertainment.

**Satisfaction with Personal Book Collection:** Majority of the veterinary officers (51.42%) were partially satisfied with their personal book collection to meet their day to day professional needs. About 5.71% of the respondents were completely unsatisfied. Of the respondents, only 3 were fully satisfied and 37.14% satisfied with their book collection.

**Requirement for Financial Support:** Sixty six (94.28%) of the veterinary officers felt the need of financial support, i.e. subsidy from government on

**Table 5**  
**Purpose of reading books**

Purpose	Number of respondents (Percentage)
To know about diagnosis and treatment of diseases	67 (95.71%)
To know about surgical procedures	40 (57.14%)
To know about meaning and scope of certain terms	32 (45.71%)
For leisure and entertainment	25 (35.71%)
Other	17 (24.29%)

purchase of books for their professional development. Of the total, 13 (18.57 %), 41 (58.57 %) and 12 (17.14 %) veterinary officers desired that government should provide 25%, 50% and 100% financial support on purchase of books for professional development. Only four (5.71 %) veterinarians were of the opinion that there should be no support from the government on purchase of books.

Present study revealed that more than half of the veterinary officers were partially satisfied with their personal book collection in meeting their day to day professional needs. Lack of funds was found to be one of the major reasons for limited collection of books owned by veterinary officers and about 94.28% of the respondents desired financial support from government on purchase of books for their professional development.

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