**POLI 343: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL RESEARCH**

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**MAIN CAMPUS**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL TOPIC;**

***THE IMPACT OF FREE SHS ON THE GHANIAN ECONOMY***

**INTRODUCTION**

The concept of free education in Ghana can be traced back several decades. In the early years of Ghana's independence in the 1950s and 1960s, the government of Ghana introduced free education policies aimed at increasing access to education for all Ghanaians. These policies included the provision of free primary education, and later free secondary education for students who passed their Common Entrance Examinations. However, these policies were not sustainable due to economic challenges and other factors. In the 1990s, the government of Ghana under President Jerry Rawlings introduced the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy aimed at providing free education to all Ghanaians at the primary and junior high school levels. In 2008, the government of Ghana under President John Agyekum Kufuor introduced the Progressively Free Secondary Education (PFSE) policy, which aimed to provide free education for all eligible students at the secondary level. However, the implementation of the policy was limited due to financial constraints and other challenges. In 2017, the government of Ghana under President Nana Akufo-Addo introduced the Free SHS policy aimed at providing free education to all eligible students at the secondary level. The policy covers tuition fees, textbooks, and other essential fees, making secondary education more accessible to Ghanaians. The policy has been met with mixed reactions, with some hailing it as a significant step towards providing access to education for all Ghanaians, while others have criticized it as being poorly planned and implemented. The concept of free education in Ghana dates back several decades, and the Free SHS policy is the latest iteration of this idea. While there have been challenges in its implementation, the policy has made significant progress towards increasing access to education for all Ghanaians. This proposal aims to assess show the free SHS policy has affected the Ghanaian economy. To comprehend the effects of the free SHS policy, this study will make extensive use of reviews of literature, surveys, interviews and case study to understand the impact of free SHS on the Ghanian economy.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Before the introduction of the Free SHS policy, access to secondary education in Ghana was limited due to financial barriers. Many parents could not afford the high cost of tuition and other expenses associated with secondary education, which led to low enrollment rates and high levels of inequality in access to education. The Free SHS policy was designed to address these challenges and provide equal opportunities for all students to access secondary education, regardless of their socioeconomic background. The policy has been widely praised for its potential to improve education outcomes and reduce poverty and inequality in Ghana. Since the introduction of the policy, there has been a significant increase in enrollment rates in secondary education, particularly among students from low-income backgrounds. According to the Ghana Education Service (2021), enrollment in public senior high schools increased from 819,177 in 2016/2017 to 1,199,830 in 2019/2020, representing a 46.4% increase. Despite the successes of the Free SHS policy, there have been some challenges in its implementation. These challenges include a shortage of qualified teachers, overcrowding in schools, and inadequate infrastructure and resources in some schools. These challenges have had a negative impact on the quality of education and could potentially undermine the long-term effectiveness of the policy. The Free SHS policy has the potential to improve education outcomes and reduce poverty and inequality in Ghana. However, there is a need for continued investment in education infrastructure and resources, as well as policies to address the challenges faced in the implementation of the policy.

**RESEARCH METHODODLOGY**

A qualitative approach will be used in this proposed study. The impact of free SHS program will mainly be assessed using a case study approach.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

One major concern with the implementation of the Free SHS policy in Ghana is the potential negative impact on the quality of education. A study by Ablo and Dzibordi (2019) found that the Free SHS policy has resulted in an increase in student enrollment, but has also led to overcrowding in classrooms, shortage of teaching staff, and inadequate infrastructure and resources, which could negatively affect the quality of education. Despite the increase in access to education for students from low-income backgrounds, there are concerns that the Free SHS policy may not have been implemented at the right time due to the current state of the economy.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STUDY**

This proposal would require a comprehensive analysis of the policy's effects on various sectors. The study would involve an analysis of the education sector, including enrollment rates and availability of resources. The economic implications of the policy would be analyzed. The study would also evaluate the challenges facing the implementation of the policy, including inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of teachers. The study would involve a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys and interviews with stakeholders such as parents, teachers, policymakers, and business leaders. Overall, the study would provide insights into the policy's effects on various sectors, identify challenges, and provide recommendations for addressing them.

**THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research is underpinned by the crowding-out effect theory (Akuffo, A. K., &Alhassan, A.L. (2019). This theory suggests that government subsidies can displace private investment and reduce competition in the education market, leading to a decline in the quality of education. Additionally, the implementation of Free SHS may create a burden on the government budget, leading to inflation, increased debt, and other economic challenges. Another is the human capital theory (Becker, G. S. (1964). This theory also suggests that education is a form of investment that generates economic returns by increasing the productivity and earning potential of individuals. In the context of Free SHS, the policy has the potential to increase human capital, leading to increased productivity and economic growth.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To examine the economic impact of free SHS policy in Ghana, asses public spending priorities and evaluate the trade-offs between short-term benefits and long-term cost for sustainable economic growth.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

1.How has the free SHS policy impacted the quality of education in Ghana?

2.How has the policy affected economic growth and government’s finance?

3.How has Ghana’s labor force been affected by the free SHS policy?

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research will provide insights into the policy’s effectiveness in promoting access to quality education and its implication for socioeconomic development. It will inform policy makers on ways to address existing challenges and improve the policy’s outcomes for sustainable development.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

This study will adhere to ethical standards such as inform consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants will be informed about the study's objectives, and their consent will be sought before data collection.

**LIMITATIONS**

One of the limitations of this study is the potential for social desirability bias in the survey responses. Participants may provide socially desirable responses instead of their true opinions. Another limitation is the potential for selection bias in the sample. The selected schools may not be representative of all senior high schools in the country.

**CONCLUSION**

The goal of this research proposal is to assess how the free SHS policy has affected Ghana’s economy, educational system, rate of economic growth and government finance and labor market, and for the purpose of determining the impact of free the SHS policy on the Ghanaian economy, the proposed research would make use of surveys, interviews, and a thorough assessment of the literature.

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