



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ESL UNDERGRADUATES' KNOWLEDGE AND PATTERNS OF
PLAGIARISM IN ACADEMIC WRITING, AND UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY POLICIES IN MALAYSIA***

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SAMANEH ZANGENEHMADAR

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

November 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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November 2014

Chairperson: Professor Tan Bee Hoon, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

The increasing prevalence of plagiarism has recently become a serious issue in academia. To prevent plagiarism, it is necessary to understand students' knowledge about plagiarism, what they perceive to be the factors contributing to plagiarism, their knowledge of the conventions of writing, and university policies on academic integrity. This study was undertaken with four objectives in mind: (1) to investigate the extent of the awareness of plagiarism among Malaysian undergraduates; (2) to identify patterns of plagiarism in students' academic writing; (3) to compare the level of students' plagiarism based on the Internet and printed sources of information; and (4) to examine the integrity policies of top five Malaysian universities.

This descriptive study used a mixed-method design to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. To investigate students' knowledge of plagiarism, pre-determined questionnaires were randomly distributed among 400 undergraduates at a local public university. Moreover, to identify the existing plagiarism patterns and examine the level of plagiarism in students' writing, essays were randomly collected from 70 students of the 400 surveyed participants. Half of the 70 students (n=35) were randomly given two printed articles on global warming to read, and based on their reading, they constructed an essay of about 500 words by typing it using MS Word. The remaining half of the students (n=35) were emailed the Internet URL links of the two sources (of the same articles) and given instructions to write the 500-word essays on the same topic. The essays (two sets of 35 essays) were checked using Turnitin, a text-matching software. The originality reports of students' essays produced by Turnitin were then checked against the original sources to code various instances of plagiarism. In addition, to investigate the integrity policies of top five universities in Malaysia, the documents were sourced from the websites of the relevant universities and coded based on core elements of an exemplary academic integrity policy.

The results of the study indicated that the majority of the students are more aware about definitions rather than forms of plagiarism. They mentioned the ease of copying and pasting from the Internet as the most common contributing factor to plagiarism. The findings of the study also showed that the higher the students' language proficiency is, the higher is their level of knowledge of plagiarism. In addition, students from the field of social science have more knowledge about plagiarism than those from the Pure Sciences. Direct copying with no reference and quotation marks is the most frequent plagiarism pattern in students' writing. Plagiarism patterns in essays based on the Internet and printed sources are found to be significantly different. Similarity indices of academic essays using Internet sources are also significantly higher than those of printed sources. Finally, the results from the investigation of Malaysian university integrity policies indicated that policies of university A, B, and D are easy to locate and access. Universities A, B, and C apply both punitive and educative approaches to address plagiarism. They also provide a clear outline of the responsibility for academic integrity which must be borne by the students and the staff of the university.

The study recommends that lecturers need to incorporate specific instructions about citation practices and referencing skills in ESL writing courses to reduce the occurrence of plagiarism among students. The study provides universities with new insights to highlight the exemplar of five core elements in Malaysian university policies.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi Keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGETAHUAN DAN POLA PLAGIARISME MAHASISWA ESL DALAM
PENULISAN AKADEMIK, DAN DASAR INTEGRITI AKADEMIK
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Baru-baru ini amalan plagiarisme semakin meningkat hingga menjadi satu isu yang serius dalam akademia. Dalam usaha mengelakkan plagiarisme, kita perlu memahami pengetahuan pelajar tentang plagiarisme, tanggapan mereka tentang faktor yang menyumbang kepada plagiarisme, pengetahuan mereka tentang tatapenulisan yang lazim, dan polisi universiti tentang integriti akademik. Kajian ini telah dijalankan dengan empat objektif sasaran: (1) mengkaji tahap kesedaran terhadap plagiarisme dalam kalangan pelajar prasiswazah di Malaysia; (2) mengenal pasti corak plagiarisme dalam penulisan akademik pelajar; (3) membandingkan tahap plagiarisme pelajar dengan berdasarkan dua sumber maklumat, iaitu sumber bercetak dan sumber Internet; dan (4) meneliti polisi integriti lima universiti terkemuka di Malaysia.

Kajian deskriptif ini menggunakan kaedah eklektik untuk menganalisis kedua-dua jenis data, iaitu data kualitatif dan data kuantitatif. Untuk mengkaji pengetahuan mahasiswa tentang plagiarisme, soal selidik berstruktur telah diedarkan secara rawak kepada 400 orang mahasiswa sebuah universiti awam. Untuk mengenal pasti corak serta tahap amalan plagiarisme dalam penulisan akademik mereka, 70 orang pelajar ESL telah dipilih secara rawak daripada 400 peserta kajian untuk menghasilkan dua set esei. Bagi set pertama, separuh daripada 70 mahasiswa (n=35) diberi secara rawak dua artikel bercetak tentang pemanasan global untuk dibaca, dan berdasarkan pembacaan itu mereka diarahkan untuk menyediakan esei sepanjang lebih kurang 500 perkataan dengan bertaip menggunakan MS Word. Bagi set kedua, baki separuh lagi pelajar sampel (n=35) die-melkan URL internet untuk mencapai dua sumber (artikel yang sama), dan diarahkan untuk membaca dan seterusnya menulis esei dengan tajuk dan panjang yang sama. Kedua-dua set esei (setiap set 35 esei) disemak dengan menggunakan Turnitin, iaitu perisian pepadanan teks. Laporan ketulenan esei pelajar yang dikeluarkan oleh Turnitin kemudiannya disemak dengan berdasarkan sumber asal untuk

mengesan pelbagai unsur plagiarisme. Di samping itu, untuk meneliti polisi integriti lima universiti terkemuka di Malaysia, dokumen berkaitan dimuat turun daripada laman sesawang universiti berkenaan dan dipetik dengan berdasarkan unsur teras bagi percontohan model polisi integriti akademik.

Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa majoriti pelajar memiliki pemahaman yang sederhana tentang plagiarisme. Mereka menyatakan bahawa perihal mudah untuk memetik dan menampal bahan daripada internet menjadi faktor paling lumrah yang menyebabkan plagiarisme. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa semakin tinggi kecekapan bahasa pelajar maka semakin tinggi pemahaman mereka tentang plagiarisme. Di samping itu, pelajar dalam bidang sains sosial terbukti memiliki pengetahuan tentang plagiarisme yang lebih baik daripada pelajar sains tulen. Corak plagiarisme yang paling kerap ditemui dalam penulisan pelajar ialah penyalinan langsung bahan tanpa rujukan dan tanda petikan. Namun, corak plagiarisme antara esei yang berasaskan sumber internet dengan esei berasaskan sumber bercetak didapati sangat berbeza. Unsur kemiripan dengan sumber asal dalam penulisan esei berasaskan internet jauh lebih tinggi berbanding dengan esei berasaskan bahan bercetak. Akhir sekali, hasil penelitian terhadap polisi integriti universiti di Malaysia menunjukkan bahawa polisi universiti A, B, dan D mudah dikesan dan dicapai. Universiti A, B, dan C menggunakan strategi pendidikan dan hukuman untuk menangani masalah plagiarisme. Mereka juga memberikan garis panduan yang jelas tentang pertanggungjawaban terhadap integriti akademik yang harus dipikul oleh pelajar dan staf universiti berkenaan.

Kajian ini mencadangkan agar pensyarah memasukkan pelajaran khusus tentang amalan sitasi dan kemahiran membuat rujukan dalam kursus penulisan ESL demi mengurangkan amalan plagiarisme dalam kalangan pelajar. Kajian ini juga memberikan pencerahan baharu kepada universiti agar percontohan bagi lima unsur teras dalam polisi universiti Malaysia dititikberatkan.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 27/11/2014 to conduct the final examination of Samaneh Zangenehmadar on her thesis entitled "ESL undergraduates knowledge and patterns of plagiarism in academic writing, and university academic integrity policies in Malaysia" in accordance with Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Plagiarism is considered a serious ethical problem in higher education. The word 'plagiarism' can be traced to *plagiary* meaning 'literary theft'. In Greek, the word *plagiârius* means 'kidnapper' or 'literary thief', and *plagium* means 'kidnapping' (Barnhart, 1995). Plagiarism, as a type of breach of integrity, is stealing and presenting the ideas or words of others as one's own or taking original text without acknowledging the reference source (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2004).

Plagiarism can take several forms: Sometimes, a written research paper is bought from a research service, or students submit each other's work with or without the original students' knowledge, or a student submits someone else's paper and presents it as his/her own. Plagiarism may be verbatim copying with appropriate acknowledgement but no quotation marks to show that the material is paraphrased. In addition, plagiarism is paraphrasing material from one or two original sources without proper documentation (Park, 2003). Therefore, plagiarism is common and may occur in different forms in academic writing.

1.1.1 Academic Writing

A key element in academic writing is the students' ability to use source texts. Students are supposed to learn academic writing skills and to use and present cited materials in writing. They need to know how to read the sources, identify the relevant information, and effectively synthesize those materials in their writing. Attribution of original source is one of the serious issues in non-native writing in English. In academic writing the facts presented are attached to those who presented the facts. English teachers focus on the attribution and referencing procedure may cover academic writing because academic writing is the creation of an author's identity as the presentation of fact (Scollon, 1995). Moreover, many writing manuals emphasize accurate referencing for students of higher education in order to avoid plagiarism. Instructions are provided for students on referencing, quoting sources, using direct quotations, paraphrasing, and writing a consistent reference list (Moore, 2014; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004).

The ability to write using material gathered from sources is one of the most common and challenging issues, specifically as a second language (L2) writer (Hirvela & Du, 2013).

ESL students may lack the adequate linguistic skills necessary to read and comprehend sources in English. Thus, they have difficulties in incorporating those ideas from reading sources and summarizing these in their own words (Currie, 1998). Due to the language barriers faced by ESL students and their uncertainty about appropriate source use, researchers have found that these students may be more susceptible to plagiarism (Marshall & Garry, 2006; Pecorari, 2003).

Many studies about using sources in L2 writing revealed that difficulties related to language may lead to inadvertent plagiarism. As a result of inadequate linguistic resources and reading skills, some writers make a few small changes to the original source and present the texts as paraphrases or summaries. Teachers consider the limited changes of original texts as plagiarism. Therefore, widespread pedagogical strategies rather than punishment are needed to improve writing skills in L2 students (Pecorari & Petrić, 2014).

Limited referencing skills and L2 resources, lack of knowledge about citing conventions, and uncertainty about what constitutes common knowledge lead to unintentional plagiarism in academic writing among students (Currie, 1998; Errey, 2002; Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Howard, 1999; Li & Casanave, 2012; Marshall & Garry, 2006; Pecorari, 2003; Pecorari & Petrić, 2014; Shi, 2010). Plagiarism is deemed a kind of crime in the academic context (Bouville, 2008). As for the penalties in the western academic context, Hsu (2003) stated that plagiarism is viewed a serious transgression of academic integrity and students' plagiarism may result in them failing a course or being expelled from school. In addition, plagiarism has some negative consequences since it is unethical behavior and is seen as copying the academic work of others.

1.1.2 Negative Consequences of Plagiarism

Copying the work of others without proper acknowledgment is an unethical behavior that may lead to harmful effects. First of all, plagiarism hurts the plagiarized authors. In this case, plagiarized authors may lose credit or rewards because no one recognizes them as the original authors and they cannot achieve what they deserve for their work (Bouville, 2008).

The second negative effect of plagiarism is unfair benefits for plagiarists. The plagiarist becomes famous for the ideas that are not his or hers and receives credit for the work of others. Plagiarism is similar to commercial crime when a famous brand is reproduced but with lower quality. Plagiarism also has some negative consequences for readers who cannot restructure the ideas in a way that can be made public (Maddox, 1995). Moreover, when readers come across documents with no citations or acknowledgements, they are unable to access further related sources (Snapper, 1999).

Finally, plagiarism influences trust. Trust is a strongly significant factor in research and education that will be damaged by plagiarism (Hinman, 2002) because the plagiarist is viewed as an unreliable person (Bouville, 2008). In the current study, although students' copying of words or paragraphs without proper attribution is not so problematic in their learning process, teachers may not be able to assess their real achievement. Teachers as readers of students' essays may not be able to realize students' problems in terms of source use in academic writing. In addition, plagiarism affects trust between teachers and students in educational contexts, and this may affect students' learning and evaluation of their learning. Students who plagiarize may receive unfair credits from the teachers for the work that is not his/hers. Therefore, students may not go for learning or creating their own words. Moreover, they do not learn how to reorganize or paraphrase others' words without losing the main idea. Lack of students' knowledge of concept and forms of plagiarism provide the opportunity for students to apply original authors' ideas without proper acknowledgement. Therefore, to prevent plagiarism and its negative effects in academic context, universities need to develop and implement relevant integrity policies for plagiarism prevention.

1.1.3 Academic Integrity Policies

Academic integrity deals with students' academic misconduct and plagiarism. To develop integrity in the college context, it requires the awareness, commitment, and contribution of all parties involved, such as faculty, students, and executors. Faculty members have more direct contact with students; thus, they have more opportunities to educate students about academic dishonesty and to detect academic integrity violations (Bleeker, 2007).

In some institutions, there are no policies pertaining to academic integrity; therefore, individual faculty members may decide how to deal with students' breaches of academic integrity. In contrast, some other institutions apply very developed and efficient systems such as student-run honor codes which reduce academic dishonesty among students (Drinan & Gallant, 2008).

Furthermore, an academic integrity policy should first state why the values of academic integrity are observed and academic dishonesty is punished, so that all members of the institution are made aware of the policy. Therefore, they are more likely to follow the rules when they understand the reasons for them (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). In addition, many college students nowadays not only often fail to value integrity, they also sometimes criticize it. Therefore, students and faculty members must be reminded that dishonesty is unacceptable behavior and the institution will take all necessary actions as a deterrence against academic dishonesty (Carter, 1996).

It is important to introduce the institution's ethical principles and to explain the academic integrity policy to new students and their parents during the year (Lathrop & Foss, 2005).

The range of academic integrity systems needs to be comprehended to increase the awareness and effectiveness of staff's challenge with plagiarism (Drinan & Gallant, 2008). In addition, to establish an efficient institutional policy, an academic integrity policy must explicitly identify the responsibilities of students, faculty members, and administrators. The academic integrity policy should also remind the students of their obligation in the development of academic honesty (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2001). The difficulties that students face in academic writing and the lack of properly established integrity policies lead to plagiarism among students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Plagiarism, as a form of academic misconduct, has now become an issue of concern in the education system. Although plagiarism is considered an academic offence with severe penalties, a large number of students still plagiarize, mostly intentionally (Mahmood, 2009). In addition, over the past 60 years, numerous studies have been carried out on the percentages of students who cheat and engage in other forms of academic misconduct. In other words, the increasing prevalence of academic integrity breaches has been a serious issue for some time and currently, is more worrying than ever for the higher education system (Henderson, 2007).

These debates imply a lack of students' knowledge of plagiarism and the relevant contributing factors, especially among Asian students (ESL/EFL) who are not familiar with the rules and academic writing conventions (Dawson, 2004; Lahur, 2004; Song-Turner, 2008; Yusof & Masrom, 2011). Although some studies have been conducted in Malaysia (Smith, Ghazali, & Minhad, 2007), there is still a lack of research about Malaysian students' knowledge of plagiarism. In addition, the findings of related studies conducted in other Asian countries such as China and Japan (Hu & Lei, 2012) Deckert, 1993; Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Rinnert and Kobayashi, (2009) are not generalizable to Malaysian students due to two important reasons. First, most students in some Asian countries such as Japan and China are monolingual (Chinese or Japanese), whereas most students in Malaysia are multilingual (Malay, Chinese and Tamil). Second, the status of English in these mentioned Asian countries is EFL while English is considered as ESL in the Malaysian context. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more research in Malaysian contexts to investigate students' knowledge of plagiarism and their perception of various contributing factors to plagiarism in L2 writing.

Some studies (LoCastro & Masuko, 2002; Marshall & Garry, 2006) indicate that plagiarism is more common among students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL) compared to English as L1 students as they are less competent in English to use the source properly (Campbell, 1990). Paraphrasing is also difficult for ESL students because they are not proficient enough in English to reformulate the structure of a sentence without losing the main idea (Devlin & Gray, 2007). ESL students tend just to copy because of their lack of language proficiency and therefore their inability to

express their ideas by themselves. They may tend to copy because otherwise they do not know how to write or convey the meaning.

Therefore, it is necessary to look at students' essays to examine the kinds of plagiarism patterns in students' writing that would inform teachers better about how to teach writing in a way that prevent plagiarism among students. In addition, previous studies have examined the appropriateness of intertextuality and source use in students' writing particularly L2 learners of Western and Asian countries. However, research which examines the effect of source mode (printed or online) on students' level and pattern of plagiarism in Malaysian ESL context is scant.

Thus, it is important to investigate how source mode is related to Malaysian students' pattern and extent of plagiarism. To overcome this problem, it may be crucial to specifically investigate students' knowledge of writing rules and to discover what difficulties they face in source use that contribute to plagiarism patterns in academic writing.

Another area of concern is how universities address plagiarism. There is a domino effect that when a university does not have or does not care to have an integrity policy, the teachers and students will also not care about plagiarism. Just looking at students' knowledge of plagiarism is not enough in plagiarism prevention because there is a link between how serious universities are in implementing the policy and whether or not the students take it seriously. The university integrity policy is supposed to ensure that all academic staff and students move in the right direction. So there is a question here to what the policy really does. Therefore, this study fills in the gap to investigate whether there is a link between university policy and students' practice.

In addition, although a number of research studies have examined university integrity policies and approaches for plagiarism prevention in universities of Western countries (Born, 2003; Bretag et al., 2011; O'Regan, 2006; Sutherland-Smith, 2010, 2011; Sutherland-Smith & Pecorari, 2010), most of the previous studies have not provided enough details about the content and essential core elements of an efficient university integrity policy. Of particular interest is the absence of research involving integrity policies of Asian universities such as Malaysian universities. With regard to this, an investigation of the university integrity policies in Asian context, and more specifically in Malaysia, is needed to highlight and improve the essential elements in integrity policies on plagiarism deterrence.

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore ESL undergraduates' knowledge of plagiarism and to identify patterns of plagiarism in students' academic writing as well as to examine the integrity policies of five Malaysian universities. This study was specifically undertaken (1) to investigate the perception of plagiarism among Malaysian undergraduates, (2) to examine the relationship between students' knowledge of plagiarism and their year of study, field of study, and English proficiency level, (3) to identify plagiarism patterns in students' academic writing, (4) to compare the level of students' plagiarism based on Internet and printed sources of information, and (5) to examine the integrity policies on plagiarism detection and prevention in five Malaysian universities. Based on the above objectives, the following research questions (RQs) were formulated:

1. How do ESL undergraduates perceive plagiarism, academic policy, and other contributing factors that influence students' performance in academic writing?
2. How does students' knowledge of plagiarism vary with year of study, field of study, and English proficiency level?
3. What are the patterns of plagiarism in undergraduates' academic essays when using printed and online sources of information?
4. How is the level of plagiarism among the undergraduates related to their use of printed and online sources of information?
5. How do five Malaysian universities approach plagiarism as reflected in their university integrity policies?

These research questions are interlinked because they are all about plagiarism. The first research question looks at students' knowledge of plagiarism, and if students have knowledge about plagiarism, whether that shows in their actual writing. Therefore, that leads the study to examine the plagiarism patterns in students' academic essays. Then according to the results of the questionnaire on students' understanding of plagiarism and their plagiarism patterns, the level of plagiarism can be determined in their writing. Students' knowledge, patterns and levels of plagiarism may be a reflection of the integrity policies practiced by the university. As Imran (2010) argued, if there are strict rules, punishments or penalties to deal with plagiarism, students would be forced to produce original ideas and avoid plagiarism. This leads to the fourth research question about integrity policies of Malaysian universities. The following section presents the theoretical framework of this study on the issue of plagiarism.

1.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Six ethical theories (Deontology, Cultural relativism, Utilitarianism, Rational self-interest, Machiavellianism, and Situational ethics) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007), and four approaches (punitive, cultural, pedagogical, and holistic) are applied in this study to guide the

investigation on plagiarism among Malaysian undergraduates. The theories and approaches are discussed in detail below, along with how each theory and approach is related to plagiarism detection and prevention.

1.4.1 Ethical Theories

Six ethical theories are used to explain whether students think plagiarism is right or wrong and why they commit plagiarism. The ethical theories and relevant strategies to respond to students' plagiarism under each theory are discussed.

Deontology Theory: The most well-known advocate of deontological ethics was the great German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). According to the deontological ethics presented by Kant, all human beings have unconditional and fundamental duties that are obligatory and which do not require any additional motivation (Tännsjö, 2013). Under deontology, although plagiarism is morally wrong, an offender steals and presents someone else's work as his or her own. According to this theory, students commit plagiarism if they misunderstand or are unaware that plagiarism constitutes a wrong behavior (e.g., I didn't know what plagiarism was/I didn't know that plagiarism was wrong) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

To address the issue of students committing plagiarism due to the lack of knowledge and clear guidelines about the concept of plagiarism, institutions need to create an honor code and to establish ethical rules to define what constitutes plagiarism. Moreover, appropriate citation and referencing techniques need to be taught and professors should present proper documentation in their materials as well. Further, challenging, specific and different assignments should be given to students every semester. The faculty can use anti-plagiarism software as an educational tool to teach students about plagiarism (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Cultural Relativism: This view holds that in order to understand actions, beliefs, values, and norms, it is required that they are considered within their own cultural contexts (Sobo & Loustaunau, 2010). Individual cultures affect the notion of ethical or unethical behaviors and people from different nations have distinct views about ethical standards (Robertson & Fadil, 1999). Under this theory, students focus on how plagiarism is acceptable in their culture (e.g., It is allowed in the country where I come from) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

For example, although plagiarism is considered one of the worst crimes committed by students in the western context, students in non-western contexts do not have these views. They view plagiarism as culturally acceptable behavior in many countries; thus, ESL or EFL instructors of students from non-western countries need to consider the

students' backgrounds and cultural values. However, if the instructors know that their students really accept plagiarism in their culture, they do not need to change the students' views nor spend time explaining why the students must avoid plagiarism (Wheeler, 2009).

There are various cultural perspectives on plagiarism and some cultures, such as Asian cultures, may not be aware of the Western concept of plagiarism. In particular, the majority of researchers who consider cultural perspectives focused specifically on the culture of Chinese students (Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Hayes & Introna, 2006; Hu & Lei, 2012; McGowan & Lightbody, 2008; Shi, 2004; Sowden, 2005; Sutherland-Smith, 2005).

Moreover, due to today's electronic world, many L2 students see the Internet as a source of free and accessible information from which they can borrow the words of others (Sutherland-Smith, 2005). Plagiarism may be a cultural or language obstacle for L2 writers. Having an understanding of these two barriers of plagiarism as two distinct problems should help L2 students to be aware of various cultural influences on what proper citation behavior is as they develop their writing skills (Shi, 2006). Under the Cultural Relativism theory, students believe that plagiarizing is an acceptable behavior. Therefore, to prevent plagiarism due to cultural differences, it should be clarified why plagiarism is considered wrong behavior and what constitutes plagiarism. Professors thus need to define plagiarism as wrong behavior and also establish the principles to prevent plagiarism. In addition, proper referencing techniques and practices should be taught and relevant software, as a pedagogical tool, needs to be used for plagiarism detection and deterrence (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Utilitarianism Theory: The theory was developed as a main ethical theory by Jeremy Bentham, a British lawmaker, to encourage decision-making for the common good rather than for the benefit of any particular social class when laws were made (Sullivan & Pecorino, 2002). In this view, all human beings have exactly the same value and individuals act to provide the highest level of happiness for the highest number of people. The benefit of the action and overall pleasure must be maximized (Sullivan & Pecorino, 2002). Based on this reasoning, students' plagiarize if the plagiarism consequences are good and they believe that they achieve more by doing so (Granitz & Loewy, 2007). In other words, one can learn better or get higher grades by plagiarizing and nobody gets hurt.

In response to the above reasoning, professors should test students on plagiarized texts to show them the lack of learning. They should also ensure that students know that they can be easily caught if they plagiarize as there are anti-plagiarism tools as well as various other means of detecting plagiarism. To emphasize the negative consequences of plagiarism, the faculty must seek new technological resources and apply penalties (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Rational Self-interest Theory: The theory is also called Social Contract theory and was first defended by Thomas Hobbes on the premise that a person's moral duties depend on an agreement among the members of a society to form the community in which they live (Friend, 2004). People exchange value for value and one acts to benefit oneself without any sacrifice. In this approach, plagiarism occurs if plagiarists feel that they are engaging in a fair exchange (e.g., I'm publicizing the author's work/The teacher does not put much effort into this, so why should I?) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

The measures taken to combat plagiarism concentrate on the way plagiarism is considered as an unfair exchange for both the original authors and plagiarists. In other words, the focus should be on the negative consequences of plagiarism for the original author. Professors should also use the developed copyright laws pertaining to the use of Internet materials and explain to the students that similar essays bought from the Internet are easily detected. Moreover, the efforts of professors in class should be emphasized and investigated (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Machiavellianism Theory: The concept of Machiavellianism (ethical egoism) is named after the Florentine political philosopher and statesman, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1572), who held that people act based on their own interests and sacrifice others for their own benefit. Under this theory, the plagiarists believe that they can escape from plagiarism and instructors cannot blame or catch them (e.g., Look how clever I am, I can plagiarize, do well, and not get caught). If they are caught, they blame others (e.g., It's the teacher's fault) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

According to Machiavellianism theory, students think that professors cannot catch them when they plagiarize. They deny the transgression and also scold others for misunderstanding their actions. The responses to this belief of the students focus on the students' knowledge of what plagiarism is. Therefore, proper referencing skills need to be taught to assure students that the plagiarism incidents can be easily detected and the plagiarist can be caught. Further, the professors use an anti-plagiarism tool, utilize various plagiarism detection techniques, follow the regulations for penalizing plagiarism and implement severe penalties if students plagiarize. Finally, institutions need to establish ethical conventions and principles to avoid academic dishonesty (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Situational ethics Theory: A contingency framework of ethics was introduced in 1985 that posited individual factors (knowledge, values, attitudes), social and organizational factors (significant others, opportunity, rewards factors), and environmental criteria affect an individual's ethical or unethical behavior (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985). According to this theory on ethics, students commit plagiarism due to situational and external elements that are beyond their control. A situational factor is the students' reason for plagiarizing the work of others (e.g., My kid was sick) (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Some students mention circumstances which are beyond their control as the contributing factor to their acts of plagiarism. Consequently, professors should impose severe punishments and they should make sure that students have adequate knowledge about plagiarism. Students also need to be informed that all plagiarism incidents are treated equally regardless of any situational elements (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

Summary of Ethical Theories

It should be mentioned that deontology and cultural relativism theories explain why offenders may not be aware of plagiarism as transgression and they may not realize that they are doing anything wrong. The deontology theory explains that students plagiarize when they believe that engaging in plagiarism is correct and acceptable behavior. Students' plagiarism is inadvertent since they are unaware of plagiarism as wrong behavior and they do not have appropriate knowledge or adequate understanding about plagiarism. Therefore, instructors need to clarify plagiarism to students and teach them proper citation and referencing skills to increase their awareness of plagiarism.

Similarly, cultural relativism explains students' different cultural views on plagiarism. Under this theory, students are unaware of plagiarism as academic misconduct in their culture; thus, they commit plagiarism. Some Asian cultures are not familiar with citation conventions and plagiarism as a western concept. Accordingly, plagiarism needs to be defined as wrong behavior and students should be educated about appropriate techniques of source acknowledgement.

In contrast, Utilitarianism, Rational self-interest, Machiavellianism, and Situational ethics explain that students are aware of plagiarism as wrong behavior but it is rationalized away by the circumstances. In other words, although students believe that plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity, they plagiarize to deceive and cheat lecturers. They believe that certain circumstances and conditions are allowable for plagiarism (Granitz & Loewy, 2007). Thus, strict penalties are required to deal with plagiarism in order to address and reduce students' use of various circumstances as excuses for engaging in plagiarism.

In this study, the six ethical theories help to investigate students' common explanation for plagiarism and the responses instructors need to develop and follow to prevent students' plagiarism and to emphasize adequate learning. The relevant solutions recommended by ethical theories may help to improve awareness of various aspects of plagiarism in academic writing. Table 1.1 shows the six ethical theories as well as and students' interpretations and responses to each theory.

Table 1.1 Interpreting and responding to students' plagiarism based on ethical theories

Ethical theory	Interpretation	Response
Deontology	Although plagiarism is morally wrong, students plagiarize only if they misunderstand or are unaware of plagiarism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create ethical rules. • Teach and present citation and referencing techniques. • Assign various and specific assignments. • Use anti-plagiarism software.
Cultural Relativism	Students plagiarize because it is acceptable in their culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain plagiarism as wrong behavior. • Create integrity rules. • Teach citation techniques. • Apply anti-plagiarism software.
Utilitarianism	Students commit plagiarism if they see that the outcomes of plagiarism are good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize inadequate learning and other negative consequences of plagiarism. • Focus on teachers; observance of students • Enforce clear and severe penalties.
Rational self-interest	Plagiarists think that they engage in a fair exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight plagiarism as an unfair exchange for the main author. • Emphasize unfair exchange of plagiarism for the plagiarist. • Highlight professor's efforts.
Machiavellianism	Students think that it is alright to plagiarize if they can get away with it and they do not get caught.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach documentation techniques. • Explain the teachers' observance of students' work. • Establish and enforce clear and severe penalties.
Situational ethics	Students plagiarize because of circumstances beyond their control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply penalties • Establish ethical principles. • Establish and apply clear and strict penalties. • Follow zero tolerance approach.

Due to the occurrence of plagiarism among students, some approaches have been suggested to deal with the issue.

1.4.2 Approaches to Addressing Plagiarism

The challenge and opportunity involved in addressing plagiarism is emphasized by four different approaches: punitive, cultural, pedagogical, and holistic approaches.

Punitive Approach to Plagiarism Prevention

One approach to foster learning and plagiarism prevention is the punitive approach, with severe penalties for misconduct. This approach is usually not as effective as the encouragement of good practice by demonstrating appropriate behavior, regular practice and satisfying action. Some teachers consider that source acknowledgement practice needs to be learned just like other academic skills such as giving seminars or conducting experiments. Others view plagiarism as a serious offense deserving the most severe penalties. The punitive approach has more of a detrimental effect than beneficial consequences for students' learning. When teachers help students to learn instead of imposing unfair penalties, the students put more effort into their studies (Martin, 2004).

Cultural Approach to Plagiarism Prevention

People have various understanding about plagiarism across cultures. There is a general awareness of possible cultural differences in plagiarism concepts (Pennycook, 1994, 1996). Due to different perspectives on plagiarism, it is difficult for students from the Eastern cultures to understand the importance of people's ideas and the originality of others' works (Swearingen, 1999). In addition, cultural values seem to influence the education in China. For example, memory learning is emphasized, so students are likely to be rote learners and Chinese background students may copy others' words in their writing (Pennycook, 1996). Therefore, when Chinese students enter Western higher education institutions, it is difficult for them to report authors' words critically and to use their own voice (Hayes & Introna, 2005). Rote learning should be viewed as different cultural and linguistic practices, particularly in terms of paraphrasing. In addition, acceptability of plagiarism among students from China may be due to rote learning (Pennycook, 1996).

Lectures in China often teach based on the content of a textbook and students need to memorize the materials verbatim for exam. Therefore, most students are not expected to interpret or consult a number of sources (Hayes & Introna, 2005), and some of them may directly use the work of others without giving appropriate citation (Kirkpatrick & Yonglin, 2002). In fact, Chinese students consider using others' words as a form of respect and it is hard for them to change this cultural view (Pennycook, 1996).

In line with addressing plagiarism through various cultural views, Shi (2006) suggests that many students who speak English as a second language (L2) worry about being accused of copying. This is because the idea of plagiarism is an unfamiliar concept to them because they come from non-western background. Therefore, lecturers need to be aware of students' cultural challenges in terms of plagiarism and educate them to make appropriate choices in their writing and source citation (Shi, 2006).

In addition, it was suggested that instead of punishment, pedagogical strategies and proactive teaching are needed to prevent plagiarism in second-language academic writing (Pecorari, 2003). Pedagogical measures can also help students improve their knowledge about plagiarism prevention (Deckert, 1993). For instance, teachers can inform students about the consequences of plagiarism based on the institutional policies regarding penalties for plagiarism such as warning, course failure, and expulsion. Teachers can also discuss various notions of authorship across cultures. Also, instructors can help students to achieve comprehensive understanding about their writing tasks and contexts. Finally, university staff need to be aware of the different cultural attitudes toward textual borrowing so that they can address plagiarism from an inter-cultural perspective (Currie, 1998).

Pedagogical Approach to Plagiarism Prevention

The pedagogical approach refers to different strategies to address plagiarism and provide more opportunities to reduce and deter plagiarism among students. More specifically, to address plagiarism pedagogically an appropriate opportunity needs to be provided for all students especially ESL students to approach writing without the fear of punishment for the grammatical mistakes in their writing. This kind of fear and anxiety increases copying and plagiarism among students. Thus, students' mistakes are to be viewed as a developmental process that pedagogical measures should be taken to address them (Buranen, 1999).

From the perspective of the pedagogical approach, plagiarism should be viewed as mainly a developmental issue. The academic curriculum needs to consider referencing and the deep understanding of knowledge production (Angéllil-Carter, 2000). Therefore, a common definition of the concept of plagiarism should be discussed, and the written policy and guidelines of the institutions need to be improved. Moreover, academic literacy programme on referencing in academic writing should be developed, and the difficulties of developing one's text based on others' words should be highlighted. The academic literacy programme helps students to understand the construction of knowledge by emphasizing the role of author (Angéllil-Carter, 2000). Moreover, to address plagiarism among students, libraries can educate them appropriate textual borrowing by means of orientations, instruction, teaching reference rules, and web-based guides (Amsberry, 2009). Furthermore, to avoid unnecessary quotations, students must develop paraphrasing and summarizing skills. Learning of appropriate source use is a

developmental process that involves trial and error. In addition, students need to practice academic writing and citation skills in context without fear of being accused of plagiarism (Polio & Shi, 2012).

Also, some researchers (Belter & du Pré, 2009; Chao, Wilhelm, & Neureuther, 2009; McLafferty & Foust, 2004) emphasized explicit instructions on paraphrasing, citation practice, proper use of quotation in academic writing and plagiarism definitions are needed and instructors should emphasize the concepts that deal with plagiarism. Students need to view the plagiarism prevention software as a learning tool rather than be afraid of it. Therefore, institutions should ensure the accessibility and availability of useful detection and prevention tools and software (such as Google, Turnitin, and Plagiserve) for students to check the occurrence of Internet plagiarism in their writing (Fischer & Zigmond, 2011; McLafferty & Foust, 2004). Class discussion on the definition of plagiarism and how to quote and reference properly is another preventative approach that may be effective in plagiarism deterrence (Insley, 2011).

Ellery (2008b) and Divan, Bowman and Seabourne (2013) also address plagiarism in a meaningful way and suggest that giving support and constant feedback on students' work as well as imposing punishment are necessary from the beginning. Volkov, Volkov, Tedford and Branch (2011) mention that applying assessment items on plagiarism prevention and increasing students' understanding of what constitutes plagiarism will prevent plagiarism in students' written assessment. Formative assessment and the related feedback can also improve students' referencing skills, their understanding of plagiarism and their ability to recognize and avoid plagiarism in their writing. Dias and Bastos (2014) emphasize creativity and originality in learning instead of memorization and repetition, and McCabe and Pavela (2004) state that teachers need to encourage constant learning as an attractive and enjoyable experience and they find creative ways to explore interesting, and challenging questions.

In addition, to develop academic integrity, McCabe and Pavela (2004) emphasize the role of a teacher as a counselor and the faculty needs to help students to understand the appropriate application of the Internet and online resources to avoid cheating. Moreover, a student's responsibility to maintain academic integrity must be encouraged and clearly explained. In other words, the academic integrity standards need to be defined, implemented and shared as a responsibility with students. Assessment forms should also be fair and reasonable. In general, faculty members should observe and enforce academic integrity rules to prevent plagiarism among students. Finally, in spite of a faculty's primary role and an instructor's commitment in defining and protecting academic integrity (Belter & du Pré, 2009), it must be a shared responsibility and an essential value in real academic communities (McCabe & Pavela, 2004).

Landau, Druen, and Arcuri (2002) highlight that when students receive feedback on their knowledge of plagiarism and are exposed to examples of plagiarized text, they are more

able to detect plagiarism and less likely to plagiarize when paraphrasing. In particular, Fischer and Zigmond (2011) suggest that the writing task needs to be divided into more manageable steps. They suggest that an outline and an initial draft should first be submitted before the deadline in order to avoid plagiarism. Insley (2011) likewise emphasize that students submit the paper in a few stages to prevent plagiarism due to lack of time. Moreover, an initial draft of the paper helps students to identify plagiarism and make the necessary corrections before the final submission of their written work.

Sometimes, students intentionally commit plagiarism because they believe that plagiarism is an easy way to complete the assignments. Therefore, in this case, individuals need to understand that the institution takes plagiarism seriously (Insley, 2011). The researchers (Landau et al., 2002) found that punishment is the least effective method for detecting and reducing students' plagiarism. They also claimed that taking a proactive approach to reduce plagiarism is important since a sufficient and clear understanding of plagiarism may be developed in students. In addition, to reduce the level of Internet plagiarism in students' writing, students' awareness needs to be improved regarding the ethical use of online materials. The proper citation of Internet sources also needs to be taught and the importance of giving credit to the work of others should be explained (Baruchson-Arbib & Yaari, 2004).

In general, ESL students' interaction with more experienced students and instructors may help them to negotiate and co-construct their concepts of correct source use by working in their areas of proximal development. Student-student and student-instructor interaction are necessary for students to construct established definitions and beliefs of plagiarism (Evans & Youmans, 2000).

Holistic Approach to Plagiarism Prevention

Students' plagiarism is a complex issue that requires more than one response. The holistic institutional approach emphasizes a shared responsibility among the student, staff and the institution of learning. A major aspect of the holistic approach in dealing with plagiarism is to implement formative and constructive assessment.

In the holistic approach, students need to have the appropriate information and skills in academic learning. Approaches to curriculum design and assessment need to be developed to ensure that assessment does not encourage or reward plagiarism and but will focus on formative assessment to measure student learning. The holistic approach holds that institutional procedures and regulations must recognize that students are not adequately prepared when they progress to higher education and instructors need to ensure that students understand the appropriate conventions and practices in a western academic context (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006).

In addition, regulations are to be adhered to not just to punish the plagiarists, they are to be followed to prevent students from future plagiarism. The holistic approach involves determined roles and responsibilities for staff, students and institutions to review the quality of procedures to ensure that all the three elements of detection, regulations, and punishments are constantly performed and that none of them is more important than the other two elements (Macdonald & Carroll, 2006).

Detection procedures allow institutions consider assessment to reduce opportunities for plagiarism, develop fair and clear policies and procedures to consistently deal with plagiarism across the institution. The holistic approach emphasizes the development of good academic practices instead of detection and punishment to prevent plagiarism. By using formative assessment, information and feedback are provided to prevent students from plagiarizing due to misunderstanding and confusion (Duggan, 2006; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006). Figure 1.1 summarizes the ethical theories and relevant approaches to address plagiarism.

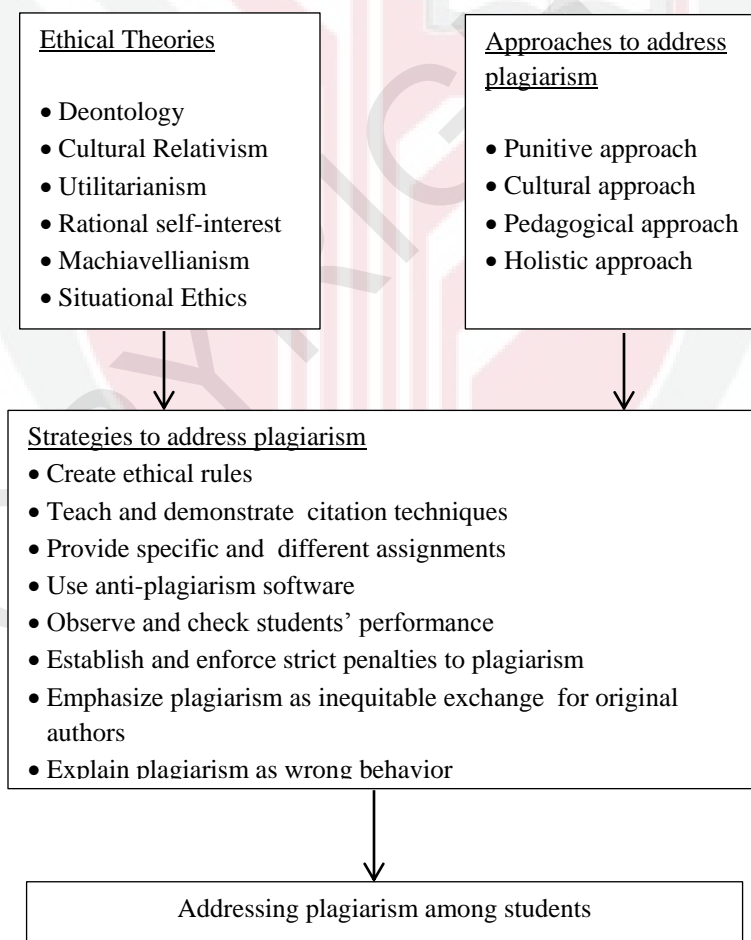


Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework of the study

Various explanations of ethical theories on why students plagiarize as well as the approaches to address plagiarism are used to guide the present study in understanding Malaysian undergraduates' knowledge and patterns of plagiarism and the integrity policies of Malaysian universities.

1.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The aim of the study is to address plagiarism among students at public university in Malaysia. Thus, students' knowledge of definitions and forms of plagiarism, policies of plagiarism detection and prevention, perceived reasons of plagiarism, and students' difficulties in academic writing are investigated. Students' patterns and levels of plagiarism are identified in relation to online and printed sources of information. In addition, based on five core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy (Access, Approach, Responsibility, Detail, Support) (Bretag et al., 2011), the integrity policy of top five public universities in Malaysia are examined to highlight the exemplary policy as well as the exemplars in core elements of each university (Figure 1.2).

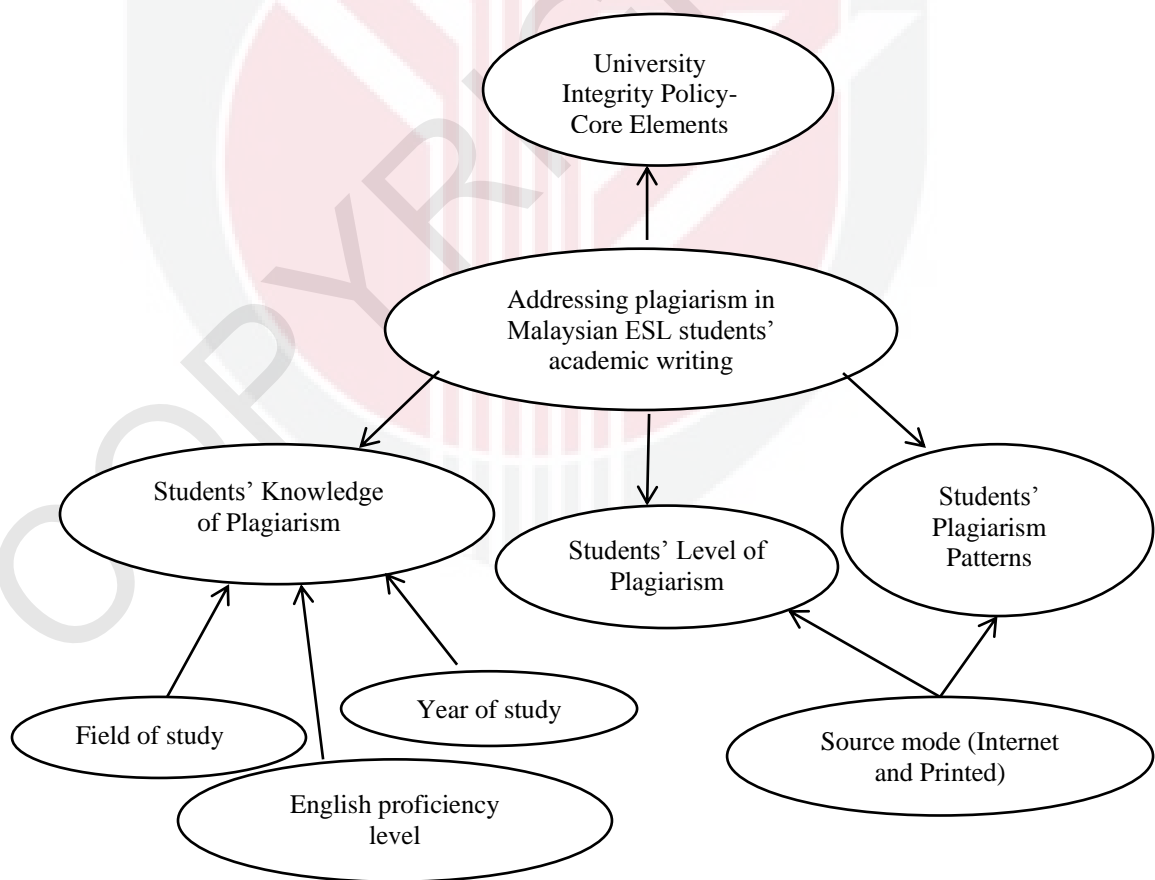


Figure 1.2 Conceptual framework of the study

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study intends to offer a significant contribution to the area of academic writing. It is important in that it explores the students' knowledge of plagiarism. The results of the study may provide insights into university academics who are concerned about plagiarism. This study may help stakeholders to understand students' knowledge regarding plagiarism that, in turn, may help in developing new policies on plagiarism, modifying present policies or academic curriculum. This study highlights the exemplars in the core elements of policies in Malaysia to enhance academic integrity in the Malaysian context.

Furthermore, the study helps instructors to identify appropriate approaches to teaching ESL learners the conventions of academic writing, paraphrasing skills and citation rules to prevent plagiarism in the education system. The findings of this study can be used as a pedagogical base to maintain or to increase ESL students' knowledge of plagiarism and citation rules. Thus, useful approaches are identified to be applied in the classroom. The extent to which students understand plagiarism and a university's policy on plagiarism may also contribute to the success of applying pedagogical and institutional approaches to manage aspects of plagiarism.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Academic Integrity: Possessing academic integrity is having a commitment to the five fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (Keohane, 1999). All members of an academic institution need to take responsibility to develop academic integrity in their institutions. Academic integrity is not just the result of following strict rules; it requires all parties to value integrity in the institution. Some common strategies to develop academic integrity in academic contexts include education and students' involvement in discussions on developing institutional academic integrity, developing and publishing clear definitions and examples of academic dishonesty, presenting clear and consistent methods to communicate disapproval of unacceptable behaviors and their consequences, and providing clear and appropriate processes for recording violations (Day, Murillo, Sibley-Smith, & Smith, 2007)

Academic Integrity Policy: Policies relating to academic integrity include monitoring principles that lead honor codes, appropriate procedure for academic integrity transgression, and other institutional processes relating to academic integrity violation (Mills, 2009). An integrity policy includes any written documents that address a school's position, procedures, beliefs, rules, guidelines, or definitions regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty (Kibler, 1992). It is developed by the whole community and adopted by the institution. An integrity policy basically supports integrity and ethical behavior; a clearly defined list of actions that are not permissible;

procedures to follow in case of policy violations ; and clearly defined penalties assigned to each action (Lathrop & Foss, 2000).

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, copying answers during tests, using another individual's work and presenting it as one's own (plagiarism), and getting help from others in producing one's own individual work (Elzubeir & Rizk, 2003). Academic misconduct refers to any illegal help in creating any academic work such as paper, project and examinations (cheating), or to presenting for academic evaluation the ideas or words of others as one's own ideas without appropriate acknowledgement (plagiarism) (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006).

Academic Writing: Writing has traditionally been viewed as a mental and cognitive activity; it conjures up the image of an individual working in a quiet and isolated place. Academic writing is one of the most important social practices. When social interactions occur in the academic community, knowledge and writers' identities are constructed, negotiated, and created in a text. Academic writing is thus the basic means by which academics engage in what they do most: publishing, communicating, and contributing their knowledge (Canagarajah, 2002). Academic writing is also a form of evaluation that demonstrates knowledge and proficiency by means of certain disciplinary skills such as thinking, interpreting, and presenting (Irvin, 2010).

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas and representing them as one's own (Underwood & Szabo, 2003). Plagiarism can also be defined as the fabrication of information and citation; the submission of others' work that is garnered from journals, books, articles, papers, and the Internet; or presenting other students' papers, lab results, project reports and claiming them as one's own or giving wrong citations (Henderson, 2007).

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