RESEARCH ARTICLE
COMPARISON OF STUDENT ACHIEVERS ACROSS TWO CITIES OF KARNATAKA THROUGH FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS
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ABSTRACT
Student Achievers from two cities of Karnataka were compared to check for any vital differences in terms of lifestyles and routines and to check for what they considered as influencing them to achieve. Focus Group Discussions was conducted with six student achievers of each city. One city was a Tier 1 city (Bangalore) and the other one was a Tier 3 city (Tumkur). Student achievers from three areas of achievement were chosen- academics, sports and extra-curricular activities. Themes were drawn out based on the interview questions chosen. Differences and similarities mainly in the form of qualities deemed necessary for achieving in any arena were analysed between the two cities.

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INTRODUCTION
In today’s world, most students are under intense pressure to succeed or achieve in any arena so as to distinguish themselves. This provides a lot of motivation and competition. At least most students aim to achieve something and are even motivated to do so. But only a fraction of them actually complete their goals. This could be the result of several factors which may directly or indirectly influence them. These factors could be what are responsible for understanding the process of achievement in students.

A lot of studies have been conducted to understand the reason behind why people actually succeed in achieving something while others fail even when there is a drive to succeed. Research has also tried to understand how the process of achievement occurs. Certain studies have revealed that the achievement process can be broken down into five stages-all of which are essential to succeed in anything but for the purpose of the current study, only the first three have been considered. The first stage is having a dream or a vision. From these dreams they will draw specific targets or goals for them to complete. The second phase is the goals stage. Drawing on the specific goals formulated in the first step, these are refined in this step. Realistic and unrealistic goals are separated and only what can be achieved by the person is retained. The third step is the planning stage. Here, the goals, from step two are taken up for individual consideration and the best strategy to go about each one of them is considered. Now taking these steps into consideration, this study attempts to draw out basic themes from achievers regarding their lifestyles and their influences to achieve in their respective fields. Furthermore, achievers from two cities in Karnataka have been compared. While one city is a Tier 1 metropolitan city (Bangalore), the other one is a Tier 3 city (Tumkur). To go a little further, different types of achievements in students were also taken into consideration- academics, sports and extra-curricular activities.

Review of Literature has revealed that achievement has the ability to effect a change in the self-concept of ability and those who attribute their achievement to ability prefer to do tasks which require some competence. It was seen that one’s personal standards were found to be significant predictors of achievement. It also was very vital in pointing out which social factors had been found influential in relation to academic achievement. Some of the important ones included parental upbringing style, family factors and lastly the influence of religion too.

METHODOLOGY
Aim
To conduct focus group discussions with six achievers from each city- Bangalore and Tumkur.

Objectives
1. To get an insight into the routines of achievers.
2. To understand the factors those are believed to have led to achievement.
3. To understand what is similar and different in achievers across the three types of achievements as well as between cities.

Sampling
Six student achievers from each city were chosen to take part in the Focus Group Discussion.

The inclusion criteria for choosing these achievers were that they had to have been achieving within the first three ranks in their area of achievement for at least three years in a row previously. The students had to be studying the State syllabus be at the high school level i.e. in 8th, 9th or 10th standards. Two students from each area of achievement were chosen for the discussion in each city.

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Procedure

The inclusion criteria was presented to the schools and a list of students who all the conditions were taken and six students- two from each stream of achievement were chosen randomly from the list. A group discussion was initiated with each group. The following questions were asked of each group plus any follow up questions that were deemed necessary based on the discussion:

- Can you talk a little about your daily routines? Weekdays and weekends?
- When was the first time you achieved? How did it make you feel? Do you think it contributed to you achieving in the same area again?
- What factors do you think has helped you achieve?
- How much do you think your family and friends have contributed to your success?
- How much do you think your community and religion has contributed towards your achievement?
- What are some of the qualities that you think is necessary for an achiever?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were various themes drawn from the responses given by the students. The following were the highlights of the Focus Group Discussion:

Theme 1: Qualities required for the process of achievement as perceived by achievers-

Achievers who participated in the focus group discussions between the two cities all agreed upon a certain list of factors that had helped them achieve. The qualities listed were further divided into what can be called as professional and personal categories. They have been listed below.

Professional qualities:

- Having a fixed routine was essential.
- Goal setting- both short term and long term goals were necessary for the achievers to focus on.
- A sense of determination to reach those goals.
- Keeping up with time-tables was found to be integral to achieve in any field.
- To be up-to-date on the current affairs and brush up on their general knowledge.
- Keep role models who are specific to their stream or area of achievements. For example sportspeople quoted famous cricketers, footballers and so on when asked about their role-models.

Personal Qualities:

- Support from family and the school especially was mentioned often.
- Have some ‘me’ fixed always, especially during the weekends.
- Focused on bringing a good name for themselves, their parents, family and the school.
- Show great sense of maturity and ability to maintain responsibility.
- Firmly be in control of making decisions.

Theme 2: Internal motivation towards achievement-

One of the first things that was noticed about the achievers was the fact that they were all quite confident in their abilities and their determination to achieve. This, most of them acknowledged, worked out positively as well as negatively. Their prior achievements helped them understand the responsibility they have as achievers. But some of them mentioned it may also be very pressurizing for them to think about their past achievements as it has given rise to certain expectations about themselves to others which they need to constantly maintain. They feel that this could be tiring sometimes maintaining their standards.

Apart from that, what was noticed was the determination with which the achievers worked towards their goals. They showed that they had already decided in terms of a career- even going into the specifics of the kind of work they would like to do. This was explained in terms of how and why those careers were chosen to be pursued and they were clear in terms of how much effort was involved in reaching those goals. They were also well aware of the path that had to be followed to be successful in their careers- even going to the extent of listing out the best colleges for the courses they wished to study in future.

Next it was noticed that the first time they achieved in something was the starting point for them to continue achieving. All of them recalled their first achievements with great pleasure and were vehement in their insistence that they were intensely motivated by that experience. This seemed to have had a profound effect on their lives- going as far as shaping their futures to an extent.

It was thus noticed that internal factors played a very important role when it came to the process of achievement itself.

Theme 3: Differences in achievers between the two cities-

Since there were two focus group discussions conducted in two different cities, it was possible to notice some of the differences between the achievers. Some of the important ones have been listed below.

- In the manner of maintaining a routine, Tumkur achievers were quite rigid in terms of maintaining it. Bangalore achievers quite freely confessed that they broke from their routines to adjust with some other activity- though not very often.
- Bangalore achievers had a different lifestyle as compared to Tumkur Achievers as they had more choices from which to choose from in terms of leisure activities, resources and so on.
- Tumkur achievers were seen to be a bit more influenced by the social factor of community when compared to Bangalore achievers.
- Bangalore achievers were seen to be involved in a lot more different activities when compared to Tumkur achievers.
- Tumkur achievers insisted that it was crucial to have some time off and have some ‘me’ time especially during the weekend. By comparison Bangalore achievers spoke of lack of time to do anything remotely fun even during weekends.

CONCLUSION

The Focus Group Discussions were therefore very helpful in gaining an insight into the routines of the achievers. It also helped reveal the perceived professional and personal qualities
that were necessary for the process of achievement. Among them, the highlighted ones included the determination to do well, the compulsory ‘me’ time to be had every once in a while which was necessary to unwind and the willingness to take up responsibility. Next, the internal factors of motivation among achievers were revealed in the process of the discussions. The process of having achieved sometime back in the past in their current area of achievement was shown to be a major contributor to their current achievements. The fact that they also had a lot of forethought when it came to career decisions as well as the ability to set target for themselves effectively is also significant. Finally there was a crucial difference in terms of lifestyles as well as the ability to be focused on achievement between the two cities of Bangalore and Tumkur.

References


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