

An Investigation into Screening Process of Athletes during Basic Education School Sports Competitions and its Influence on Students' Athletes in the Gomoa East District in Ghana.

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the screening process of athletes for basic school sports competitions and its influences on students' attitude towards Extracurricular Activities in the Gomoa East District. The study employed the descriptive survey design involving 150 respondents. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistic. It was found out that, the respondents had a general positive perception about the screening process and therefore there is the need for a more scientific approach to the screening exercise to make it more robust and transparent to boost stakeholder's confidence and continuous interest. It is therefore recommended that a more scientific approach should be adopted to reduce significantly the level of bias in the screening process.

Key words; Screening process, Facial screening, Competition, Student athlete.

Introduction

Governor Guggisberg's Sixteen Principles of 1925 recommended that games and sports should be part of school life (McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Physical education and extracurricular activities in our school calendar is a never changing event that drives and simulates the minds and the lives of students. It is very paramount in transforming, informing, educating and training students, ardent sports individuals and the society in general. Ghana as a community cherishes sporting activities to the extent that, a sport (football) as a discipline is tagged as "the passion for the nation" in Ghana. In some communities, it is known as; the heartbeat of every home. Basic School Sports Competition is a yearly programme organized on rotational bases across the ten regions of Ghana to harness talents.

Screening on the other hands as sited by (Antonio & Fernando, 2008) is the systematic practice of evaluating sports participants before competition to detect falsification of personal details and most importantly cardiovascular abnormalities and thus prevent sudden death or progression of disease. Attitude according to (Word Web, 2009), is a complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways. The participation of students in the extracurricular activity across the length and breadth of Basic Schools in Ghana has been in a bad state for some decade now as a result of many contributive factors leading to poor participation of pupils/athletes in extracurricular activities from their youthful stages into their adulthood.

The introduction of screening process in the basic school sports as a measure is to foster equity among student-athletes which has been of great concern not only to pupils and parents but also an issue for discussion of sports organizers and enthusiasts. Screening is a systematic examination or assessment, done especially to detect unwanted substance or attribute (Lacorte, 1989)

The Gomoa East as a District in the central region is endowed with numerous talented athletes over past decades, many trophies, medals and cups have been won by the Central Regional school teams during inter-school sports competitions in the past with very wide point's differences but that cannot be said today. There has been a sharp decline in their performance in the Inter-School through to Inter-Regional Basic School

Sports Competitions for the past half a decade now. This has raised several questions, dialogues and series of action plans at various stakeholders meetings.

In Ghana, extracurricular activity forms part of the educational curriculum as an integral part of the general education. Before 1990, participation in school sports competitions was opened to all enrolled pupils irrespective of one's age, body weight/size. But now, screening is the determiner for participation in disciplines like; football, athletics, volleyball, table tennis and netball. The screening procedures took a centre stage in the letter from Ghana Education Service; Headquarters (1988) on impersonation during a national school sports festival in Wa-Upper West Region. Extracurricular activity is physical activity which through casual or organized participation, aim to use, maintain or improve physical fitness and provide entertainment to participants (Rogets, 1995).

There is therefore the need to investigate the kind of screening procedures in the Basic School Sports Competitions for athletes to be very much aware and be mindful of the consequences on extracurricular activities and it is in this light that this research is being conducted.

Statement of the Problem

The hall mark of extracurricular activity is to promote long life, fitness and healthy lifestyles among student through well structured physical activities as an integral part of their lives. This research work is investigating the screening procedures and its influence on the students (athletes) attitude towards participating in extracurricular activities at the schools and in the national school sports competition as a whole. According to Wanderi (2006), games and sports are important cultural elements, and therefore called for the reinstatement of African games in schools. Indigenous games and sports have the potential for the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of the citizenry.

The screening exercise as it has been named in the Basic School Sports Competition since 90s, was introduced to eliminate unqualified athletes who infiltrate into school sports competitions to deprive genuine student-athletes from competing in school sports. The fact that a pupil looks over-weight, over-aged, tall etc does not mean he /she has been hired by a school to cheat in the competition is a disincentive to them. In the screening processes features like these are scrutinized; ages of athletes not exceeding 12 and 15years for Primary and JHS respectively. Body stature or posture, height, and the number of years spent in school or performing for a school, district, on transfers and across all levels of sports. Some works have been done by researchers on this field, screening exercise as a matter of fact, fetches serious problems and misgivings among athletes. Those contacted confirmed their misgivings about the screening exercise/procedures. (Lacorte, 1989)

Others viewed this concept as a tool for victimizing, depriving, destroying and eliminating deserving or potential athletes participating in the national school sports competition. The effects on students' attitudes towards their involvement in extracurricular activity nowadays left much to be desired. Much work has not been done by researchers into the influence of screening procedures on extracurricular activities in the Gomoa East Schools and the country. It is based on this missing gap that the research work is being conducted to scrutinize the screening procedures in Basic School Sports Competitions and its influence on the students (athletes) attitude towards participating in extracurricular activities at the school levels and in the national school sports competition as a whole

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate screening procedures in the Basic School Sports Competition and their influence on students' attitudes towards extracurricular activities. This study examines what prompted the school sports authorities to institute screening procedures into the basic and national school sports competitions and how they are able to determine athletes' eligibility and non-eligibility and also its influence on the students' attitude towards the extracurricular activities. The study also seeks to analyze the processes, methods and the challenges facing athletes at the Basic schools sports competition and to provide workable guidelines to improve and better screening modalities in Gomoa East District..

Research Questions

1. What prompted the authorities to start the screening of athletes at the basic school competitions?
2. What screening criteria are used in the Basic School Sports competition?
3. How do participants perceive screening process?

4. How do screening procedures influence student's attitudes towards extracurricular activities?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed to conduct this study. This was because the study aimed at describing the processes involved in the screening of contingent in the Basic Schools Sports Competitions and the influence it has had on the extracurricular activities on students.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), the descriptive survey is often directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study. Creswell (2008) added that the descriptive survey design is used to determine individual opinion about a policy issue or programme. The cross-sectional survey design provides useful information for decision-makers since it has the advantage of measuring current attitude or practices. Pilot and Hungler (2003) say descriptive survey has an advantage of producing a good amount of responses from a wide range of people. Descriptive survey is appropriate when a researcher attempt to describe some population or aspect of population by selecting unbiased sample of individuals who are asked to complete questionnaire, interviews or test (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

The study adopted the mixed-method approach (triangulation) in order to validate responses. The researcher used both the quantitative and qualitative designs to obtain data. Questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from the athletes, while the interview guide was administered to the sports officials. According to Creswell (2008), the mixed-method involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The use of this method enables the researcher expand the findings for more in-depth and comprehensive information.

A sample size which was chosen for the study was 135 student-athletes and 15 accompanied officials were arrived at using the 30% of 450 student-athletics and 50 officials. The district physical education coordinator was purposively selected for the study. The research work used the 30% of the population for the study. This was due to the large size of the population, in a manner that facilitates a fair representation for the study, 30% of the population was used as the sample size. Thus purposive sampling is also known as judgmental sampling and the researcher chooses the respondents whose opinions are thought to be relevant to the research topic (Amedahe & Gyimah, 2003).

Results/Discussion

Research Question 1: What prompted the sporting authorities to introduce the screening of athletes at the basic school sports competitions?

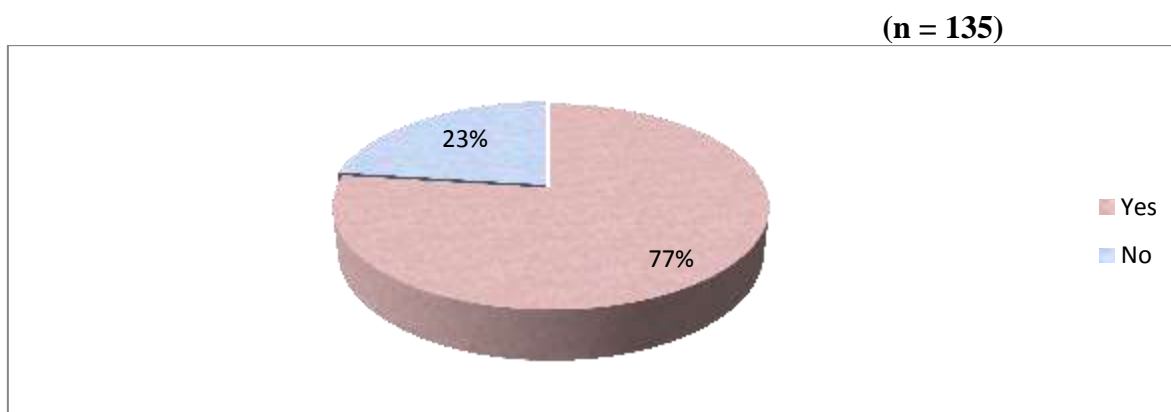
The study sought to gain insight into why the sporting authorities introduced or had started screening student-athletes at the basic school level. It emerged that cheating, impersonation were the main causes of screening the basic school athletes at the various circuits. This is because, majority of the interviewees indicated that it was realized that those closer to the coast like the central, western, Greater Accra and Volta region were fielding over-grown and huge looking athletes. Especially in the case of Volta, it was found out that there were instances whereby some of the athletes fielded were from Togo. Indeed, most of them had already completed their basic school education in Togo, but sought to school in Ghana too in order to learn how to read, write and to speak English Language. Again once they are students, they are part of the school's activity and that make them eligible to compete in all schools programmes since they are genuinely enrolled and admitted in the various schools. The table 5 below analyzed some thought on cheating and suspicious impersonation of the teams.

Table 1. Analysis on cheating and suspicious impersonation in school sports

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	104	77.03
No	31	22.96
Total	135	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The response to analysis on cheating and suspicious impersonation in school sports is further shown Figure 1.



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 1. Year of participation in school sports

The observation made upon the analyses revealed that 104(77.03%) of the respondents indicated that they ever suspected teams of cheating and impersonation while 31(22.96%) claimed otherwise. The study upon further checked revealed that fielding of unqualified athletes had been in existence in schools sports champs for some years now.

The observation supports Ghana Education Service (1988) concern that the school and colleges sports festivals were characterized with impersonation or fielding of unqualified persons. This assertion was also affirmed by Ogah (1994) that outsiders are used as students in competing for schools, circuits, districts and the regions in competitive sports.

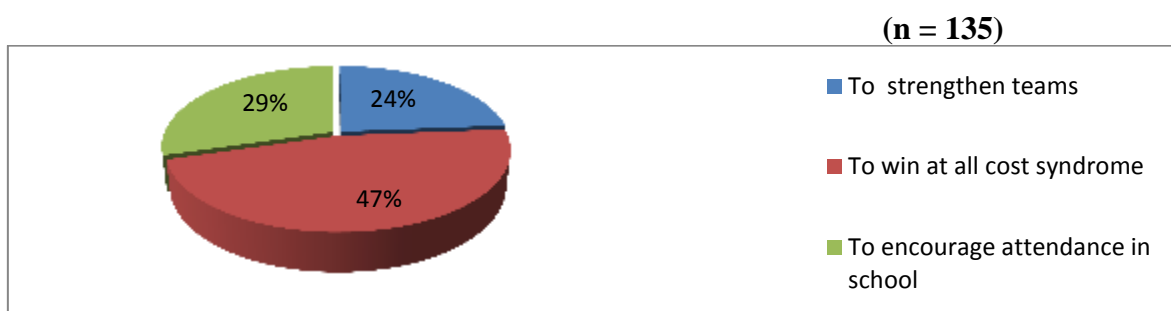
Another serious observation made was as results of some P.E. teachers or coaches wanting to win competitions at all cost syndromes then fielded non-school athletes from different schools, communities, circuits, districts, colt teams, league teams and even from the various regions to beef up their school teams in order to win or get to the ultimate. In order to ensure maximum fairness and equal level playing grounds, they therefore decided to screen all prospective participants to eliminate completely such unacceptable and unsportsmanlike behaviours and had been in existence since 1991.

Table 2 Analysis on reasons for impersonating in schools sports

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
To strengthen teams	32	23.70
To win at all cost syndrome	63	46.67
To encourage attendance in school	40	29.62
Total	135	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The data in Figure 2, further indicate analysis on reasons for impersonating in schools sports.



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 2 Analysis on reasons for impersonating in schools sports.

The details in Table 2 and Figure 2, indicated that 32(23.70%) of the respondents justified that impersonation is done to strengthen teams in competitive sports, 63(46.67%) asserted that to win at all cost syndrome was the major push factor for integrating the outsiders into the school team. The other 40(29.62%) indicated that the motive behind impersonating was to encourage non-school goers or habitual absentees to attend school. This result revealed that the rationale for fielding unqualified athletes in schools sports was to win at all cost. Ogah (1994) was also of the view that the fielding of unqualified persons in the school's sports was aimed at gaining undue advantage.

He again asserted that, if non-school goers or the habitual absentees are really fielded in school sports with the intentions of encouraging them to attend school, the teacher who indulged in that act may have good intentions but, said that, those so called students (mercenaries) were admitted and registered just for or during the inter school sports champs only.

On the how the screeners were selected for the screening and how the screening was done during the sports competitions, for the P.E. teachers, coaches, selection for the screeners was done by the National P.E. Coordinator together with the Regional P.E. Coordinators. Unlike the responses from the teachers, coaches, the P.E. Coordinators reported that at the District level, reliable and experienced people such as a team of coordinators were tasked to perform the selection of basic school athletes. They observed that, the screening was basically about athlete's age, height, physical features and weight. The researcher again observed that, they required from all athletes bring along their birth certificates, take their height measurements and weighed them using a weighing scale.

Besides the above process, it was also observed that, even before the use of the birth certificate, the coordinators usually lined up the athletes in a parade for facial detection of over-aged participants (facial screening). Going forward, an official posited, "What we do as coordinators was that we call for a parade, go round them, look at their faces and decide who is too older to participate in the event. It is when this unscientific approach is questioned then that we use the birth certificate for confirmation. I can assure you that this process had scored over 95% accuracy using this 'crude' method.

Notwithstanding their dismay, all interviewees agreed that, the duty of coordinators was to ensure only qualified and suitable athletes were presented to compete, which were sometimes the case. The respondents said that the issue of free and fair was objective. A few of them said fairness did not exist at all in the screening process, but a greater proportion thought otherwise, due to the human factor that is involved in the process.

Research Question 2: What screening criteria are used in the Basic School Sports competition?

According to the regional coordinators, some of the process, strategies or criteria for screening sports athletes in competitions were the facial screening, checking of weight, body size, bodily hair (pubic hair), height, age limit, years spent at school and other subjective observations or discretions.

Analysis on Criteria Used In Screening

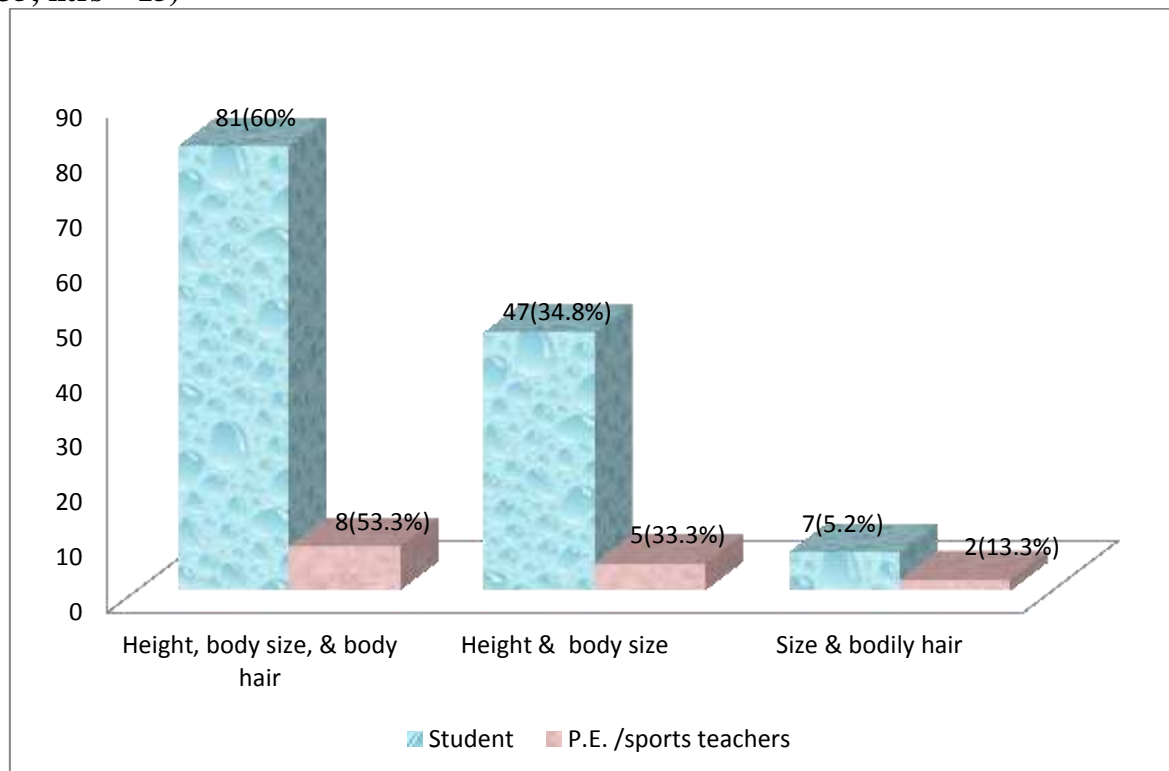
The general principles underlying the New Educational Reforms confirmed this result as cited in the Ghana Education Service (1987) underscores the principle that the child should begin formal education at the age of six years and the length of basic formal education should be nine years.

Table 3. Details criteria used in screening basic school athletes

Responses	Students		P.E. /sports teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Height, body size, & body hair	81	60	8	53.3
Height & body size	47	34.8	5	33.3
Size & bodily hair	7	5.2	2	13.3
Total	135	100	15	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The response on the details of criteria used in screening basic school athletes is further shown in Figure 3. (nst = 135; ntrs = 15)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 3. Details criteria used in screening basic school athletes

The data in Table 3 and Figure 3 showed that 60% of student-athletes respondents indicated that the Height, Body size and athletes with Bodily hair were mostly affected in the screening processes or exercises. Another sessions of the respondents of 34.8% were of the view that, those with enough or excessive body size (plummy) and height were also affected in the screening process mostly while the remaining 5.2 percent were also looked out for considerations.

The Table also indicated that 53.3 percent of the P.E. teachers' responses agreed that, the most considered physical features during the screening are; the body size, height and bodily hair. With 33.3 percent, indicated Height and body size while 13.3 of the percentage indicated that the body size and hairy body mostly disqualify student-athletes during screening processes.

These findings were partially confirmed by Ogah (1994) who said that, students with much body hair, good height and short muscles or excessive body fat fall victim in the screening process. He however, added that girls who develop early/big breast and those who were not very good looking fall victim in the screening processes. He cited a case in which a girl was screened-out because of her breast while her twin brother was allowed to compete.

The table 3 indicated that 71.85 percent of the responses showed that sometimes athletes less than the required age are screened-out due to the usage of unscientific pedagogy in our school sports champs. In the other hands, 28.12% indicated their disagreement to the claim that, the screened-out athletes are not within the required age blanket. The table further indicated that, 73.33% of the P.E. Gurus also agreed to the claim that, student-athletes within the age limit are mostly screened-out just because of the approaches employed in this sports screening in our schools system with the remaining 26.67% disagreed to that assertion.

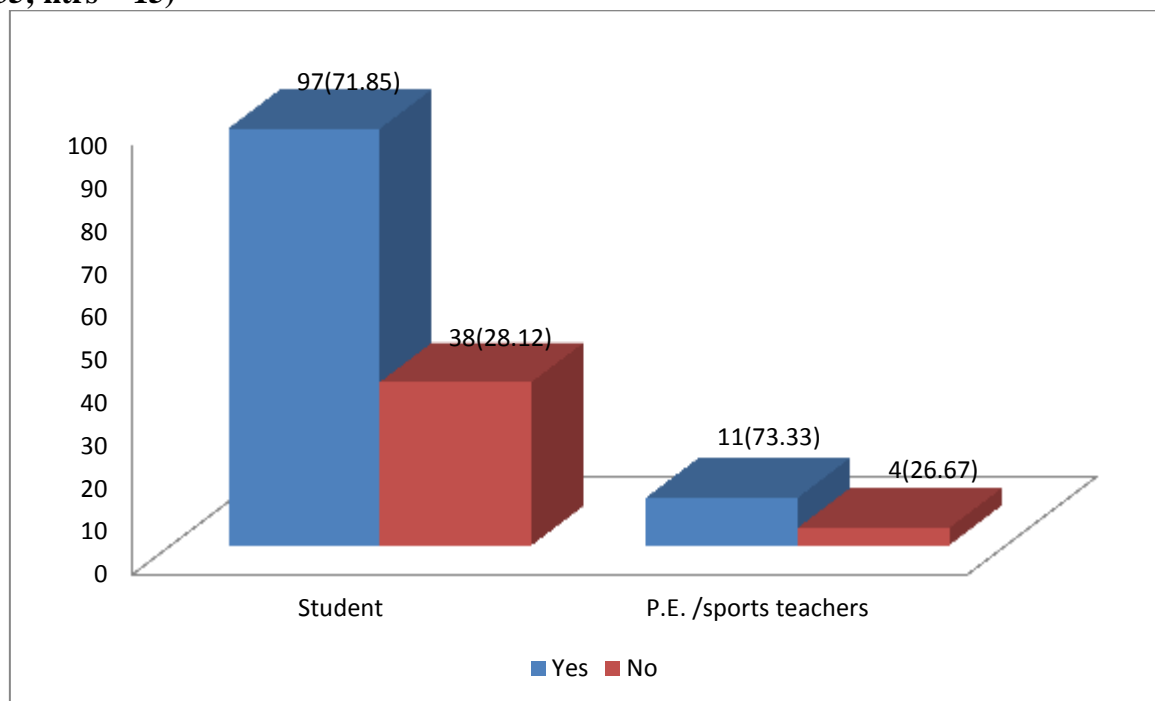
The research findings had shown the view of the student-athletes and P.E. and sports teachers is affirmed by Ogah who said that, there were instances where genuine under-15 year old were screened-out. He stressed that those who appear contrary to what they want/expect fall victim to be screened-out are mostly the early developers.

Table 4. Analysis of screened-out athletes within the age limit

Responses	Students		P.E. Teachers, sports chairpersons/secretaries	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	97	71.85	11	73.33
No	38	28.12	4	26.67
Total	135	99.97	15	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 4. further shows the response on analysis of screened-out athletes within the age limit. (nst = 135; ntrs = 15)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 4. Analysis of screened-out athletes within the age limit

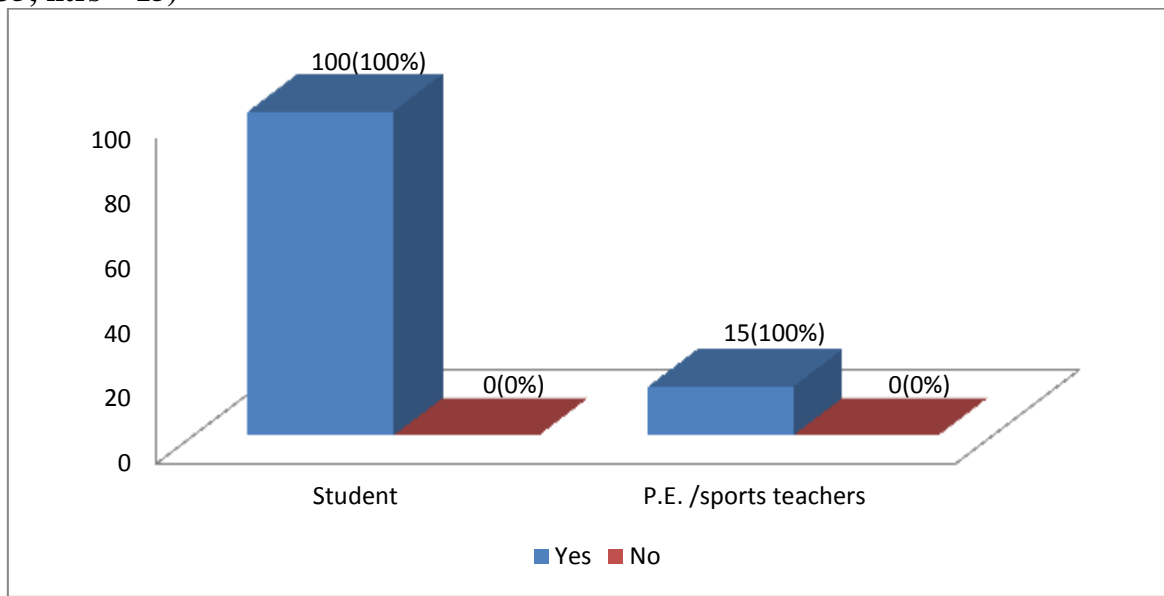
The data in Table 4, and Figure 4, showed a 100% agreement in each category of respondents that some student-athletes who are above the prescribed age limit sometimes go through the screening process successfully to compete without being disqualified. The results showed that, despite the screening exercise, some sports boys and girls who partake in competitive sports in school are above the prescribed age. As one of the key proponents, Ogah (1994) pointed-out that during screening in school sports. As confirmed earlier, 18 year olds boy competed in the events meant for student-athletes of 15 years. This is explained by Thompson (1991) that children develop at their own rate and some develop earlier and some later than the average ones and it was not surprising to see 17 year old student-athletes having the same physical characteristics of a 15 or better still below the 15 year. Notwithstanding their dismay, majority of the respondents surmised that screening in sporting arena cannot be 100% flawless, but fairness may be between 50-70%. The respondents retort further that by saying, the issue of free and fair screening was subjective for the mean fact that fairness did not exist in the screening process, because of the human discretions that was involved in the process.

Table 5. Analysis on athletes above the age limit but declared eligible during Screening

Responses	Students		P.E. Teachers, sports chairpersons/secretaries	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	135	100	15	100
No	0	0	0	0
Total	135	100	15	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The data in Table 45 is further shown in Figure 5 (nst = 135; ntrs = 15)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 5. Analysis on athletes above the age limit but declared eligible during Screening

Research question 3: How do participants perceive screening process?

The study sought to assess how the student-athletes perceived the screening process with regards to basic school sports across the circuits and the regions of the country. Therefore, frequency and percentage analyses were conducted to explain the perceptions of basic school athletes about the screening process in the intramural and extramural sports.

In finding out students’ understanding of what screening in the basic school sports is all about, hundred percent (100%) are of the view that screening as a process is a way of removing/eliminating student-athletes who are considered older than a certain age from participating in the school sports competitions. The results indicated a common understanding of student that screening is a way of selecting students of the same age group to compete. The same view is shared by Ogah (1994) when he described screening as a means whereby a group of persons determine by age through inspection to decide their eligibility in the school sports competitions.

Table 6 below is the summary of their responses about the perceptions of student-athletes on screening process (135).

Table 6. Perception responses of student-athletes

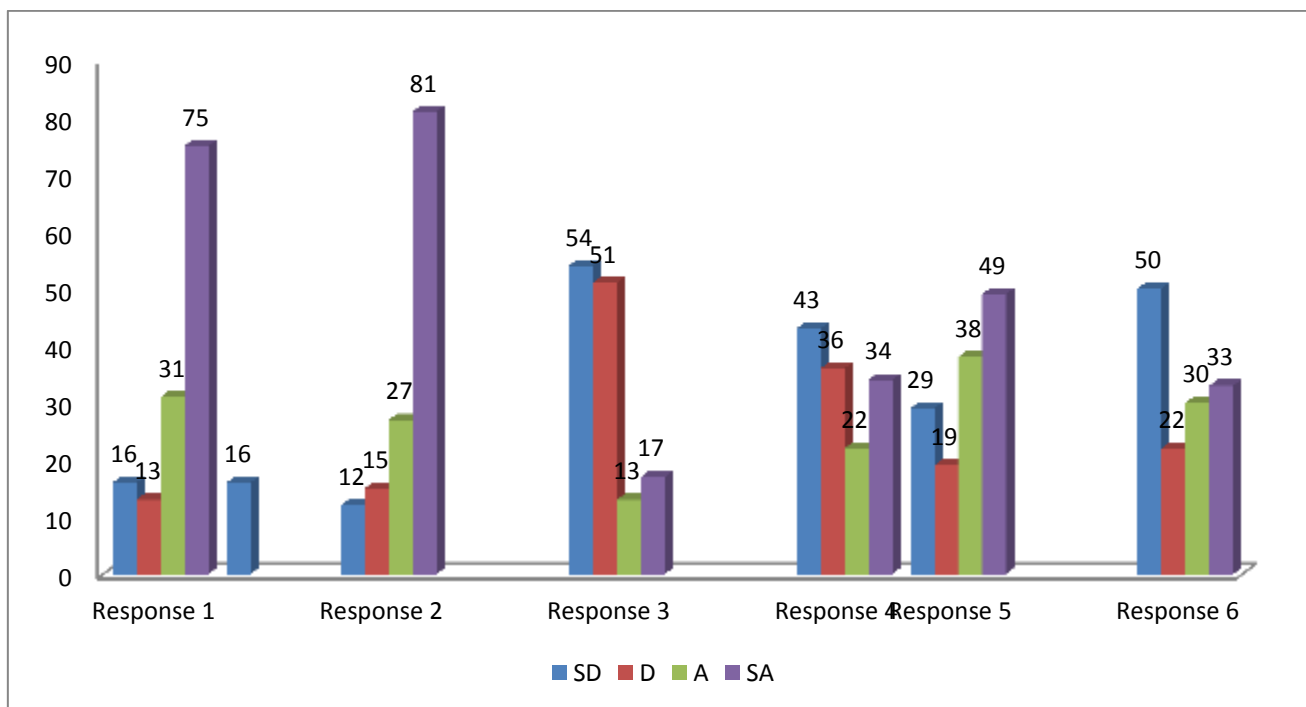
(n = 135)

Perceptions	SD	D	A	SA
	freq (%)	freq(%)	freq(%)	freq (%)
I must go through screening to compete in the sports.	16(11.85)	13(9.63)	31(22.96)	75(55.56)
I am happy if the over-aged athletes are removed from participating in the school sports.	12(8.89)	15(11.11)	27(20)	81(60)
I feel I am a failure after I have been disqualified.	54(40)	51(37.78)	13(9.63)	17(12.59)
I will always participate in sports even if I am screened-out.	43(31.85)	36(26.67)	22(16.29)	34(25.19)
The people doing the screening are doing a good job.	29(21.48)	19(14.07)	38(28.15)	49(36.29)
The people doing the screening are doing a bias job.	50(37.04)	22(16.29)	30(22.22)	33(24.44)

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 6 also shows the summary of the responses about the perceptions of the student-athletes on screening process.

(n = 135)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Response 1: I must go through screening to compete in the sports.

Response 2: I am happy if the over-aged athletes are removed from participating in the

school sports.

Response 3: I feel I am a failure after I have been disqualified.

Response 4: I will always participate in sports even if I am screened-out.

Response 5: The people doing the screening are doing a good job.

Response 6: The people doing the screening are doing a good job.

KEY: SD-Strongly Disagree; D-Disagree; A-Agree and SA-Strongly Agree.

The data collected revealed that 106 (78.52%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they went through screening process before taking part in the competitions. In addition, more than half of them 80% said they would be very happy if over-aged athletes are screened-out of the competition, while the remaining 27(20%) stated otherwise. Moreover, 22.22% of the respondents indicated strongly agree and agree with the statement that, they would feel as failures when they are disqualified through the screening process.

On whether or not they would try taking part in sports even when they are screened-out of the tournaments, the results indicated that majority of them have responded in the way that left to be desired. This means that, they are not determined to engage into sporting activities whenever they faced screened-out. Additionally, 86 (64.44%) were in agreement that screening officials were doing a good job, based on the results achieved so far and that could be concluded that the respondents generally had positive perceptions about screening process or exercise.

Screening as a process by which sports organizers take out more mature students out to enable the age appropriate ones to participate in the basic school sports competitions. The study further indicated that, athletes' assertions have positive perceptions about the screening and the process of screening that made the majority agreed that they are taken through such process before the competitions. Other also agreed that they would be very happy if over-aged athletes are screened-out of the competitions in the school's sports at the basic levels.

Research Question 4: How do screening procedures influence student's attitudes towards extracurricular activities?

The responses gathered from Table 7 on analysis on the positive effects of screening on students attitudes towards extracurricular activities, the study indicated that, the majority of the respondents revealed that there are numerous challenges associated with the screening process in our schools sports. Among the effects enumerated included the following:

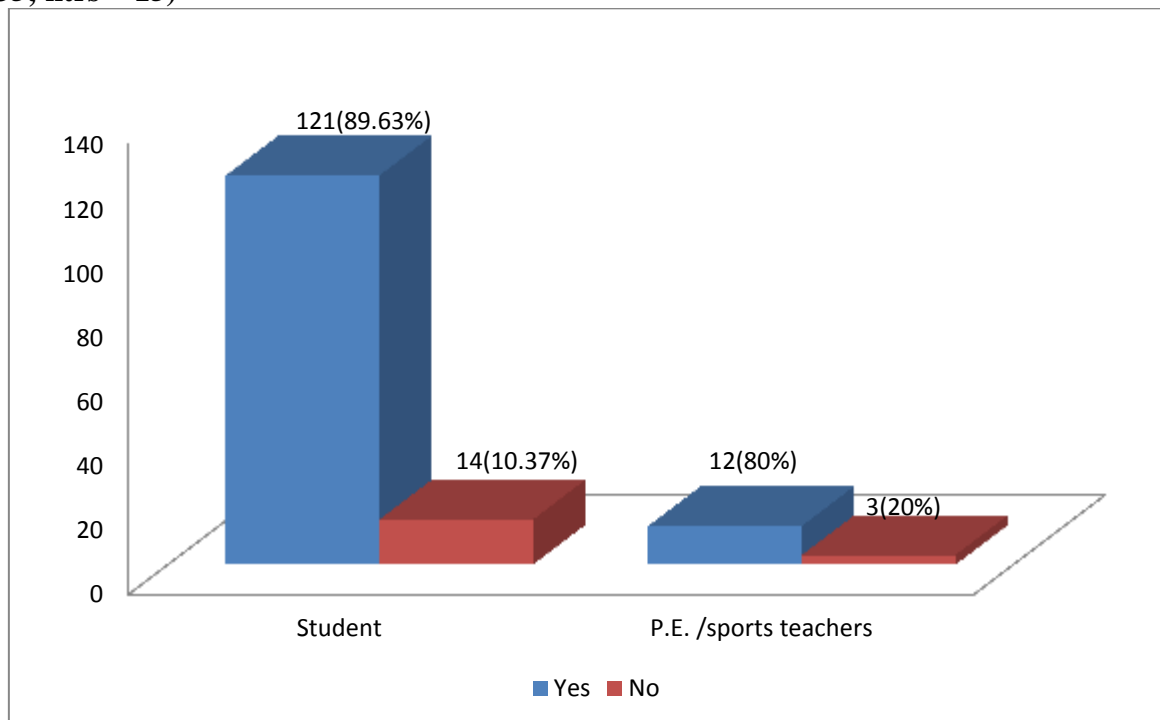
- a. The denial of some eligible students to participate in school sports.
- b. Favouritism/bias of some screening panelist to some particular schools.
- c. Misunderstanding and quarrels between some teachers, coaches' sports fanatics and some members of the screening panels.
- d. Some schools even boycotted games because they could not raise a team to meet the required team sports game play.
- e. Sometimes athletes are not presented by the school officials for screening but manage to let them compete with the screened ones.

Table 7. Positive influence of screening process on students' attitudes towards Extracurricular activities

Responses	Students		P.E. Teachers, sports chairpersons/secretaries	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	121	89.63	12	80
No	14	10.37	3	20
Total	135	100	15	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The data in Table 7 is further shown in Figure 7 (nst = 135; ntrs = 15)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 7 Positive influence of screening process on students' attitudes towards Extracurricular activities

According to Whitehead (2006), as cited earlier, children born intrinsically are motivated to be physically active. That motivation, if kept alive by physical success, freedom and fun will do more than good to promote the fitness behaviours that add years to life. It will forever maintain the zeal and zest that adds life to the years. The views expressed by the respondents are all in line with the findings of Weinberg and Gould (2011) that some of the reasons the youth give it out for participating in sports are that they want to have fun, improve upon their skills, the excitement of competition, to do something they are good at, to stay in shape, to be part of the team, to win, to go to higher level of competition and to learn new skills.

The table 7 showed that, 89.63% and 80% of the respondents; students and P.E. teachers, sports secretaries/ chairpersons respectively had indicated that, screening of student-athletes had actually eliminated the element of cheating in the basic school sports to about 89.63% and 80% as stated earlier. The remaining 10.37 for students and 20% for sports gurus were of the view that screening had not eliminated the purpose for which the screening had been introduced but rather, posing great and diverse effects on students running away from participating in extracurricular activities

This result was in conflict with Ogah's (1994) assertion that, the age limit and the screening have failed to prevent outsiders from infiltrating into the school sports activities. This failure is as a result of the P.E. teachers and the likes doing nothing to prevent other teachers from bringing-in outsiders who were not eligible to represent the various schools. And from Ogah's argument, the screening had to some extent made it difficult for people who have completed the basic school education to infiltrate but non-school goers within the age limit can find their way to participate in the school sports without being noticed.

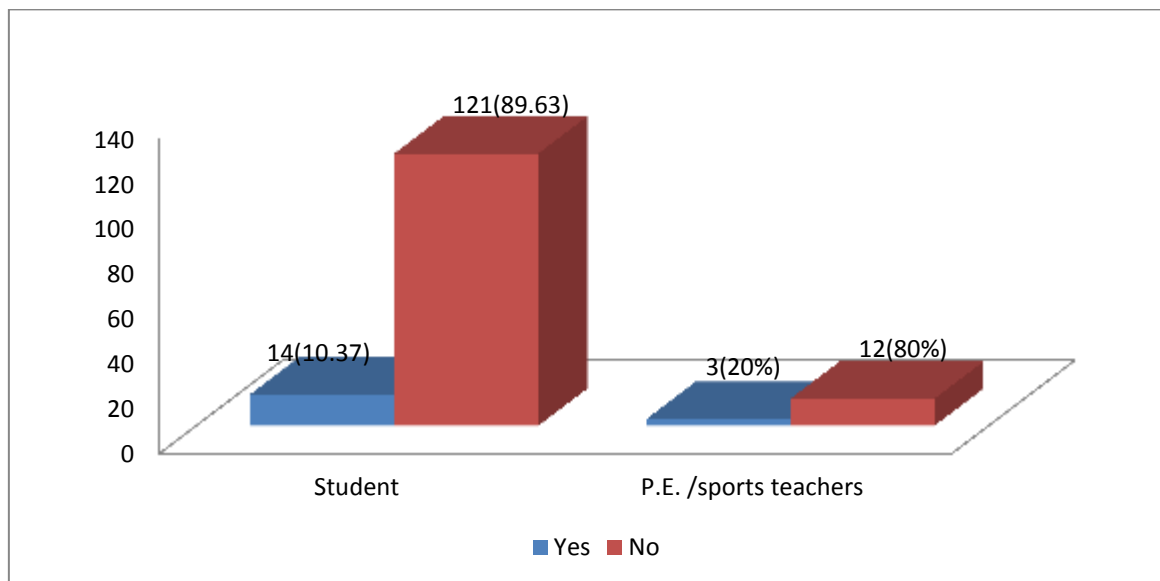
The findings agreed with that of Sirard, Pfeiffer and Pate (2006) who studied motivational factors associated with sports participation in over 1600 middle school children. They revealed that having fun was the highest-rated motive for all the children, and that females have a greater attraction to the social aspects of sports than the males. Ryan (1980) also surveyed male and female athletes from different schools in a variety of sports, pointed that to influence several factors such as scholarships for student-athletes.

Table 8 .The negative influence of screening on students' attitudes towards extracurricular activities

Responses	Students		P.E. Teachers, sports chairpersons/secretaries	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	10.37	3	20
No	121	89.63	12	80
Total	135	100	15	100

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

The data in Table 8 is further shown in Figure 8. (nst = 135; ntrs = 15)



Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Figure 8. The negative influence of screening on students' attitudes towards Extracurricular activities

The data in Table 8 and Figure 8 indicated the responses of respondents that affirmed that screening has some negative attitudinal effects on the extracurricular activities based on the results collected. The results revealed that the screening exercise had adversely affected students' participation in the extracurricular activities in the Gomoa-East District in the central region.

This information confirmed Sorkpor's (1995) report that since the inception of the screening process, the involvement and performance of the schools and the district team at regional sports festivals have gone down drastically even though the district teams had maintained its superiority in the previous meetings. He

further stressed that, apart from weakening the strength of the teams, it equally reduced the morale of the remaining team-mates thus, in long round affect the students' attitude towards the engagement in extracurricular activities in the Gomoa East District and the region at large.

The study further pointed out a number of other adverse effects the screening exercise was having on the personality of our student-athletes to avail themselves for extracurricular activities in the various schools in the districts. Among them were that good human relations are marred sometimes by conflicts emanating from screening processes or arising out of the conduct of a panelist and causing some of the screened-out student-athletes get dispirited by ending their basic school education abruptly.

Conclusions

Sports participation on a regular basis has been shown to have positive effect/influence on physical health (LaPorte & Newman, 1985; Stephens, Jacobs & White, 1985), psychological enhancement, stress reactivity, and mental well-being, such as reduced depression, anxiety, tension and stress and increased vigour and clear-mindedness (Senkfer & Williams, 1995). Additionally, physical exercise has been suggested to have a positive impact on body-image, self concept and to enhance self-esteem (Frederick & Ryan, 1993). Thus, with all this material demonstrating the benefits of habitual participation in sports, one might believe that most people take part regularly in some form of sport, but, discouragingly enough this is not the case. It seems screening out an athlete was strong enough to deter potential athletes for irregular participation more especially those who have the capacity. (Overdoff, 1994).

The researcher was motivated by these concerns to undertake this all important investigation to underscore the screening process of athletes for basic school sports competitions and its effects on students' attitude towards extracurricular activities in the Gomoa East District. As a result of the research, the following conclusions have been drawn;

1. The introduction of the screening processes was justifiable but there should an alternative approach to solving the issue of fielding unqualified persons in school sports competitions.
2. Penalizing/banning officials involved in the malpractices to deter others other than the students or the team.
3. It was obvious that students have a clear understanding of what screening was but are unaware of the purpose for which screening processes were introduced. And if awareness is made, students are likely going to help solve the problem by resisting the infiltration of outsiders into school sports.
4. The inspection to determine eligibility of students in the basic school sports, the process is mostly questioned because, some students within the acceptable age are most times screened-out while others above the age limit are declared eligible to compete.
5. Sanctions laid down for officials who fielded unqualified players in schools sports are not applied to the letter.
6. Teams found involved in any of these offenses are suspended.
7. The denial of some students, 13 years and above in the primary and 16 years and above in the JHS, to compete in schools sports is a major problem faced by the competition. It is deemed to an infringement to the child's right.
8. The screening process has both the positive and the negative effects on the basic school sports and the extracurricular activities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of the study and it was to assist the policy makers, sports coordinators and sports gurus to come to terms with the screening processes and also its influence on sports participation.

It is therefore recommended that a more scientific approach can help reduce significantly the level of bias in the screening process.

Again, Ghana Education Service, National Sports Council and other relevant agencies and stakeholders should make sure that screening is always conducted for all prospective athletes and those who fail to meet the standards are disqualified without fear or favour.

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