**Climate Change Paper**

GREV 701-61 (Wednesday)

J. Scott Copley

October 7, 2020

 Generation Z, often called the iGen, Homeland Generation, Digital Natives, or even Gen Tech, has been immersed in technology and global awareness unlike any previous generation. Born between 1996-2012, Gen Z’s awareness of terrorism, war, hunger, racial and gender inequalities has been deeper than any previous generation in history. This generation of extremely diverse young people exists in a dichotomy between being considered among the most sheltered, least resilient generations in history and being deeply concerned about the greater world in which they reside. Gen Z’ers care about the human condition, ethics, and social justice. Given what we know about this generation, how are they impacted by environmental concerns such as anthropogenic climate change?

Some questions to be answered could be:

* What does this generation understand about history and causes of climate change?
* Among global concerns, how would Gen Z rank climate change?
* How may climate change affect safe food supplies, clean water, global ecosystems and more?
* Should governments and corporations address climate change, and what roles might each play?
* What does sustainability mean, and how could it be an interdisciplinary concept?

The outcome of this study could be important to schools contemplating whether or not to further infuse climate change and sustainability into their curricula.

Copley, p. 2

Assuming IRB approval has been obtained, a three-semester study could be conducted by offering multiple sections of a course to college freshmen and sophomores at a mid-sized university covering climate change, sustainability and other environmental issues. This paper also assumes that the steps required to develop a course, gain university approval and have such a course placed into the course catalog will also have also been completed.

Using a qualitative method, researchers would administer a questionnaire to course pre-registrants at the beginning of a semester. Researchers would also conduct interviews with participants to gain a more in-depth perspective regarding participants’ viewpoints and attitudes on climate change and sustainability. At the end of the semester, researchers would follow up with participants through surveys and interviews to learn if and how participants’ perspectives have shifted regarding climate change. A sample size of between 800-1,000 students is imagined for this study. Researchers could also include surveys and interviews with instructors of the course to gauge their perceptions of the students at the beginning of the course, and then again at the end of the course.

 A review of the literature would begin by defining the search terminology to be used and growing the search terminology based upon continued literature reviews. Because in-depth research regarding Generation Z is only now emerging, a great deal of the literature review will likely be derived from journal articles, conference presentations, etc. Research will also center upon current issues in anthropogenic climate change and sustainability, as researchers work to understand if climate change and the views of Generation Z is a viable area to study. It will also be important for researchers to understand the issues of climate change so they will be able to design appropriate survey and interview tools.