UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

TOPIC

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE WEIGHT SCREENING REGULATION IN BASIC SCHOOLS SPORTS COMPETITIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN ATTITUDE TOWARDS PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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DECLARATION

I, Kwaku Danso hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person or material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Signed……..

…….

SUPERVISOR‟S DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guide lines and supervision of dissertation lay down by the University of Education, Winneba

Dr. P.B. Akuffo……

Signature……...

Date……..

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Throughout my study I have received support, guidance and encouragement from many people. I would be ungrateful if I failed to commend those people. I thank God for enabling me to finished this successfully. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor. Dr. P. B. Akuffo, for his patience in providing me with guidance and technical support throughout my study. His encouragements and inspiration greatly inspired me to forge ahead.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to God Almighty for his protection and to my family for moral support

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was investigate the consequences of weight regulation in National School Sports Competition and its effect on students‟ attitudes towards sports in some selected Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. A descriptive cross sectional survey was conducted to investigate the concerns about weight regulation, extent to which Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has achieved its aims and objectives, and the effect of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports. A convenience sampling technique was used by the researcher to select the four schools from each District and a purposive sampling technique to select the 332 respondents. In all fourteen (14) Senior High Schools in the region were selected for the study. Quantitative data analysis methods were used in the analysis of the data. It turned out that the introduction and application of weight regulation and screening has impacted positively on students‟ attitude towards sport. This is due to the fact that it prevents cheating in the competition, it allows the less privileged to participate, and it has also prevented bias among sports men and women. The study however, found that student athletes were not medically screened before participating in national and school sports competitions and these prone athletes to several health risk especially those with cardiovascular diseases and eye infections as well as mental problems. The consequences of weight regulations included; sidelining of talented fat students; discrimination, and prevention of some skillful students from exhibiting their talent. In all, Weight screening has achieved its aims and objectives in terms of promoting fair opportunity and fair play among national school sports competitions in Ghana. The study recommends that the Ministry of Youth and Sport in conjunction with the Ghana Education Services should outline measures that will ensure that athletes who participate in zonal or national school competitions are screened before participation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Every competition has rules and Regulations. The Weight Screening Regulation in sports in National Schools Competition is an innovation by Ghana Education Service (GES) in checking cheating after the 1984 Basic School National Festival at Ho in the Volta Region. During the competition, the organizers realized that, the weight of athletes from the Volta Region, i.e. both boys and girls, were far above those from other regions, and they were using it to the disadvantage of the others. After the competition, the organizers called all the Regional Physical Education Organizers to look into this and later came out with these findings:

That, students from Togo who complete school at the Basic level in Togo mostly come back to Volta Region to be enrolled in our Educational System just to learn English Language and once they are admitted, they automatically qualify to participate in any competition.

Thus, individual Physical Education Teachers who will then get these students admitted in their schools start to use them to the disadvantage of other schools in the same locality or zone but benefited the region after those students had been selected to be part of the Regional Team.

In 1996, when Feyenoord decided to establish their academy in Ghana, their managers also tried to find out why a Ghanaian child of 15 years involved in sports has a weight above or higher than a Holland boy of 15 years also involved in sports, so that they may know where to begin their selection of players from. After the study, it came out clear that Ghanaians

always cheat most of their European counterparts when it comes to sports, because in Ghana unlike Europe, record keeping is a problem so they decided to select their Ghanaian players at the weight level not exceeding 36kg for their under 12 and 54kg under 15 respectively to start developing them.

Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1998 saw some sense in these two (2) studies and adopted them in order not to disadvantage any school or region during the Zonal or Regional Competitions, hence the introduction of screening. This was done basically on the children‟s Age, Weight, Facial looks (muscle) and the number of years that an athlete has spent in school. This also meant that if a student is transferred from a school to another, he or she will still be affected with the regulation. They also adopted 36kg and 37kg for boys and under 12 years and 39kg and 41kg for girls under 12 years. In the under 15 years category, 55kg – 56kg for girls and 54kg – 55kg for boys.

The rationale for this weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition seeks to prevent cheating and also to create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight. Ghana Education Service (GES) recognizes that, to become a good National Athlete requires strong preparation and body development of skills and the acquisition of the ability to make good judgment in practice.

Before 1900, physical education and sport were not widespread in the Gold Coast as Ghana was known then. Communities participated in some physical activities which were related to social pursuits, tradition and environmental needs. The people participated in activities such as farming, fishing, and physical preparatory activities for tribal wars and conquests. The major competitive physical activities included climbing of trees, wrestling, boxing with bare fists, throwing of missiles such as spears, pulling, rowing (in the form of

regatta) and swimming. There were other activities of a recreational nature such as "tu-matu", draught, "oware", hide and seek, "checkers", acrobatic and agility exercises, "ampe" (for females), and various indigenous drumming and dances (Baba *et al.*, 1993). Several of these activities often took place as competitions on festival days, moon-lit nights or after a hard day"s work at the farm.

The arrival of Europeans in the colony and its colonization later by the English saw the introduction of foreign sport and games in schools that they established (often referred to as Castle Schools because they were located in fortified castles where the Whites lived). These newly introduced physical activities took precedence over the indigenous ones and were performed in the form of organized competitions by schools only (and later the public) at Empire Day Celebrations in commemoration of the birthday of the queen of England, Queen Victoria beginning in 1880.

Sport and games competitions were often organized for schools, mostly. Football and athletics were the first to be introduced and soon became the most popular competitive activities among the youth. The public"s involvement did not begin until the formation of the Excelsior Football Club in Cape Coast (1903) and Hearts of Oak Football Club in Accra (1911) although smaller and less popular clubs had been formed in Sekondi, Cape Coast (the capital of the colony) and Winneba (named Windy Bay by the colonial masters). It was not until the castle schools were taken over by missionaries that physical education was introduced as a compulsory subject. Between 1882 and 1909, however, various educational acts were passed that included physical education in the general education curriculum.

The first physical education syllabus was introduced to schools in 1902. Governor Gordon Guggisberg who was appointed the governor of the Gold Coast in 1919 is credited for laying a solid foundation for the teaching of physical training. He introduced some educational reforms and established educational organs to supervise their implementation as a major priority of his administration. He further formulated a sixteen-point education policy that emphasized the importance of character training, physical education and sport training in the educational curriculum. Fundamental to the implementation of this policy, was the authorization for the construction of playing fields in all schools. The policy made physical education, sport and organized games core subjects of the educational curriculum and the governor gave personal attention to the formation of inter-schools sports competitions at the elementary and secondary school levels of education. This led to the establishment of a competition in 1926 (called the Aggrey Shield) involving Achimota School (from Accra), Presbyterian Training College (from Akropong), Mfantsipim and Adisadel College (both from Cape Coast).

Governor Gordon Guggisberg‟s educational reforms remained in place until 1933 when they were replaced with new reforms and curriculum. A new syllabus that was introduced did not entirely remove the often militaristic approach in teaching of physical education and sport reflected in the 1919 educational reforms. In fact, they rather emphasized rhythmic free, good posture and suppleness without making provision for self-expression and individual skill learning. However, they provided opportunity, without expert guidance, for teachers to be innovative in their approach to teaching physical education and sport (Baba *et al.,* 1993). Without such expert guidance, teachers of physical education and sport lost focus resulting in a decline in sport performances. A decade later, the Education

Act of 1944 was promulgated to arrest the decline. The new act made provision in the policy for the introduction of three 35-minute physical education lessons per week in elementary schools and two 40-minute lessons per week in secondary schools. Since specialist teachers for physical education were not available, each classroom teacher was responsible for teaching these subjects with or without any background training.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Policies are guides that reflect procedures which when adhered to, fulfill the best interest of an institution or organisation. The Ghana Education Service has policies guiding the various operations of the various units under it. The Schools and Colleges Federation is one of such units under the Ghana Education Service. It is responsible for drawing policy guidelines, for the organisation of the National Schools and Colleges Sports Competitions. These guide schools to understand and know the goals and objectives of the sports competitions. Thus, provide guidelines for the establishment of the sports competition at the basic level, which set a framework for the development of Physical Education and sports at the Basic School level.

During the recent inter-school competition, students who were screened out because of their weight, created a heated argument among coaches and spectators, why potential students were prepared several weeks from their respective Regions, will only be denied from participating on basis of overweight. The organisers on the other hand, fail to organise another competition for those students at their level of weight.

It is for these reasons that necessitated this study to investigate the consequences and influence on these children‟s‟ attitude towards physical education and sports.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the consequences of weight regulation in National School Sports Competition and its influence on students‟ attitudes towards sports in some selected Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the concerns about weight regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition.
2. Identify the extent to which Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has achieved its aims and objectives.
3. Find out the influence of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered;

1. What are the concerns about weight regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition?
2. To what extent has Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition achieved its aims and objectives?
3. What is the influence of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Weight Regulation has been observed to be one of the most important strategies in school sports competition. It is hoped that the findings of the study will highlight on the following;

The findings of the work will serve as a base for further research.

The study will identify Weight Regulation concern for students and Physical Education Teachers and come out with recommendation that will guide in the planning of future competitions.

The results of the research can be used to re-design programme for National Competitions and enhance students‟ development.

It will also help the students to assess themselves during school sports competition and be able to solve problems they encounter during weight screening.

1.6 Delimitation

The term weight regulation and its influence on National School Sport Competition is too broad a topic that cannot be handled within the time frame and other requirement for this research work. As a result the researcher focused on the influence of Weight Regulation on student‟s attitudes towards sports. The study was delimited to fourteen (14) schools in two municipalities and two Districts for convenience. Berekum Municipal (4), Sunyani Municipal (4), Tano North District (4) and Tano South District (2) schools. The study focused on Physical Education Teachers, Headmasters (Administrators) of Senior High Schools and twenty (20) students each from the schools.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include factors such as; vast and scattered schools at the study area in data collection and also the fact that the research work must be combined with assignments and studies. The inability of some respondents to complete the questionnaire after they have started may serve as a limitation to the study. These limitations may affect

the generalisability of the results. The researcher intended to overcome these limitations by resorting to appropriate sample size, efficient sampling techniques, and proper ethical consideration.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the review of relevant literature. This covers both theoretical and empirical evidence. The chapter discussed the works of other authors in relation to the topic. The literature review is based on the objectives of the study.

In 1950, a one-year program for training physical education teachers was mounted at Achimota College and later transferred to the University College of Science and Technology, Kumasi (now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology). This program was subsequently upgraded to a two-year program of training in 1959, after independence, when it was moved to the Government Training College in Winneba. Before 1952, sports, in the Gold Coast, was organized and supported "principally by interested and enthusiastic individuals" (National Sports Policy, 1994, p.3). The first legal effort to promote, develop, and control sports was made in 1952 with the enactment of the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council Ordinance (No. 14).

During the post-independence era, physical education and sport in Ghana has experienced a period of great expansion from the colonial era when there was little regard for a planned programme of activity except for the daily drill which was referred to as physical training (PT). This form of program was a replica of the carry-over effect of the then Gold Coast soldiers who had participated in fighting in the First World War as part of the imperial British Empire war machinery. A ritualistic and militaristic drill system of physical training and game activities was introduced into the school system under the control of these ex-servicemen which had the sole aim of instilling discipline in the youth.

After independence from British Colonial Rule in 1957, Gold Coast (now Ghana) embarked on a path of accelerated development with a key emphasis of searching for a national identity and international recognition in all spheres of endeavor within the broader context of "African identity" (Baba, 2000). Within five years of short-term accelerated development in sport, Ghana had become a beacon of sport development in Africa and many other colonies looked up to her to establish an African sport image. With proper planning, albeit without any long-term programming, schools and colleges in Ghana had undertaken extensive interscholastic programs guided by a policy of compulsory intramural sport programs for all school children. A majority of schools and colleges had established departments of physical education with programs for mass gymnastics and competitive sport (e.g. soccer, track and field, boxing, table tennis, and cricket) which featured in the Empire Day Games. These sport programmes were taught and managed by classroom teachers and military ex-servicemen.

None of these teachers had acquired the qualification to teach or manage sport programs in these institutions but they put their shoulders to the task and produced phenomenal results under trying circumstances. The successful management of sports in schools by these teachers and military ex-servicemen probably gave rise to the traditional belief or myth that anyone could teach or manage sport irrespective of one‟s academic background. Mere enthusiasm and material support from the central government was enough impetus to move the wheels of sport development forward. As time passed by, the momentum of development began to slow down and became noticeable to everyone that those at the helm of managing sport could not be exonerated from blame.

Gradually, higher standards of teacher education in the field of physical education were established and better trained teachers were produced. The trend in professional preparation required a much broader general education with some specialized training in physical education. Soon the physical education teachers became burdened with the task of coaching virtually all sports. To every Ghanaian, sport was linked directly to physical education without a clear line of demarcation between them. They represented two sides of the same coin.

As the program in physical education and sport continued to expand in schools and colleges in the country, interscholastic sport also continued to grow in popularity. This culminated in the formation of the Schools and Colleges Sports Association in 1961 by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. The formation of this association represented the government‟s affirmation of its commitment to harness the sporting activities of schools and colleges in the country into a bastion of sport development. Between 1961 and 1966 there was a quantum leap in the growth of sport especially in football, athletics, boxing, field hockey, table tennis and cricket that influenced professional preparation programs in colleges and universities. It was during this period that the Central Organization of Sports (COS) was established that had wide powers to control sports and physical education in Ghana. “The socialist philosophy of Democratic Centralism for Mass Participation in sports” was adopted with wide ranging successes at the international level (National Sports Policy, 1994; p.5).

2.2 Weight Regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition

In order to promote fair and interesting matches in National School Sport competitions and to reduce potential injuries caused by large differences in body mass and strength, athletes compete in weight classes. As a consequence of the weight-classification rules, it is well recognized that athletes often practice short-term weight regulation to achieve an advantage in meeting the required weight for the competition (Artioli, Gualano & Franchini, 2010).

In order to rapidly attain a lower pre-competition weight, weight-loss strategies may be used. The most common practices include reducing food and fluid intake and pursuing active sweating through increased exercise or other forms of voluntary dehydration (or both), such as passive sweating in a sauna or hot bath (Boisseau, Vera-Perez & Poortmans, 2005). However, these rapid weight-loss strategies are associated with negative effects. Short-term weight regulation leads to reductions in body water, electrolytes, glycogen, and lean tissue, which alter a number of physiologic functions, such as thermoregulation (Casa, Armstrong & Hillman, 2000), cardiovascular function, and metabolism (Fogelholm, 2004), which are crucial to athletic performance. Furthermore, the food- and fluid-deprived state during the weight-loss period also seems to negatively affect the psychological state of the athlete, increasing tension, anger, fatigue, and confusion and decreasing vigor (Filaire, Maso, Degoutte, Jouanel & Lac, 2001).

Based on research findings with implications for health and performance, some guidelines regarding rapid weight loss have emerged. Wilmore (2000) proposed that the body can tolerate a short-term body weight loss of less than 4% through dehydration, whereas Burke (2007) suggested that a maximum weight reduction of 2% to 3% of total body weight, if undertaken with sufficient sport nutrition and hydration practices. Despite knowledge

among athletes (Marquart & Sobal, 2004) and coaches (Sossin, Gizis, Marquart & Sobal, 2007) about the potentially adverse effects of rapid weight loss on performance, this practice is widespread and often exceeds the proposed guidelines (Filaire *et al.,* 2001). Therefore, it is important to examine the athletes' own experiences and opinions of weight regulation.

2.3 Screening of Athletes in National School Competitions

There are no universally accepted or mandated standards for the screening of high school (and college) athletes, nor are there approved certification guidelines for those healthcare professionals who perform such screening examinations. Some form of medical clearance by a physician or other trained healthcare worker, usually consisting of a history and physical examination, is customary. The responsibility for obtaining medical clearance usually rests with the individual high school student-athlete to identify a healthcare provider for the purpose of obtaining medical clearance for sports. For high school athletes, standards have been established by the state legislatures or recommended by the individual state high school athletic association, local school districts, or, in some cases, the state Department of Education. The National Sport Federation of High Schools has not played a primary regulatory role in the design, performance, and quality control of the high school screening process but has preferred to leave this authority to each individual state association.

In 1997, the level of sophistication present in the US high school screening process was scrutinized and found to be lacking (Glover & Maron, 2008). Forty percent of the individual states had either no formal screening requirement or a history and physical

examination questionnaire form from the Basic School which is judged to be incomplete and inadequate for reliably raising the suspicion of cardiovascular disease.

In a recent preliminary analysis, revisiting this issue 8 years later in 2005 (Glover & Maron, 2006), a striking improvement was evident in the state questionnaire forms for medical clearance. Eighty-one percent of the states are now judged to have adequate questionnaires whereas only 2% of the states are clearly inadequate. Between 1997 and 2005, the mean number of items on screening forms increased from 6.8±7 to 9.7±7, an improvement of 43%. However, the number of countries in which non-physician examiners are now permitted by legislation to perform athlete screening has increased by 64%. Eighteen states (35%) permit chiropractors or naturopathic practitioners to screen athletes.

The decision to disqualify an athlete from further participation on the day of a concussion should be based on a comprehensive physical examination; assessment of self-reported post-concussion signs and symptoms; functional impairments, and the athlete's past history of concussions. If assessment tools such as the SAC, BESS, neuropsychological test battery, and symptom checklist are not used, a 7-day symptom-free waiting period before returning to participation is recommended. Some circumstances, however, will warrant even more conservative treatment recommendation.

Athletic trainers should be more conservative with athletes who have a history of concussion. Athletes with a history of concussion are at increased risk for sustaining subsequent injuries as well as for slowed recovery of self-reported post-concussion signs and symptoms, cognitive dysfunction, and postural instability after subsequent injuries. In athletes with a history of 3 or more concussions and experiencing slowed recovery, temporary or permanent disqualification from contact sports may be indicated

Pre-participation screening by history and physical examination alone (without noninvasive testing) does not have sufficient sensitivity to guarantee detection of all cardiovascular abnormalities linked to sudden death in young athletes. Indeed, customary screening practices in the United States may be encumbered by substantial false-negative results. The standard personal history conveys low sensitivity and specificity for detection of many cardiovascular abnormalities pertinent to young athletes, particularly when symptoms such as chest pain or lightheadedness are elicited. Congenital aortic valve stenos are probably the condition most likely to be detected reliably during routine screening because of the characteristically loud systolic heart murmur (Tanaka *et al*., 2006).

Once the athlete has been thoroughly evaluated and determined to have sustained a concussion, a comprehensive medical management plan should be implemented. This plan should include frequent medical evaluations and observations, continued monitoring of post-concussion signs and symptoms, and post injury cognitive and balance testing. If symptoms persist or worsen or the level of consciousness deteriorates at all after a concussion, neuroimaging should be performed. Although scientific evidence for the evaluation and resolution of the concussion is ample, specific management advice to be given to the athlete on leaving the athletic training room is lacking.

According to McCrory (2002), athletic trainers and hospital emergency rooms have created various home instruction forms, but minimal scientific evidence supports these instructions. However, despite these limitations, a concussion instruction form (Appendix should be given to the athlete and a responsible adult who will have direct contact with the athlete for the initial 24 hours after the injury. This form helps the companion to know what signs and symptoms to watch for and provides useful recommendations on follow-up care.

Also, in 1982 a nationwide program of pre-participation screening including 12-lead electrocardiography (ECG) was launched in Italy. The aim was to examine whether this 25-year screening program should be considered a valid and advisable public health strategy. The analysis of data coming from the long-running Italian experience indicates that ECG screening has provided adequate sensitivity and specificity for detection of potentially lethal cardiomyopathy or arrhythmias and has led to substantial reduction of mortality of young competitive athletes by approximately 90%. Screening was feasible to the Italian Health System, which is developed in terms of health care and prevention services, and because of the limited costs of cardiovascular evaluation in the setting of a mass program. On the basis of current scientific evidence the implementation of a mass-screening program aimed to prevent athletic-field sudden cardiac death should be at least carefully considered by public health administrators worldwide (Cardiol, 2008)

2.4 Objectives of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition

The objectives are, to present athletic trainers with recommendations for safe weight loss and weight maintenance practices for athletes and active clients and to provide athletes, clients, coaches, and parents with safe guidelines that will allow athletes and clients to achieve and maintain weight and body composition goals.

Unsafe weight management practices can compromise athletic performance and negatively affect health. Athletes and clients often attempt to lose weight by not eating, limiting caloric or specific nutrients from the diet, engaging in pathogenic weight control behaviors, and restricting fluids. These people often respond to pressures of the sport or activity, coaches, peers, or parents by adopting negative body images and unsafe practices to maintain an ideal body composition for the activity. This provides athletic trainers with

recommendations for safe weight loss and weight maintenance in sport and exercise. Although safe weight gain is also a concern for athletic trainers and their athletes and clients, that topic is outside the scope of this position statement (Jathl,2011).

Weight classifications in sport (eg, youth football, wrestling, rowing, boxing) were designed to ensure healthy, safe, and equitable participation (NCAA, 2008); however, not all sports or activities in which weight might play a role in performance use a weight classification system. In activities such as dance, distance running, gymnastics, and cycling, weight and body composition are believed to influence physical performance and the aesthetics of performance. Yet the governing organizations of these activities have no mandated weight control practices. In 2005, the American Academy of Pediatrics (2008) published a general weight control practice guide for children and adolescents involved in all sports.

According to Fletcher *et al*. (1992), the potential performance benefits of lean body mass and lower levels of body fat, long-term health benefits include decreased cardiovascular risk factors, reduced triglyceride concentration, possible increases in cardio protective high-density lipoprotein cholesterol concentration, increased fibrinolysis, reduced resting blood pressure, reduced resting glucose and insulin, and increased insulin sensitivity. In females, lower body fat may also protect against breast and other reproductive cancers. Frisch & Hubinont (1990) also argued that although lean body mass has been associated with positive health benefits, negative health outcomes are associated with excessive loss or gain of body mass.

2.5 Effect of Weight Regulation on Students' Attitudes toward Sports

The effects of weight regulation may have the most pronounced effect on mental status of sport men and women during the pre-competition phase. By resisting two of the strongest biological drives, hunger and thirst, an individual's willpower and character are put to the test. When the desired weight is reached (there is no if, as stated by the athletes), a strong feeling of ability and thereby enhanced self-esteem can be achieved (Boisseau, Vera-Perez & Poortmans, 2005).

Positive aspects of weight regulation other than gaining physical advantage emerged from the data during the analysis: sport identity, mental diversion, and mental advantage. Together and individually, these categories point toward the positive aspects of weight regulation experienced by the athletes. Practicing weight regulation mediates a self-image of being "a real athlete." Weight regulation is also considered mentally important as a part of the pre-competition preparation, serving as a coping strategy by creating a feeling of increased focus and commitment. Moreover, a mental advantage relative to one's opponents can be gained through the practice of weight regulation (Boisseau *et al*., 2005).

Based on the current research and literature, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) suggests the following safe weight loss and weight maintenance strategies for participants in all sports and physical activities. These recommendations are built on the premise that scientific evidence supports safe and effective weight loss and weight management practices and techniques, regardless of the activity or performance goals. The recommendations are categorized using the Strength of Recommendation Taxonomy criterion scale proposed by the American Academy of Family Physicians (Ebell *et al*., 2004) on the basis of the level of scientific data found in the literature. Each

recommendation is followed by a letter describing the level of evidence found in the literature supporting the recommendation: A means there are well-designed experimental, clinical, or epidemiologic studies to support the recommendation; *B* means there are experimental, clinical, or epidemiologic studies that provide a strong theoretical rationale for the recommendation; and *C* means the recommendation is based largely on anecdotal evidence at this time.

Athletes and active people regularly seek methods to maximize performance, and many of the common methods involve managing diet, weight, or body composition (or a combination of these). Although many safe methods exist to achieve goal weight or the lowest safe weight, unsafe practices involve self-deprivation techniques that lead to dehydration, self-starvation, and disordered eating. In field studies and experimental research on weight-class athletes, the most common unsafe methods are a mixture of dehydration and other methods, including food restriction or improper dieting to reduce body fat. Therefore, the results of studies examining the physiologic and performance effects of rapid weight reduction may not reflect only dehydration. Studies selected for this summary are those that focused primarily on dehydration techniques and involved short-term, rapid weight reduction.

According to Tipton & Tcheng (1981) most athletes who participate in weight-class sports need short-duration, high-intensity efforts that demand rates of energy production at or above the peak oxygen uptake. For single efforts, whether performance is affected by dehydration before performance is unclear. Dehydration does not appear to reduce phosphagen energy stores (adenosine triphosphate, creatine phosphate), Houston et al., (1981) argued that although some of the weight reduction found in this study occurred with

diet manipulation and not dehydration alone. People involved in activities that use weight manipulation to improve performance appear to be more profoundly affected by hydration status. Efforts that are sustained at intensities below peak oxygen uptake are notably affected by prior dehydration. Dehydration induced with the use of pharmacologic diuretics increases frequency of muscle twitches, a potential risk factor for muscle cramps, more so than does exercise- or sauna-induced dehydration.

It has been argued that in order to promote fair and interesting matches and to reduce potential injuries caused by large differences in body mass and strength, National School Sports competitions are organized in weight classes. As a consequence of the weight-classification rules, it is well recognized that athletes often practice short-term weight regulation to achieve an advantage in one-on-one contest (Artioli, Gualano & Franchini, 2010). In order to rapidly attain a lower pre-competition weight, weight-loss strategies may be used. The most common practices include reducing food and fluid intake and pursuing active sweating through increased exercise or other forms of voluntary dehydration (or both), such as passive sweating in a sauna or hot bath (Boisseau *et al*., 2005). However, these rapid weight-loss strategies are associated with negative effects. Short-term weight regulation leads to reductions in body water, electrolytes, glycogen, and lean tissue, which alter a number of physiologic functions, such as thermoregulation (Casa, Armstrong & Hillman, 2000), cardiovascular function, and metabolism (Fogelholm, 1994), which are crucial to athletic performance. Furthermore, the food- and fluid-deprived state during the weight-loss period also seems to negatively affect the psychological state of the athlete,

increasing tension, anger, fatigue, and confusion and decreasing vigor (Filaire, Maso, Degoutte, Jouanel & Lac, 2001).

Based on research findings with implications for health and performance, some guidelines regarding rapid weight loss have emerged. Wilmore (2000) proposed that the body can tolerate a short-term body weight loss of less than 4% through dehydration, whereas Burke (2007) suggested a maximum weight reduction of 2% to 3% of total body weight, if undertaken with sufficient sport nutrition and hydration practices. Despite knowledge among athletes (Marquart & Sobal, 2001) and coaches (Sossin, Gizis, Marquart & Sobal, 2007) about the potentially adverse effects of rapid weight loss on performance, this practice is widespread and often exceeds the proposed guidelines (Filaire, Sagnol, Ferrand, Maso & Lac, 2001).Therefore, it is important to examine the athletes' own experiences and opinions of weight regulation.

In Ghana today, boys and girls in sports are required to make certain weights in order to participate in age-category sports thus; (under 12 years and under 15 years). Boys in the under 12 years category are to weigh not more than 35kg and girls not more than 45kg while boys under 15 years are to weigh 54kg and girls under 15 years are to make 56kg. This exposes the child to a lot of health hazards such as dehydration, and malnutrition since most sport boys and girls denied themselves food and water for days in order to meet the weight requirement to participate in the competition. The health hazards associated with weight regulation, therefore, create fear in some sport boys and girls leading to their negative attitude towards national school sport competition (Judelson, Maresh & Farrell, 2007).

Although a hypohydrated state leads to reduced strength (Webster, Rutt & Weltman, 2000) power (Judelson *et al*., 2007), and high-intensity endurance (Walsh, Noakes, Hawley & Dennis, 2004), the protocols often used when evaluating muscular performance cannot accurately duplicate the "real match" situation in competitive sports. Most research conducted on athletes regarding their attitude in relation to the practice of weight regulation has used questionnaires mainly highlighting the negative outcomes of weight regulation (Choma, Sforzo & Keller, 1998), without taking any positive experiences of the practice into consideration (Koral & Dosseville, 2009). Thus, qualitative approaches are rare, and the perceived benefits of rapid weight loss and regain are poorly understood.

Historically, many attempts have been made to ensure fair participation in sports at the basic education level. Investigation about the use of weight with more than five district physical education coordinators and twenty physical education teachers revealed that height had been used in the past as a criterion for participation Jathl (2011). He argued that weight regulation sometimes sidelined some talented students from participating in important competitions.

Currently, weight and facial screening are used to determine who performs. Over fifty physical education teachers who were unofficially contacted on this criteria issue vehemently disagreed and disapproved of the criteria. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that weight-regulation procedures practiced by the students also influence sport athletes in general, regardless of age or competitive level.

2.6. Summary of Literature

The objectives of weight regulation in national school sports competition are to present athletic trainers with recommendations for safe weight loss and weight maintenance practices for athletes and active clients, and to provide athletes, clients, coaches, and parents with safe guidelines that will allow athletes and clients to achieve and maintain weight and body composition goals.

However, athletes practice short term weight regulation to achieve advantage to meeting the competition requirement. For example, there is reduction of food and fluid intake, active sweating through exercise, that is, to promote dehydration and lean tissue.

The issue of national standard or regulation from scientific perspective was reviewed. It was deduced that there are no universally accepted or mandated standards for the screening of high school athletes, nor are there approved certification guidelines for those healthcare professionals who perform such screening.

In spite of lack of controlled standard, the effect of weight regulation may have the most pronounced influence on mental status of sports men and women during the pre-competition phase. By resisting two of the strongest biological drives, hunger and thirst, an individuals willpower and character are put to the test.

In a nutshell, it is deduced from the literature that to promote fair and interesting matches in national school sports competition and to reduce potential injuries caused by large differences in body mass and strength, it is important for the sports authority to have clear-cut procedure for selecting students for national school sports competitions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the overall strategies that were used to carry out the research on investigating the consequences of Weight Regulation at National School Sports Competition and their effects on student attitudes towards sports. It includes research design, population, sample and sampling techniques validity and reliability, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a survey design. A survey according to Trochim (2010) is a method of gathering information from a number of individuals, known as a sample, in order to learn something about the larger population from which the sample is drawn. In using this design, self-administered questionnaire is used to help the researcher to describe the consequences of Weight Regulation and its effect on National School Sport Competition. The study type is descriptive in nature.

3.3 Population

The population refers to the objects in which the researcher is interested in. The population for the study comprised of all secondary school who took part in the national basic sports competition in 2012 as well as physical education teachers and the headmasters of the selected senior high schools.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 332 respondents were conveniently selected for the study from 14 schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects or sites are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The sampling technique was chosen because the target group was scattered and was not readily available to the researcher. Again, items used to ensure that only those who have had the experience of weight problems during competitions were selected. The importance of this sampling technique was to include those who were within the target group and were readily available at the time of the study.

In Berekum Municipality, four Senior High Schools were selected which comprised Presbyterian Senior High School, Berekum Senior High School, Methodist Senior High School and JiniJini Senior High School. Ten (10) Physical Education Teachers, four (4) Headmasters, and eighty (80) students were selected in Berekum Municipality. Again, four Senior High Schools were selected from Sunyani Municipal comprising Notre „Dame" Senior High School, Twene Amanfo Senior High School, Sunyani Senior High School and St. James Seminary with seven (7) Physical Education Teachers, four (4) Headmasters, and eighty (80) students.

Also, Yamfo Anglican Senior High School, Serwaa Kese Senior High School, Boakye Tromo Senior High School and Bomaa Senior High School were selected from the Tano North District with five (5) Physical Education Teachers, four (4) Headmasters, and eighty (80) students.

Lastly, Bechem Presbyterian Senior High School and Techimantia Senior High School were selected from Tano South District with five (5) Physical Education Teachers, two (2) Headmasters, and eighty (80) students. In all, the study used Three Hundred and Thirty-Two (332) respondents as the sample size for the study.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

Reliability is the degree to which a test instrument produces the same result when conducted by different people. Reliability means consistency. Validity on the other hand, is the soundness or appropriateness of a test instrument.

In order to establish the reliability of this instrument, a pilot study was carried out on a sample of twenty (20) respondents in Wenchi Senior High School. The instrument reliability was established through test-re-test. A reliability co-efficient of 0.73 was obtained using person moment co-relation co-efficient (PMCC). A reliability co-efficient of 0.73 is highly reliable according to Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2006).

Draft copies of the instrument was given to the supervisor and other experts in the department for content and face validity.

3.5.1 Instrumentation

The tools for data collection were open and closed ended items. The questionnaire was in four sections. Section A of the questionnaire for Teacher comprised the Bio-data about their gender, educational qualification, current rank, and teaching experience. Section B has ten items to elicit responses from the respondents about Weight Regulation. These comprised eight item questions using likert scale on weight regulation and screening while

the last part contained two items eliciting Physical Education Teachers‟ opinion or impression about the Weight Regulation. There were questionnaires for Headmasters of the selected schools. Section A included the bio-data about their gender, teaching experience, educational qualification and current rank. Section B comprised five items to elicit responses from them and the last part contained nine items using likert scale on weight regulation and screening. There are eight items for the students to contribute their views to the study. They comprise four items for section A deals with the bio-data thus, gender, class, age, school and section B contains four items using likert on weight regulation and screening.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The study used quantitative data collection method to gather data from the field. The researcher used self-administered questionnaire to gather the information but respondents were left to decide on whether to participate or not. Some of the questions were closed ended using the Likert Scale to seek information from the respondents.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected were examined and analysed objectively to capture and present an excellent insight into the research topic. Quantitative data analysis methods are used with the aid of graphical analysis of the data. By the use of this graphical analysis, appropriate tables, frequencies and charts were generated for easy understanding of the research results. The graphical analysis is chosen due to its easy, appropriate and quality analysis method.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction:

The purpose of this research was to investigate the consequences of weight regulation in National School Sports Competition and its effect on students‟ attitudes towards sports in some selected Basic Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. All the 332 questionnaires administered to respondents were returned. Findings obtained from the survey were presented under the following topics; Concerns about Weight Regulation and Screening during Zonal or National School Sport Competition, Extent to which Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has achieved its aims and objectives, and Effect of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports.

4.1.1 Research Question One: Concerns about Weight Regulation and Screening during Zonal or National School Sport Competition

This section of the study covered the perception and concerns of headmasters, P.E teachers, and students on weight regulation and screening in national sport competitions for Senior School athletes.

Table 1: Headmasters Responses on Weight Regulation and Screening

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	**Men**
I agree that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions	0	4	5	5	**1.93**
The introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction	2	4	5	3	**2.36**
I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition	2	4	5	3	**2.36**
Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport	4	7	1	2	**2.93**
Weight Regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition	2	3	5	4	**2.21**
Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight	3	6	2	3	**2.64**

Source: Field Data, 2015
KEY: SA =Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = **Disagree,** SD= **Strongly disagree**

Data in Table 1 showed the concerns of headmasters in the various SHS contacted on weight regulation and screening in Zonal National School Competitions. The mean scores of 2.93 and 2.64 comparatively is an indication that the respondents agreed that weight regulation in National Basic School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport, and that Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight.

However, the low mean scores of 1.93, 2.36, 2.36, and 2.21 comparatively is an indication that respondents disagreed that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction, weight regulation should be used in National School Sport Competition, and weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition.

The above findings indicated that headmasters concerns about weight regulation in national school competitions were negative. The study per above data revealed that aside the fact that headmasters agreed that weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition created an opportunity for the less privileged to participate, majority of them were of the view that weight and facial screening should not be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions was not a step in the right direction, weight regulation should not be used in National School Sport Competition, weight regulation has brought negative impact on National School Sport Competition, and that it has affected students‟ attitude towards sports.

Table 2: Physical Education Teachers Responses on Weight Regulation and Screening in National School Sport Competition

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
I agree that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions	4	7	7	10	2.18
The introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction	7	9	7	5	2.64
I personally recommend the use of weight regulation in National School Sport Competition	3	11	6	8	2.32
Weight regulation in National School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport	17	9	1	1	3.50
Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating	8	5	9	6	2.54
Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight	5	12	8	3	2.68
Weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition	**6**	**5**	**11**	**6**	**2.39**

Source: Field Data, 2015

Data in Table 2 showed the concerns of physical education teachers in the various SHS contacted on weight regulation and screening in Zonal or National School Competitions. The high mean scores of 2.64, 3.50, 2.54, and 2.68 comparatively is an indication that the respondents agreed that the introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction, weight regulation in National

School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport, weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating, and that weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones to participate. However, the low mean scores of 2.18, 2.32, 2.36, 2.39 and 2.39 is an indication that respondents disagreed that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, they recommend the use of weight regulation in National School Sport Competition, and that Weight regulation has brought positive impact on National School Sport Competition.

It is deduced from the above results that though physical education teachers admitted that introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions are a step in the right direction; their general concerns about its application at zonal national school sport competitions were negative. This is because majority of the respondents affirmed that weight and facial screening should not be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions and that weight regulation has brought negative impact in National School Sport Competition.

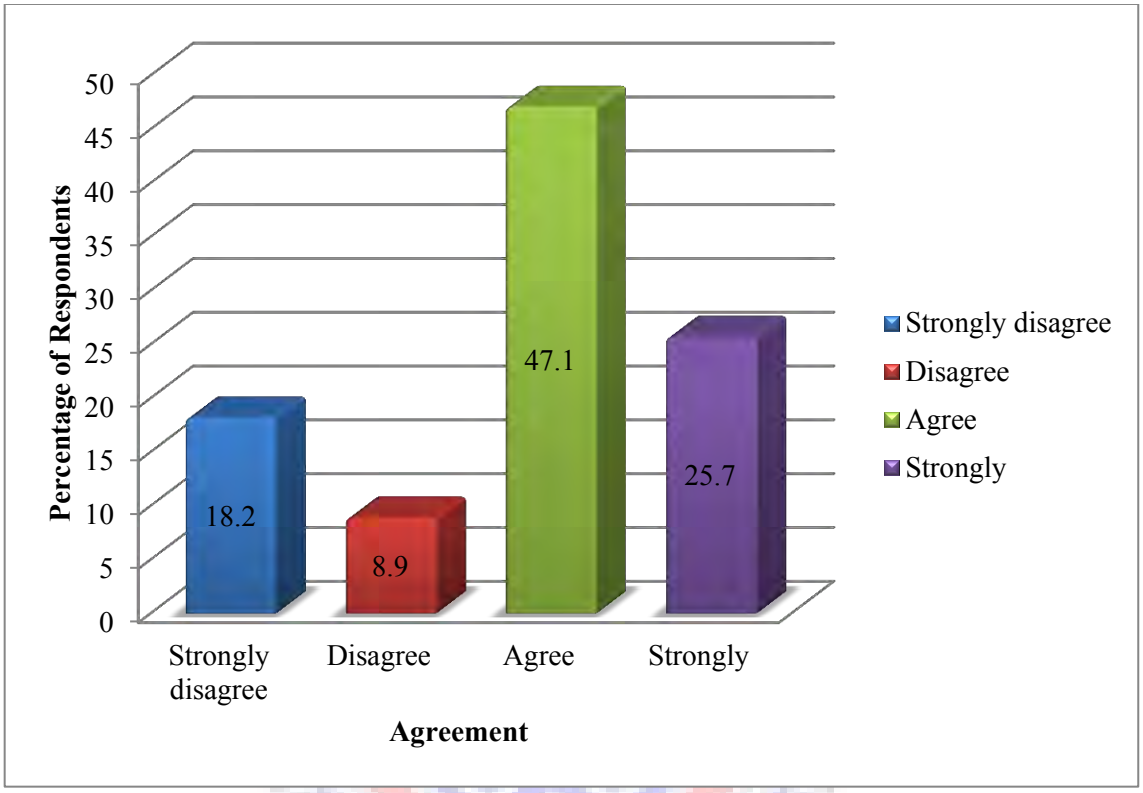
Table 3: Students Responses on Weight Screening in National School Sport Competition

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	**Mean**
Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating	96	130	36	18	**3.09**
Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition creates an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weigh	81	135	52	12	**3.02**
Weight regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected students positively	80	130	55	15	**2.98**
Weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition	67	179	11	23	**3.04**

Source: Field Data, 2015

Data in Table 3 showed the concerns of physical education teachers in the various SHS contacted on weight screening in Zonal National Basic School Competitions. The high mean scores of 3.09, 3.02, 2.98, 3.04, and 3.10 is an indication that majority of the respondents unanimously affirmed that weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating, weight screening creates an opportunity for the less privileged ones to participate, weight regulation has affected students positively, and that weight regulation has brought positive impact on National School Sport Competition. It is deduced from the above that students had positive concerns about the introduction and the application of weight screening in national school sport competitions. This is because the study revealed that majority of the students contacted unanimously affirmed that weight regulation has affected students positively since it brought about positive impact on National School Sport Competition. The students concerns regarding the weight regulation in national school sport competitions were contrary to that of the headmasters and the physical education teachers contacted.

Figure 1: Weight Screening should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions

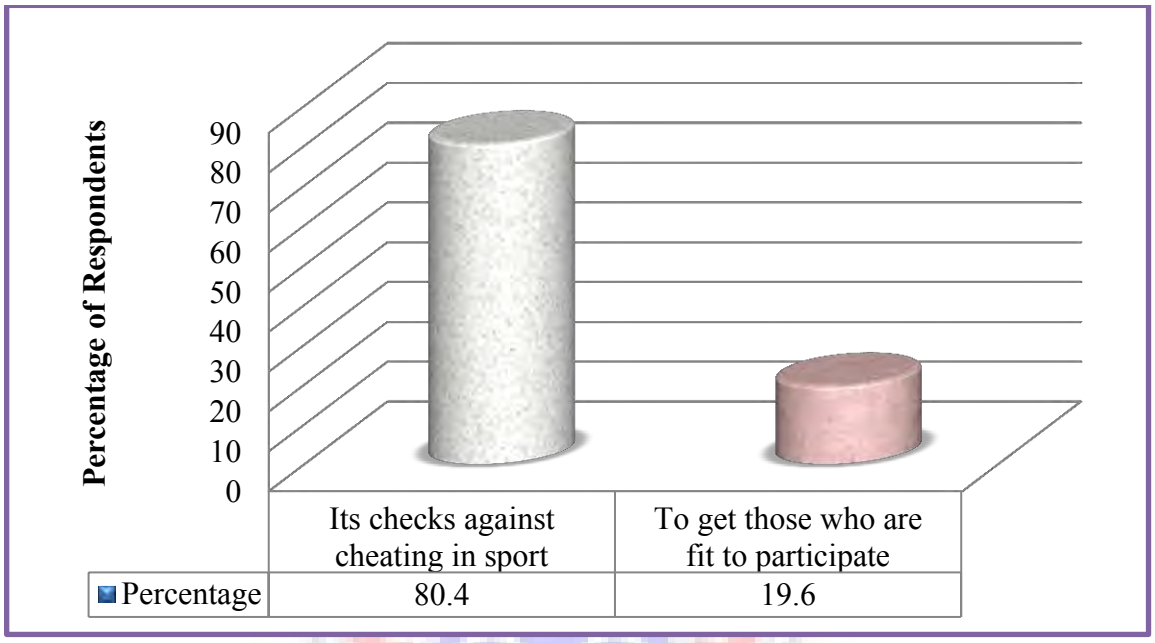


Source: Field Data, 2015

The study found per above bar chart that out of 280 students contacted, 204 representing 72.8% for both agree and strongly agree admitted that weight and screening should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions, whereas the remainder 72 (27.2%) for both disagree and strongly agree disputed that fact. The above finding means that majority of the respondents affirmed that weight and screening should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions. The reasons why students believed that weight regulation should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions were based

on the fact that weight regulation checks against cheating in sports, and that screening helps to get those athletes who are fit for the competition as shown in figure 2 below.

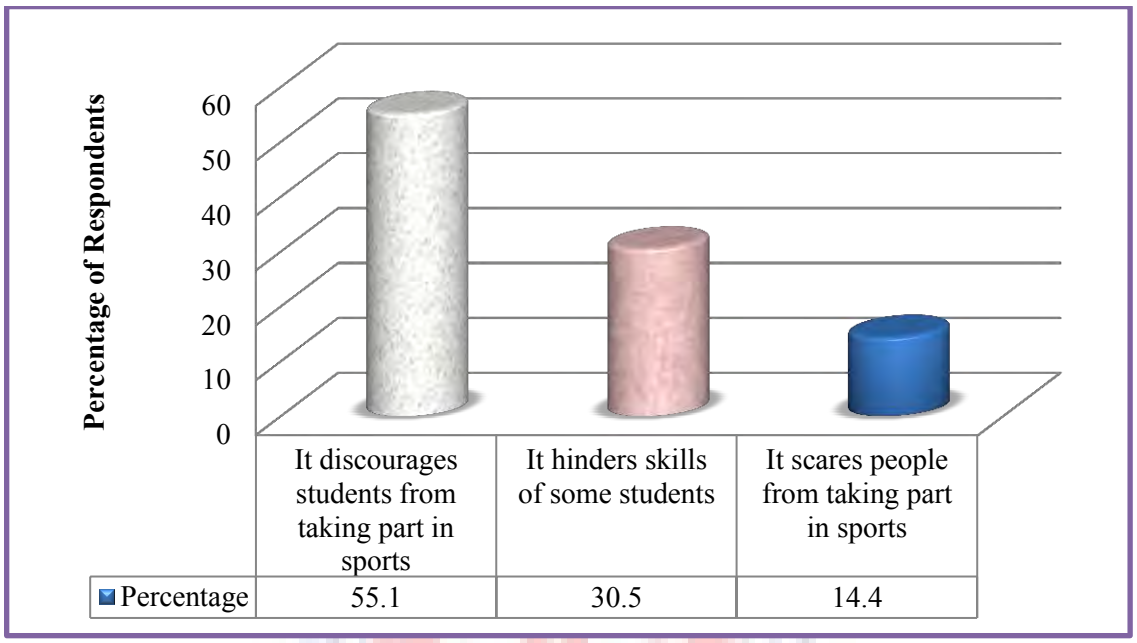
Figure 2: Reasons for Agreement to weight screening



Source: Field Data, 2015

Out of the 204 respondents who admitted that weight regulation and screening should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions, 80.4% of the respondents stated that weight and screen checked cheating in the competition whereas the 19.6% of the respondents stated that it helps to get those who are fit for the competition. These two arguments underlie the main reasons why respondents admitted that weight screening should be one of the criteria used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions.

Figure 3: Reasons for Disagreement to weight screening

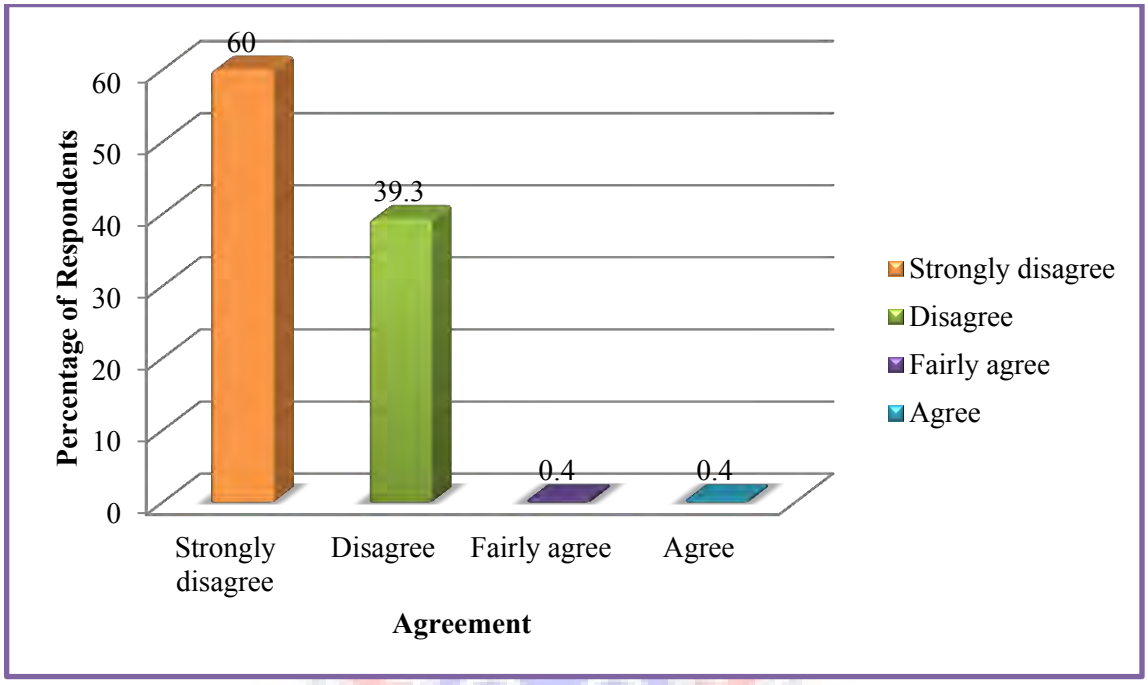


Source: Field Data, 2015

Finding as per above bar chart indicated that out of the 76 students who disagreed that weight regulation and screening should be used to determine athletes for National Sport Competitions, 55.1% of them stated that weight regulation and screening in national sport competition discourages students from participating in sports, 30.5% of the respondents stated that weight screening in national sport competitions hinder skills of some students, whereas the remainder, representing 14.4% of the respondents stated that weight screening scare people from participating in sports. It is deduced from the above finding that the reasons why some students disputed the use of weight regulation in national Basic school competition include the fact that it discourages students from participating, it hinders the skills of some students, and it scares people from participating in sport. The fear that the students might not meet the weight qualification to participate in the competitions therefore

discouraged students from participating in national Basic school sports competitions and this inhibits the skills of such students.

Figure 4: Responses whether Athletes are screened before national sport competitions

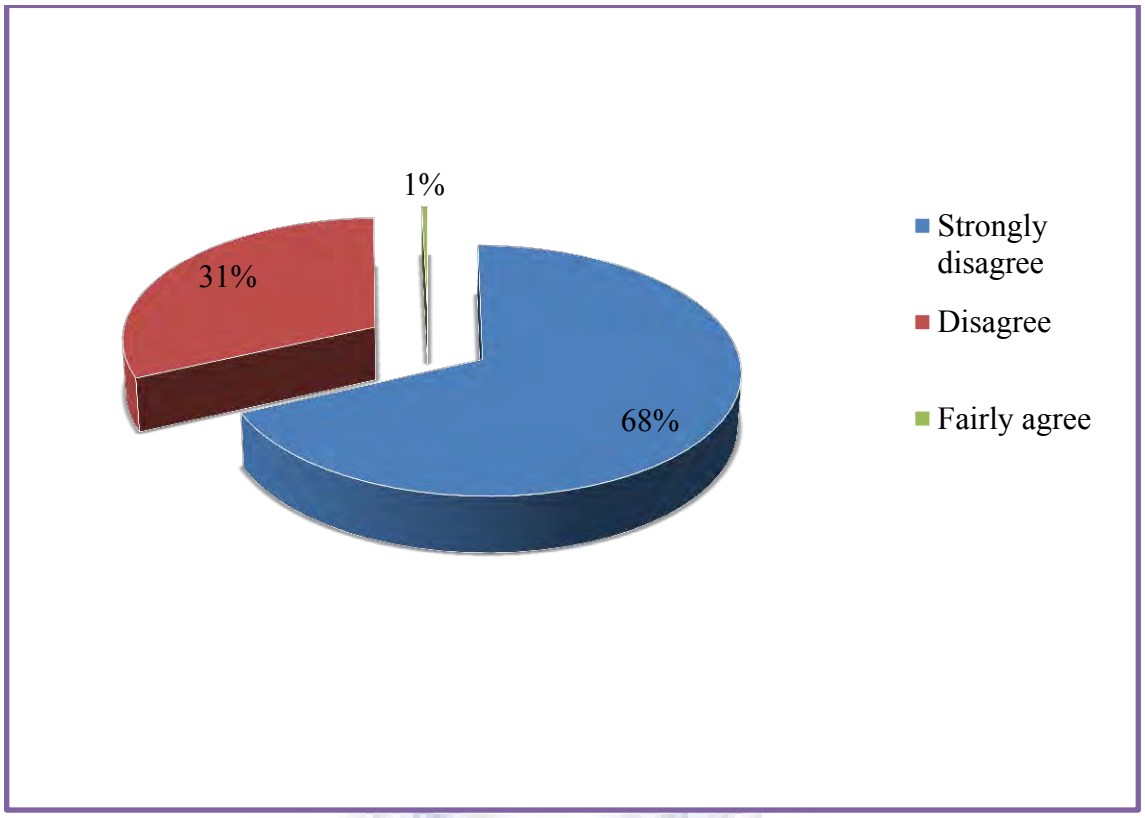


Source: Field Data, 2015

The finding as per above bar indicated that majority (n = 278) of the respondents, representing 99.2% for both strongly disagree and disagree admitted that they had never been screened before participating in national school sport competitions whereas only 2(0.8%) of the respondents affirmed that they did. This means that athletes in national school sport competitions are not medically screened before participating in such competitions. This could affect students who have medical problems and may not be able to participate in the competitions. Since students are not medically screened before participation, it may affect students on health grounds. This is because majority (99.6%) of

the athletes contacted admitted that they had never been disqualified based on Medical screening during national sport competition as shown in Figure 5 below.

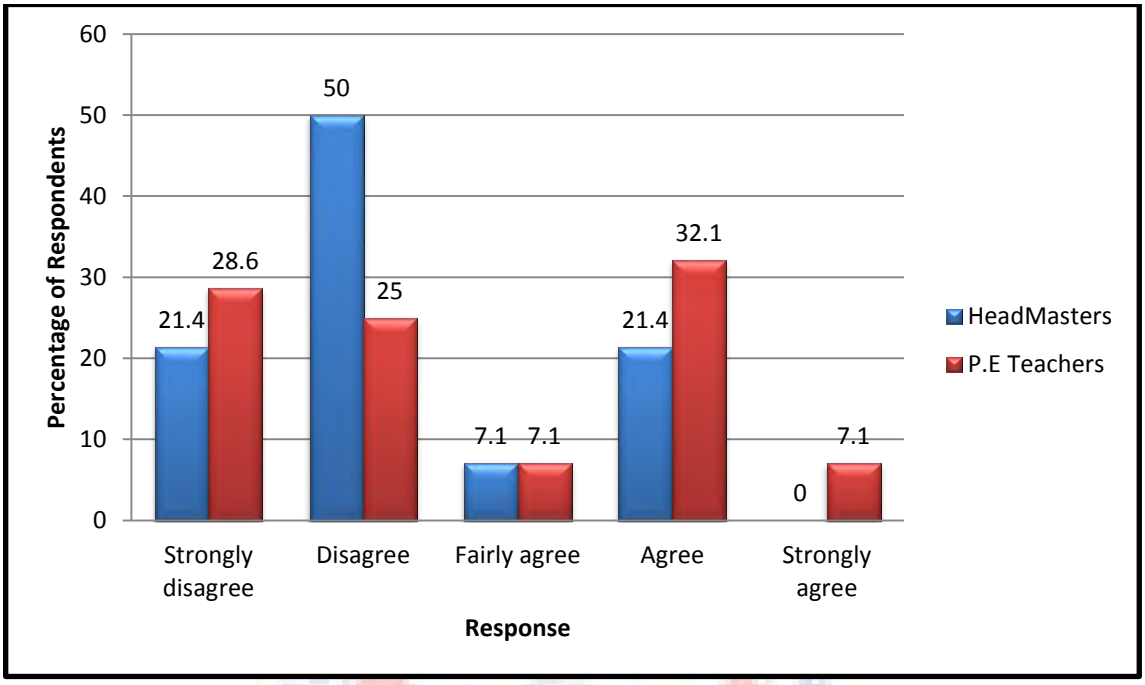
Figure 5: Athletes disqualified based on Medical screening during national sport competition



Source: Field Data, 2015

The study found that majority (n = 279) of the students contacted, representing 99% for both disagree and strongly disagree unanimously affirmed that they had never been disqualified based on Medical screening during national sport competition. This is attributed to the fact that medical screening is not conducted for Basic School athletes before they participate in national or zonal school sport competitions.

Figure 6: Existence of Universal Standards for Screening of Basic School Athletes

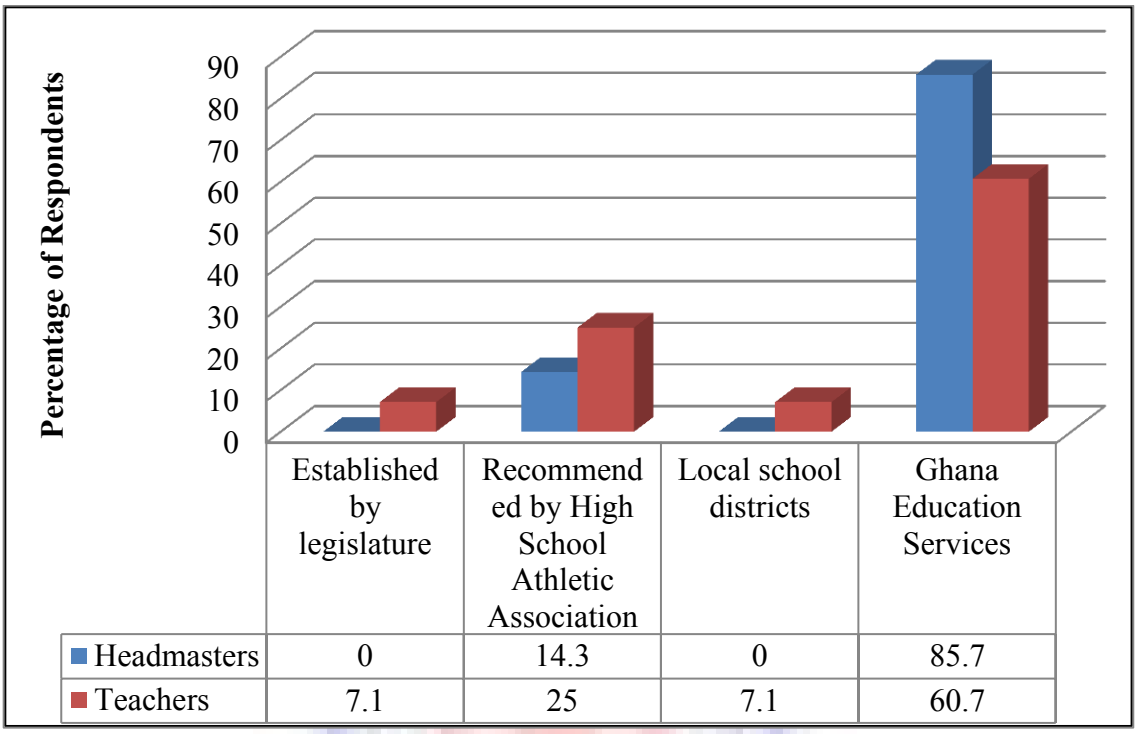


Source: Field Data, 2015

In figure 6, the views of headmasters and physical education teachers were solicited regarding the awareness of existence of universal standards for screening of basic school athletes. Finding as per above bar chart indicated that majority (71.4%) of the headmasters contacted for both disagree and strongly disagree unanimously affirmed that there were not aware of existing universal standards used for medical screening of Basic school athletes while the remainder (28.6%) stated otherwise. Similarly, majority (53.6%) of the physical education teachers contacted for both disagree and strongly disagree unanimously affirmed that there are no existing universal standards for medical screening of Basic school athletes whereas the remainder (46.4%) stated otherwise. This means that majority of the respondents admitted that there are not existing universal standards for medical screening

of Basic School athletes before ensuring their participation in zonal sport competitions in Ghana. This may affect athletes who are not fit to participate in such competitions.

Figure 7: Regulatory body that provides standard for weight regulation and screening Basic Student-athletes



	Established by legislature	Recommended by High School Athletic Association	Local school districts	Ghana Education Services
Headmasters	0	14.3	0	85.7
Teachers	7.1	25	7.1	60.7

Source: Field Data, 2015

In determining the regulatory body or bodies that are responsible for setting out weight regulating and screening for Basic School athletes, the study found that both physical education teachers and headmasters unanimously affirmed (85.7% and 60.7% respectively) that the Ghana Education Service is responsible for providing standard for weight screening of Basic Student-athletes. Few respondents also mentioned other bodies such as established legislature, Basic school athletic association, and local school districts. It is obvious from the above finding that majority of the respondents admitted that GES is

responsible for providing standard for weight regulation and screening SHS Student-athletes though other bodies and provisions may by established legislature be considered.

Table 4: Medical Conditions that disqualify an athlete from participating in competition

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Eye infections and mental retardation	9	21.4
Suffering from cardiovascular diseases	21	50.0
Suffering from epilepsy	8	19.1
Asthmatic	4	9.5
Total	42	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 4 illustrates the various medical conditions that endure an athlete to be disqualified from participating in competition. The results indicate that 21(50%) of the respondents stated cardiovascular diseases, 8 (19.1%) of the respondents said epilepsy, and 9 (21.4%) of the respondents said eye infections, mental retardation, and asthma (9.5%). This means that the medical conditions that disqualify an athlete from participating in national school sports competition include cardiovascular diseases, eye infections and mental retardation, epilepsy, and asthma.

4.1.2 Research Question Two: To what extent has Weight Regulation in National Basic School Sport Competition achieved its aims and objectives

This section of the study gave statistical and graphical representation of the aims and objectives for the introduction of weight regulation in national sport competitions in Basic Schools and whether they are able to achieve them.

Table 5: Aims and Objectives of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To maintain consistency in the governance of the middle/junior high school athletic program throughout the state	4	14.3
To enhance opportunities for fair play and competition	13	46.4
To promote safety for students who choose to participate in athletics at the middle/junior high school level	4	14.3
To prevent cheating in national school sport competition	4	14.3
To impose sanctions on schools, coaches, players, spectators, officials and anyone involved in the athletic program	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 5 illustrates the aims and objectives for setting up the weight regulation policy for Basic School athletes in Ghana. Thirteen (46.4%) of the respondents stated that the aims and objectives of the weight regulations is to enhance opportunities for fair play and competition, 4 (14.3%) each said to maintain consistency in the governance of the middle/junior high school athletic program throughout the state, promote safety for students who choose to participate in athletics at the middle/junior high school level, and

prevent cheating in national school sport competition. However, 3 (10.7%) of the respondents said to impose sanctions on schools, coaches, players, spectators, officials and anyone involved in the athletic program. This means that the main objective for the introduction and application of weight regulation policy in Basic Schools National Sports Competitions is to enhance opportunities for fair play and competition.

Table 6: Achievement of Weight Regulation to National Basic Sport Competition

Variable	Response
Contribution of weight regulation	• Fairness on the part of less privilege • Fat students are sidelined • It creates opportunity for the less privilege • It has brought fairness in weight regulation • It has brought fairness in weight regulation in terms of selection • It has brought fairness into the athlete competition • It has ensured some form of equity and fairness • It has prevented bias among sports men and women • It has prevented cheating • It has prevented cheating in the competition • It opens chances for the less privileged • It paves the way for people with almost strength to compete • Prevents cheating

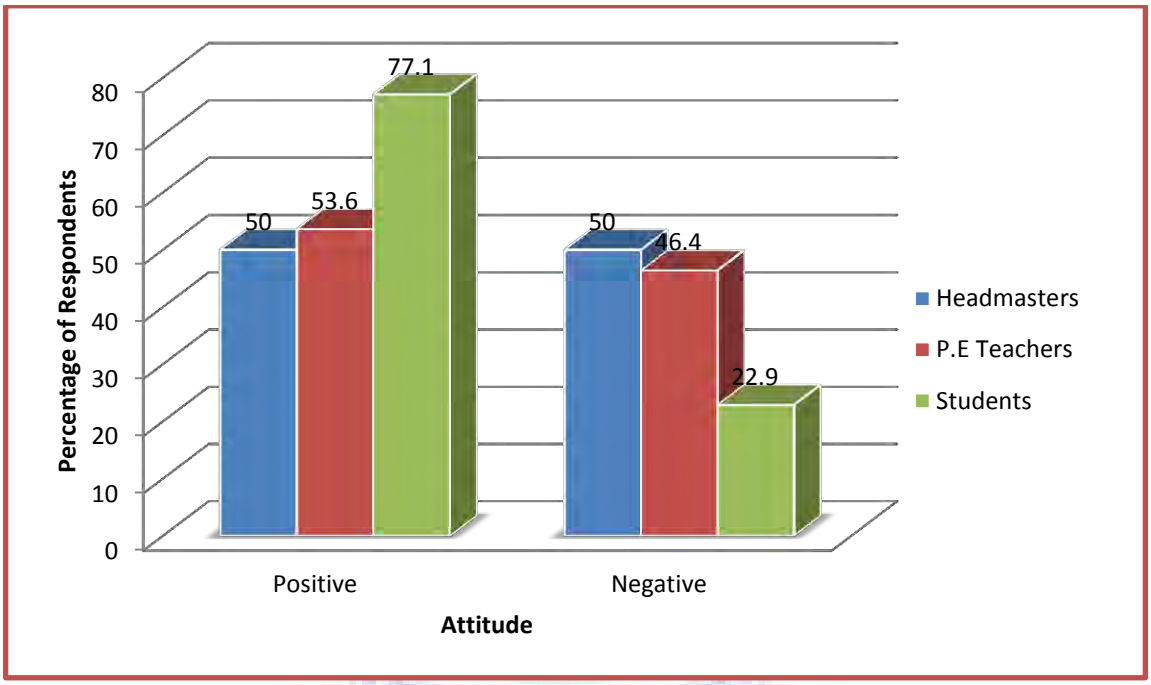
Source: Field Data, 2015

The data in table 6 indicated that the achievement of the weight regulation policy in national school sport competitions include the fact that it ensures fairness in national school sport competitions, it gives the opportunity to the less privileged to participate, it has prevented bias among sports men and women, and it has prevented cheating in national

school sport competitions. Invariably, it is deduced from the above finding that the introduction of the weight regulation for athletes in Basic Schools has achieved its aims and objectives to a large extent.

4.1.3 Influence of Weight Regulation on Students' attitudes toward Sports.

Figure 8: Attitude of Students toward Weight Regulation



Source: Field Data, 2015

Figure 8 illustrates the influence of weight regulation on student"s attitude toward sports. The finding as per above bar chart indicate that majority of the respondents representing 53.5% of the physical education teachers, and 77.1% of students affirmed that the introduction of weight regulation policy has positive impact half (50%) of the headmasters affirmed this whereas the remainder (50%) disputed that introduction of weight regulation policy has positive impact on students attitude towards sports. The above finding indicated that majority of the respondents affirmed that the introduction and the application of weight

regulation in national school sport competitions has been positive on students attitude towards sports.

Table 7: Headmasters Responses on the effect of Weight Regulation on Students Attitude towards Sport

Variable	Response
Effects of weight regulation on students attitude	• Fat students are sidelined • It has brought about discrimination on the part of students • It has brought about negative attitude towards sports • It prevented students from exhibiting their talent • Unfairness on students who grow at faster rate • Weight regulation has unfairly discriminated against students

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 7 illustrates headmasters‟ concerns of the influence of weight regulation on student‟s attitude towards sport. The respondents indicated that weight regulation has sidelined talented fat from participating in sports, it has brought about discrimination on the part of students, it prevented some skillful students from exhibiting their talent, it is unfair to students who grow at faster rate, and that weight regulation has unfairly discriminated against students. This has affected the attitude of students in the school towards participation in national school sport competitions.

Table 8: Students assessment of influence of weight regulation on attitude toward sport

Variable	Response			
	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**
Weight regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected my attitude towards sport	69.3	25.4	2.5	2.9
I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition	**37.9**	**32.5**	**3.9**	**25.7**

Source: Field work, 2015
Scale SA +A = Agree; and D +DS = Disagree

Table 8 illustrates the views of students on issues relating the influence of weigh regulation on students‟ attitude towards sport. The data in the above table shows that the **SA +A** scores of **50% and above** is an indication that majority of the respondents agreed that Weight regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected my attitude towards sport, and that they will personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition. This finding buttresses the fact that weight regulation has brought about positive attitude of students towards national school sport competition.

Discussion

This section of the study deliberated on the major finding of the study following the data analysis and in relation to the works of others used in the literature review. The discussion is based on four core variables which include concerns about weight regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition, extent to which Weight Regulation in

National School Sport Competition has achieved its aims and objectives, and the effect of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What are the concerns about weight regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition?

In assessing the concerns of headmasters, physical education teachers, and students about weight regulation during Zonal or National School Sport Competition, the study found that headmasters and physical education teachers have negative concerns about weight regulation. Headmaster believed that aside the fact that weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competing created an opportunity for the less privileged to participate, majority believed that weight and facial screening should not be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, weight regulation has brought negative impact on National School Sport Competition, and that it has affected students‟ attitude towards sports. Weight screening has deprived a lot of talented students from participating in national school competitions and this affects such students negatively. This finding is consistent with Jathl (2011) who argued that weight regulation sometimes sidelined some talented students from participating in important competitions.

Also, the study found that though physical education teachers admitted that introduction of weight screening in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction, their general concerns about its application at zonal national school sport competitions were negative. Majority of the physical education teachers believed weight and facial screening should not be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions and

that weight screening has brought negative impact in National School Sport Competition. Physical education teachers believed weight screen has prevented some highly competent students from participation in national school competitions. This is not different from Judelson *et al*. (2007) who asserted that the health hazards associated with weight screening create fear in some sport boys and girls leading to their negative attitude towards national school sport competition.

With regards to students, the study found that students had positive concerns about the introduction and the application of weight screening in national school sport competitions. The study revealed that majority of the students affirmed that weight screening has affected students positively since it brought about positive impact on National School Sport Competition. The students concerns regarding the weight regulation in national school sport competitions were contrary to that of the headmasters and the physical education teachers contacted. This finding is however, contrary to Judelson *et al*. (2007) who indicated that weight screening creates fear among sport boys and girls.

Research Question Two: To what extent has Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition achieved its aims and objectives?

The study found that the introduction of the weight regulation for athletes in Basic Schools has achieved its aims and objectives to a large extent. This is due to the fact that the main objective for the introduction and application of weight regulation policy in Basic Schools National Sports Competitions has enhanced opportunities for fair play in national school competitions. The introduction of weight screening gives the opportunity to the less privileged to participate and also prevented bias among sports men and women as well cheating in national school sport competitions. These are evidence that the introduction of

weight regulation in national school competitions has achieved its objective to a large extent. This finding supports Artioli *et al.* (2010) that in order to promote fair and interesting matches in National School Sport competitions and to reduce potential injuries caused by large differences in body mass and strength, athletes should compete in weight classes.

Research Question Three: What is the effect of Weight Regulation on students' attitudes toward sports?

The study revealed that majority of the headmasters, teachers, and students believed that weight screening has affected students‟ attitude towards national school competitions positively. This means that that the introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions has positive effect on students‟ attitude towards sports. This is because majority of the students willing to personally recommend the use of weight screening in National School Sport Competition. The introduction of weight screening has enabled the less privilege to participate in school competitions and has also eliminated cheating. This therefore influences students‟ attitude towards participating in such competitions. This finding is in line with Boisseau *et al*. (2005) assessment that when the desired weight is reached as stated by the athletes, a strong feeling of ability and thereby enhanced self-esteem is achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This chapter presents summary of findings. A descriptive survey study was conducted to determine the consequences of weight regulation in national sport competition and their effects on students‟ attitude towards sports in some elected Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. The study was based on three core variables which included level of the concerns of weight screening in national school sports, Extent to which Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has achieved its aims and objectives, and Effect of Weight Regulation on students‟ attitudes toward sports.

Regarding headmasters, physical education teachers, and student concerns on weight regulation and screening, the study found the following:

- The low mean scores of 1.93, 2.36, 2.36, and 2.21 is an indication that headmasters disagreed that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction, weight regulation should be in National School Sport Competition, and weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition.
- The low mean scores of 2.18, 2.32, 2.36, 2.39 and 2.39 is an indication that most of the respondents disagreed that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions, they recommend the use of weight regulation in National School Sport Competition, and that Weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition.

- The high mean scores of 3.09, 3.02, 2.98, 3.04, and 3.10 is an indication that majority of the respondents unanimously affirmed that weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating, weight screening creates an opportunity for the less privileged ones to participate, weight regulation has affected students positively, and that weight regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition.
- Majority (71.4%) of the headmasters contacted for both disagree and strongly disagree about medical screening unanimously affirmed that to them, there are no known existing universal standards for medical screening of high school athletes.

Regarding the extent to which weight regulation in National School Sport competition has achieved its aims and objectives, the study found the following:

- The study revealed that 13(46.4%) of the respondents stated that the aims and objectives of the weight regulations is to enhance opportunities for fair play and competition, 4 (14.3%) each said to maintain consistency in the governance of the middle/junior high school athletic program throughout the state, to promote safety conditions for students who choose to participate in athletics at the middle/junior high school level, and prevent cheating in national school sport competition.
- Eighty percent of the respondents affirmed that the introduction of the weight regulation for athletes in Senior High Schools has achieved its aims and objectives to a large extent.

On the effect of weight regulation on students‟ attitude towards sports, the study revealed that:

- Majority of the respondents representing 53.5% of the physical education teachers, and 77.1% of students affirmed that the introduction of weight regulation policy has positive impact, and half (50%) of the headmasters affirmed this and the remainder (50%) disputed that introduction of weight regulation policy has positive impact on students attitude towards sports.
- The respondents indicated that weight regulation has sidelined the talented fat students from participating in sports, and has brought about discrimination on the part of students, it prevented some skillful students from exhibiting their talent, it is unfair to students who grow at faster rate, and that weight regulation has unfairly discriminated against students.

5.2 Conclusion

It can be concluded from this study that most of the physical education teachers and student athletes admitted that the introduction and application of weight regulation and screening has impacted positively on students‟ attitude towards sport. This is due to the fact that it prevents cheating in the competition, it allows the less privilege to participate, and it has also prevented bias among sports men and women. The study however found that student athletes are not medically screened before participating in national and school sports competitions and these prone athletes to several health effects especially those with cardiovascular diseases and eye infections as well as mental problems.

The consequences of weight regulations were found to have included the fact that weight regulation has sidelined “the talented fat students” from participating in sports; it has brought about discrimination on the part of students; it prevented some skillful students

from exhibiting their talent; it is unfair to students who grow at faster rate (early matures) and that weight regulation has discriminated against. In all, it was concluded that the weight screening has achieved its aims and objectives since it promotes fair opportunity and fair play among national school sports competitions in Ghana.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

- Since the study revealed that Basic School students were not medically screened before participating in zonal or national school sport competitions, the researcher recommends that the Ministry of Youth and Sport in conjunction with the Ghana Education Services should outline measures that will ensure that athletes who participate in zonal or national school competitions are screened before participation. This will help determine those that are fit and those that are not to participate.
- Though the study indicated that weight regulation is achieving its aims and objectives, the researcher recommends that other factors such as age, and talents should be merged in the selection process to ensure more qualified individuals are not left for their talents and skills to wasted.
- Since physical education teachers and headmasters had negative perception about the application of weight regulation for selection of students for national school competitions because it has brought about discrimination on the part of students, it is recommended that strict and firm measure should be adopted by the sports authorities to ensure that students are not discriminated against during selection.

5.4 Recommendations for further Study

1) For future researchers, the study following topic has been proposed: The Contribution of Weight Screening to the Improvement of Basic School Sport Competition.
2) The coverage and sample size for this study was limited that replication of the study with a bigger sample size and extension to the whole Region will be highly desirable. In this regard, researchers recommend that similar study should be extended to the entire Region with bigger sample size.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I am a final year student from University of Education, Winneba. This study seeks to find out **"The Consequences of Weight Regulation in National School Sports Competition and their Effects on Student Attitudes towards Sports.** This is purely an academic work. I would be very glad if you could provide answers to the following questions. Strict confidentiality would be maintained, so feel free to express your candid opinion.

Date……

Code..... Institution.....

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR P.E TEACHERS

Please tick where appropriate from A to D, and indicate your suggestions where needed.

SECTION A: WEIGHT REGULATION AND ITS EFFECT ON STUDENTS ATTITUDE

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement by choosing from the **numbers1-4**in the table. **Note**: 1= **strongly disagree**, 2= **disagree,** 3 = **agree,**4 = **strongly agree**

Item	1	2	3	4
1. I agree that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions				
2. The introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction				
3. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition achieve its aims and objectives				
4. i. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport ii. Indicate the kind of attitude: Negative [ ] Positive [ ]				
5. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating				
6. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				
7. I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition				
8. Weight Regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition				

9. In your own opinion, what contribution(s) has Weight Regulation brought on board in National School Sport Competition?……

……

……..…….

10. Identify the objectives of weight regulation in National School Sports competitions?

a) To maintain consistency in the governance of the middle/junior high school athletic program throughout the state [ ]

b) To enhance opportunities for fair play and competition [ ]

c) To promote safety for students who choose to participate in athletics at the middle/junior high school level [ ]

d) To prevent cheating in national school sport competition [ ]

e) To impose sanctions on schools, coaches, players, spectators, officials and anyone involved in the athletic program who do not adhere to the rules and regulations and subsequently violates the intent or substance of these rules and regulations.[ ]

SECTION B: SCREENING OF ATHLETES IN NATIONAL SCHOOL SPORT COMPETITION

1. There are universal accepted or mandated standards for screening of High School athletes?

(a) Strongly disagree [ ] (b) Disagree [ ] (c) Fairly agree [ ]

(d) Agree [ ] (e) Strongly agree [ ]

2. Which of the following provide standards for the screening of High School student-athletes?

(a) Established by legislature [ ]

(b) Recommended by High School Athletic Association [ ]

(c) Local school districts [ ]

(d) Ghana Education Services [ ]

(e) Others (specify)……

3. On what medical conditions should an athlete be disqualify from participating in the competition?

……..

……

SECTION D: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In your own opinion what appropriate ways would you recommend to improve National School Sport Competitions with regards to cheating?

……

……

……

THANK YOU

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADMASTERS/MISTRESSES

SECTION A: WEIGHT REGULATION

Institution.....

1. How many years working experience have you in the field? (a) 0 - 2 yrs [ ]

(b) 3-5 yrs [ ] (c) 6-8 yrs [ ] (d) More than 8 yrs [ ]

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement by choosing from the **numbers1-4**in the table. **Note**: 1= **strongly disagree**, 2= **disagree,** 3 = **agree,**4 = **strongly agree**

Item	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I agree that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions				
2. i. The introduction of weight regulation in national school sport competitions is a step in the right direction ii. Give reason(s) for your answer…… …… ……				
3. I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition				
4. i. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has an effect on students‟ attitude towards sport ii. Indicate the kind of attitude: **Negative** [ ] **Positive** [ ]				
5. Weight Regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition				
6. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				

7. In your own opinion, what contribution(s) has Weight Regulation brought on board in National School Sport Competition?

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……

SECTION B: SCREENING OF ATHLETES IN NATIONAL SCHOOL SPORT COMPETITION

1. Are there universal accepted or mandated standards for screening of High School athletes?

(a) Strongly disagree [ ] (b) Disagree [ ] (c) Fairly agree [ ]

(d) Agree [ ] (e) Strongly agree [ ]

2. Which of the following provide standards for the screening of High School student-athletes?

(a) Established by legislature [ ]

(b) Recommended by High School Athletic Association [ ]

(c) Local school districts [ ]

(d) Ghana Education Services [ ]

(e) Others (specify)……

……..

3. On what medical conditions should an athlete be disqualify from participating in the competition?

……..

……

SECTION C: ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement by choosing from the **numbers1-4**in the table. **Note**: 1= **strongly disagree**, 2= **disagree,** 3 = **agree,**4 = **strongly agree**

Item	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected students‟ attitude towards sport positively				
2. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has improved the desire of students towards National School Sport Competition				
3. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				
4. The criteria used for weight screening encourage students to participate more in National School Sport Competitions				
5. I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition				

SECTION D: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In your own opinion what appropriate ways would you recommend to improve National School Sport Competitions with regards to cheating?

……

……

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Name of Institution.....

SECTION A: WEIGHT REGULATION

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement by choosing from the **numbers1-4**in the table. **Note**: 1= **strongly disagree**, 2= **disagree,** 3 = **agree,**4 = **strongly agree**

Item	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I agree that weight and facial screening should be used to determine who performs in national school sport competitions ii. Give reason(s) for your answer…… …… ……				
2. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition prevents cheating				
3. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition creates an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				
4. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected students positively				
5. Weight Regulation has brought positive impact in National School Sport Competition				
6. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition create an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				

5. What is your own experience and opinions of weight regulation?

……

……

SECTION C: SCREENING OF ATHLETES IN NATIONAL SCHOOL SPORT COMPETITION

1. I am usually screened medically before participating National School Sport competitions?

(a) Strongly disagree [ ] (b) Disagree [ ] (c) Fairly agree [ ]

(d) Agree [ ] (e) Strongly agree [ ]

2. If yes, who conducted the medical screening?

(a) The sport authority [ ] (b) Myself [ ]

3. I have ever been disqualified based on medical screening?

(a) Strongly disagree [ ] (b) Disagree [ ] (c) Fairly agree [ ]

(d) Agree [ ] (e) Strongly agree [ ]

SECTION D: ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement by choosing from the **numbers1-4**in the table. **Note**: 1= **strongly disagree**, 2= **disagree,** 3 = **agree,** 4 = **strongly agree**

Item	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. i. Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition has affected my attitude towards sport ii. Indicate the kind of influence it has on your attitude: **Negative** [ ]**Positive** [ ]				
2. I personally recommend the use of Weight Regulation in National School Sport Competition				
3. Weight screening in National Schools‟ Sports Competition creates an opportunity for the less privileged ones when it comes to the problem of weight				

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In your own opinion what appropriate ways would you recommend to improve National School Sport Competitions with regards to cheating?

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……

……

THANK YOU