A Quantitative Study of ESL/EFL Students' Understanding of Plagiarism

Wenxi Yang
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A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF ESL/EFL STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDING OF PLAGIARISM

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

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May 2014
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This study investigated ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism by doing a quantitative study. The instrument of questionnaire was used and it consisted of four demographic questions, twenty-one Likert–scale scenarios and three open–ended questions. The participants were 80 ESL/EFL students in Western Rock University from different countries and various educational levels. The results of the study were analyzed by using one–way MANOVA test three times based on gender, educational level and nationality, respectively, to determine the statistically significant scenarios in each group. The open–ended questions were analyzed by categorizing them in to groups based on the meanings. The numbers and frequencies of each category were computed as well. The results showed that the participants understood the definition of plagiarism at the abstract level but had poor ability in connecting the abstract definition of plagiarism with concrete scenarios. Also participants showed different understanding of plagiarism within the groups divided by gender, educational level and nationality, respectively.
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Father and mother, you are the most wonderful parents in the world and I cannot love your more. Your love, care and respect have given me nutrition for understanding the world and has shaped that I am today. I am luckiest the child to have you as my parents, teachers and mentors. To my father: thank you so much for supporting my education for so many years and tried your best to give me best the opportunity you can. Your decision at the critical moments has always sacrificed most for me. You are the most talented and kind-hearted man in the world and I am the luckiest one to be your daughter. Your life philosophy and wisdom have inspired me to always keep faith and never give up. I love you so much. To my mum, you are the most beautiful woman in the world who has the kindest heart and most sincere love for people. Your love, forgiveness and faith for me are my strongest motivation to pursue the beauty and goodness in the world.

The acknowledgement of my thesis has to come to the epilogue at this point; however, the thankfulness I want to give to those wonderful people can never reach an end. Each one of you here has woven a beautiful story in my life and if I had more pages to write here, I would put down every beautiful plot you have written for me. Your goodness and kindness are all in my heart and I would like to thank you all again for directing my life in a positive way.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This study aims to investigate ESL/EFL (English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language) students’ understanding of plagiarism in a university in the U.S. In this chapter, I describe my study briefly. First of all, I present the background information in the field of plagiarism together with my personal motivation on doing this study. Next, I explain the research questions and the significance of the study. Finally, I summarize each chapter of the thesis.

Why ESL/EFL Students’ Understanding of Plagiarism

Winter and McVeigh (2011) described, “student from cultures with different orientations toward cheating and plagiarism may not realize that sanctions for such behaviors in the United States are harsh and are shocked to find themselves facing severe penalties for actions that were considered minor in their home culture” (p. 162). Similarly, Pecorari (2003) pointed out that “no evidence exists that non-native English speakers plagiarize more than their native English speakers counterparts, it has sometimes been asserted that they do” (p. 321). Likewise, Deckert (1993) pointed out, “ESL students in settings of higher education are frequently viewed by Western instructors as persistent plagiarizers”. All these accusations of plagiarism above went to the students whose first language was not English and who came from a different culture at the same time, therefore they are categorized as using English as a Second Language or Foreign language (ESL/EFL) in this study. Similar to the assertions above, many scholars believed that ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism is closely related and influenced by their culture (Pennycook, 1996; Scollen, 1994, 1995; Youmans & Evans, 2000). However
some other scholars disagreed, arguing that, for those ESL/EFL students who are accused of plagiarism, it is more of the challenge of linguistic incompetence rather than influence from culture that has led them to plagiarism (Pecorari, 2003; Currie, 1998). Additionally, Wheeler (2009) argued that it could be a lack of understanding of plagiarism that has led to ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism rather than a culturally inherent belief. The contested discussions on the topic of plagiarism related to ESL/EFL students have aroused my curiosity. However, the current scholarship seems to be deficient in terms of ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. Therefore, I am motivated to conduct this research to bridge this gap and to find out what is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.

**Personal Motivation**

After coming to U.S to pursue my MA degree, I have found so many academic writing conventions that I never learned in my home country before. During one class, I learned from my professor Dr. Hanauer that, strictly speaking, the behavior of submitting the same assignment for two different classes is plagiarism and the name for it is self-plagiarism. From then on, I started to feel that plagiarism is an interesting topic and the concept of plagiarism could potentially cover a wide range of behaviors. However, dictionaries, manuals or university policies, always defined or explained the term plagiarism in a short sentence and often at an abstract level. This abstract explanation cannot always help students figure out the potentially wide-range behaviors that the definition of plagiarism could cover and cannot help students understand clearly where boundary of plagiarism is. Some students may even be still confused when they are faced with the accusations of plagiarism. This is even true for some students who use English as a second language or an additional language because they may encounter
language difficulties in understanding the academic definition of plagiarism and sometimes their low language proficiency restricted their ability to avoid plagiarism (Currie, 1998; Howard, 1999; Li & Casansava, 2012). To conclude, the concern about ESL/EFL students’ situation in academic writing related to plagiarism and my interest into this topic has motivated me to start this research to explore ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.

**Background of Study**

Topics like plagiarism always lead to highly charged, and often emotional debate because of a lack of consensus (Bloch, 2012, p.3). To explain, the definitions of plagiarism given by dictionaries, manuals and university policies are all at the abstract level and students may not understand the wide variety of behaviors that plagiarism may incorporate (Buranen, 1999). Additionally, the study by Pecorari (2001) showed that university policies about plagiarism in the United States and Britain did not provide enough information on how the definition of plagiarism can be applied. Therefore, the definitions of plagiarism are not concrete and clear enough and led to the confusions for students and even university faculty members because of its blurry concept.

In addition to the blurry concept, plagiarism has been discussed in terms of patchwriting, transgressive intertextualality and inappropriate use of sources. Howard (1993, 1995, 1999, 2000b) created the neologism patchwriting and argued that patchwriting was a learning process for novice writers to learn terminologies in a discipline and gain membership in a discourse community. Some scholars supported Howard (1993) with the results from their empirical studies (Abasi & Akbari, 2008; Currie, 1998; Li & Casansave, 2012; Pecorari, 2003). These studies found that students
used patchwriting as strategy for academic survival as well as a learning process to get into the academic discourse (Abasi & Akbari, 2008; Currie, 1998; Li & Casansave, 2012). Howard (1993, 1995, 1997) also advocated that professors should adopt a positive approach to help students learn more about academic writing and finally get rid of patchwriting stage. Another topic that is often debated on by scholars is intertextuality. Intertextuality, according to the perspective of heteroglossia proposed by Bakhin (1998), meant all languages were made up fragments from other language speakers and all writings were intertextual to some degree. Also, Intertextuality is not transgressive in nature (Chadrasoma, Thomason & Pennycook, 2004). When determining whether a piece of intertextual writing is plagiarism or not, some factors should be taken into account including students’ identity, development and intentionality (Chadrasoma, et al., 2004). Also, instructors and teachers can use these factors to get to know the knowledge of their students so they can better help them build up writing skills rather than give punishment (Moody, 2007). Another challenge faced by student writers is to paraphrase properly. The major challenge for the student writers is that the boundary of paraphrase and plagiarism is not clear (Angelil-Carter, 2000, p. 45). Studies also showed that even professors and instructors have different understandings on the standard of paraphrase (Howard, 1993; Roig, 2001). Shi (2004) pointed out paraphrasing can be even more difficult for ESL/EFL writers because of their limited linguistic repertoire. Bouman (2009), similarly, acknowledged the difficulties of paraphrase for ESL/EFL writer because their English is still under development. The rules and conventions in the academic writing, according different manuals, do not reach an agreement of how to use sources in different disciplines. The study by Shi (2012) also showed that disciplinary differences exist in
terms of referencing the sources, paraphrasing and summarizing sources therefore reaching a conclusion for the standards of source using is difficult. Despite the difficulty in reaching a final conclusion, some scholars have tried to establish a standard for how to use sources appropriately (Bouman, 2009; Pecorari, 2003). Crediting authors and using sources is important not only in terms of unifying the rules in the same academic community, but also help academic writers and students understand how the knowledge has been constructed, debated and contested (Angelil-Carter, 2000).

Another heated debate in the conversation of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism is on the role of culture. In another word, scholars have debated on whether culture has a role to play in affecting ESL/EFL students’ understanding and their behaviors of plagiarism. Pennycook (1996) pointed out that plagiarism was not simply a “black and white issue” (p. 201), because the western notion of plagiarism has been developed in a certain historical context while students from another context may have different approaches in interacting with the texts and authors. At the same time, some scholars agreed that culture, to different degrees and in different ways, influenced ESL/EFL’s understanding and conceptualization of plagiarism (Matalene, 1985; Scollon, 1994, 1995; Deckert, 1993; Pennycook, 1994, 1996; Rinner and Kobayashi, 2005; Youmans & Evans, 2000). However, some studies revealed otherwise: culture did not influence ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism (Maxwell, Curtis & Vardaenga, 2008; Pecorari, 2003; Wheeler, 2009).

Apart from the dialogue on the cultural influence, some studies have shown that students of different gender presented different understanding and orientations of plagiarism (Caron, Whitbourne & Halgin, 1992; Crown & Spiller, 1998; Gilligan, 1982;
Li & Wen, 2006; Ward & Beck, 2001; Roig & Caso, 2005). However, the results from Wheeler (2009) showed that gender did not make a significant difference in differentiating students’ understanding of plagiarism. In addition to the discussions on gender, studies continuously show that students from a higher educational level or a senior year have a better understanding of plagiarism and are less likely to plagiarize (Deckert, 1993; Lin & Wen, 2006; Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2005; Wajada, Johnston, Handal, & Brawer, 2001; Sims, 1995). The previous scholarship concerning plagiarism has built up the theoretical foundation of this present quantitative study about ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.

**Statement of the Problem**

The conversations of plagiarism have been going on in the field of second language writing and dialogues discussing the reason of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism have never stopped. Deckert (1993) revealed that ESL students did not show much concern to the original writer and had a poor ability in recognizing plagiarism by conducting a survey in a Hong Kong tertiary school among 170 Chinese ESL/EFL students. However, Deckert (1993) only surveyed Chinese students, and the questionnaire used in the study only focuses on students’ ability in recognizing textual plagiarism. This study did not uncover ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism beyond textual boundaries, such as self-plagiarism, cheating in an exam, downloading copyrighted music, etc. My study aims to bridge this gap by providing more scenarios of plagiarism in the questionnaire and investigate ESL/EFL students’ understanding and attitudes of these specific scenarios.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism in the setting of a university in the U. S. By deconstructing the abstract definition of plagiarism into different real-life scenarios, this study is designed to examine whether ESL/EFL students can recognize different types of plagiarism from these scenarios and to what extent they can recognize them. Also, this study aims to investigate how serious do ESL/EFL students perceive some apparent plagiarism in different situations and discover their attitudes towards them. Apart from that, this study explores whether gender and educational level influence the participants’ attitudes towards plagiarism. The participants are 80 ESL/EFL students from Western Rock University in the U.S and they completed the on-line questionnaire of my study, which consist of four demographic questions, 21 Likert-scale scenarios of plagiarism and three open-ended questions.

Research Question

The purpose of the study is to investigate the EFL/EFL students’ understanding and perception of plagiarism and how serious they regarded some apparent plagiarism to be by asking them to rate for different real-life scenarios in a questionnaire. I analyzed the results collected from the questionnaires submitted by the participants on-line. This on-line questionnaire consists of 21 Likert-scale scenarios of plagiarism and three open-ended questions. The first 11 Likert-scale scenarios focuses on examining participants’ understanding of plagiarism and another 10 scenarios concentrates on how serious the participants consider plagiarism to be. The statistical analysis and the analysis for the
open-ended questions are expected to answer the following research question: What is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism?

**Significance of the Study**

The results of the study will help lecturers, instructors and professors, who have ESL/EFL students in their classes, understand how ESL/EFL students conceptualize the whole picture of plagiarism as well as the specific situation of plagiarism that their ESL/EFL students may have overlooked. This insight can help the teachers prepare lessons to meet the needs of the students and provide best possible instruction and explanation on plagiarism. In this way, teachers can assist their students become an academically successful writer. Additionally, the results of the study may help teachers who have ESL/EFL students from different educational levels in the same class as well as those teachers whose classes are categorized by educational levels. The reason is this study examines students’ understanding of plagiarism based on their educational levels. Finally, this study will shed light on differences of male and female participants’ understanding of plagiarism.

**Summary of the Upcoming Chapters**

Chapter two presents the scholarship and conversations going-on related to plagiarism. In this chapter, I present the history, definition and academic challenges of plagiarism. Additionally, I address the discussions on some factors that may influence students’ understanding of plagiarism including culture, educational level and gender. Chapter three describes the methodology adopted in this research including the instrument of questionnaire, the participants, and the procedures of data collection and analysis. Chapter four presents the results and the findings of the study, based on the
gender, educational level and nationality, respectively. Finally chapter five presents the summary of the findings, implications, recommendations for further study and limitations of this present study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study is to investigate ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. The study is conducted in order to answer the research question of what is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. Topics like plagiarism always lead to highly charged, and often emotional debate because of a lack of consensus (Bloch, 2012, p. 3). In this chapter, I am going to present the scholarship and the conversations on the topic of plagiarism, with a focus on ESL/EFL students. First of all, I briefly introduce the origin and the definitions of plagiarism and discuss plagiarism in academic writings. Then, I introduce the origin of authorship and its emerging conflict with collaborative writing. Thirdly, I present cultural perspectives of plagiarism and discuss factors that might influence students’ practice and understandings of plagiarism. Finally, I revisited some empirical studies that have explored ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism and addressed the gap in the previous scholarship.

Academic Construction of Plagiarism

In this part, I first introduce the historical background of plagiarism and authorship. Then I present the definitions of plagiarism and discuss why the definition of plagiarism is difficult to understand.

The Origins of Plagiarism

In order to understand how plagiarism is defined and came into shape today, I explored the origins of plagiarism and its historical background. According to Sutherland-Smith (2008), plagiarism has a close relationship with authorship, which refers to the notion that somebody can be the only author and originator of a work.
Emphasis on authorship led to the Statute of Anne in 1710 in Britain, and this was the first statute to protect copyright of authors rather than the publishers. This law was also implemented in British colonies including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, and the United States. According to Sutherland-Smith (2008):

The role of legal Western discourse has been the primary tool used to fashion plagiarism policies in our institutions. The law also framed our ways of managing plagiarism in educational settings - usually following the punitive path that is reminiscent of criminal law penalties. It is these policies and processes that to date, have guided our practices as teachers. (p. 55)

However, some scholars argued that authorship was perceived differently in a different culture because of plagiarism may undergo a different historical and cultural development from Britain (Bloch, 2001; Deckert, 1993; Scollon, 1995; Pennycook, 1996). Bloch (2001) argued that the development of intellectual property in China was different from the Western countries. He wrote that “attitude can change dramatically as the social and historical context changes” (Bloch, 2008, p. 226). I will discuss the influence of culture upon perceptions on authorship again in the part of Cultural Perspectives of Plagiarism later in the literature review.

The Definitions of Plagiarism

In order to further explore the meaning of plagiarism, I present the definitions of plagiarism provided by dictionaries, manuals, and university policies in this part. These definitions may represent how plagiarism is conceptualized in the Western contexts, which is relevant to my study because I investigated ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism in the Western contexts.
Definition of plagiarism in dictionaries. In the Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as “the wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one’s own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc) of another” (Simpson, 1990, p. 947). Additionally, the etymology of the word “plagiarize” was from the Latin word plagiaris, which means “kidnapper” (p. 945). Similarly, plagiarism is illustrated as “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work” in the Random House Dictionary of the English language (Flexner, 1987, p. 1479). To summarize, dictionaries generally provide abstract definitions of plagiarism using concise language.

Definition of plagiarism in manuals. In addition to the dictionaries, plagiarism has been explained and described in different manuals. For example, in the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.), plagiarism occurs when “authors present the work of another as if it were their own work” and self-plagiarism is defined as the practice of “presenting one’s own previously published work as though it were new” (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 16). Also, based on the definitions in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th ed.), plagiarism involves two kinds of wrongs. Using another person’s ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person’s work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person’s ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantages constitutes fraud. (Modern Language Association of America, 2009, p. 66)
To summarize, different manuals share similar principles in explaining plagiarism. However, from these definitions, the boundary of plagiarism and proper writing is not easy to define.

**Definitions of plagiarism in universities.** Other than the manual books, which regulate the referencing systems in academic writings, definition of plagiarism is also in the policies of the universities. For example, the Department of English in the Western Rock University defined plagiarism as a conventional sense in the discipline. Specifically, on the Statement of Plagiarism, plagiarism is defined as “the unacknowledged borrowing of ideas, facts, phrases, wordings, or whole works, either through direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrasing or summarizing without appropriate documentation” (*Statement on Plagiarism*, 2013.). The graduate catalog also lists explanations of plagiarism as well as policies about sanctions related to plagiarism in the part of academic integrity. Based on the academic Integrity Policy and Procedures from the Graduate Catalog in Western Rock University, plagiarism is described as “misrepresenting or passing off the ideas, words, formulas, or data of another as one’s own” and was labeled as “dishonest and illegal” (*Academic Integrity and Procedures*, 2013, p. 108–109). The graduate catalog explained academic integrity by listing twelve situations that constitute inappropriate behaviors. Also the sanctions and consequences of committing plagiarism were explained in great detail step by step. However, these the policies did not explain how these policies and rules can be applied in the real–life situations or in different disciplines.

Scholars also pointed out that university policies on plagiarism could sometimes lead to confusion. For example, Pecorari (2001) conducted a study to examine university
policies of plagiarism in Britain, the United States and Australia. This study revealed that university policies on punishing the plagiarists were similar, however, they “give little indication of how the definitions should be applied, and provide no template which a teacher or disciplinary board could use to determine whether a specific text meets the definition” (p. 38). To summarize, university policies could lead to confusion due to its lack of explanations on the application of plagiarism in different contexts.

A difficult understanding on plagiarism. From visiting the definition of plagiarism in different sources above, I have found that definitions given by dictionaries, manuals and policies are all written in abstract and academic terms without reaching a comprehensive level that can help students easily identify plagiarism in real life practices. This problem was identified by Angelil-Carter (2000), who argued that plagiarism was an “ill-defined concept” and the definition of plagiarism was even more ambiguous when interacting with different genres of writing. Due to the ambiguities and ill concept, Howard (2000a) even proposed to empty the category of plagiarism and replace plagiarism with terms such as “fraud, citation and repetition”, which were three totally different categories (p. 488). Buranen (1999) also acknowledged the difficulty in identifying plagiarism based on its academic definition because plagiarism could include a wide range of behaviors. To be specific, Buranen (1999) wrote:

One of the major problems with the word plagiarism itself is its use as a kind of wastebasket, into which we toss anything we do not know what to do with: it can refer, at various times, to outright cheating (for instance, purchasing a research paper and presenting it as one’s own work); to appropriating large blocks of text
without attribution; to omissions or mistakes in citations; to paraphrasing an original too closely; to collaborating too closely . . .” (p. 64)

In order to address the difficult definition of plagiarism, in my study, I deconstructed the abstract definition of plagiarism into 21 real-life scenarios and made them into a five-point Likert scale questions in the questionnaire. In this way, I was able to explore ESL/EFL students’ perception on whether certain kinds of behaviors constituted plagiarism or not. Also I could gain an insight on how serious they thought of some apparent plagiarism.

**Plagiarism in Academic Writing**

Plagiarism has been a challenge for long in academic writing and the acts of plagiarism in academic writing have been given various labels, such as “patchwriting” (Howard, 1993), “transgressive intertextuality” (Chandrasoma, Thomson, & Pennycook, 2004), and inappropriate paraphrasing or inappropriate textual borrowing (Pecorari, 2008). Each of these terms represents a perspective in the on-going dialogue about plagiarism. In this part, I will introduce these perspectives in the conversation of plagiarism one by one.

**Patchwriting in Academic Writing**

Howard (1993, 1995, 1999, 2000a, 2000b) contributed a lot on the scholarship on patchwriting, a neologism he defined as “copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures or plugging in one-for-synonym substitutes” (Howard, 1993, p. 233). This invention of the term has been a great contribution in the field of plagiarism and has been discussed and used in many studies (Abasi & Akbari, 2008; Currie, 1998; Pecorari, 2003).
Instead of regarding patchwriting as a kind of unacceptable and vicious behavior of plagiarism, many scholars argued that it should be perceived as a necessary stage for learning academic language and getting into a certain discourse community (Currie, 1998; Howard, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2000a; Hull & Rose, 1989; Pecorari, 2003). First of all, Howard (1999) argued in her study that patchwriting was a necessary stage of learning writing for students and it helped students gain a membership in a discourse community. He explained that learners adopted patchwriting as a strategy when they knew little about the concept they were writing. Patchwriting, in this case, help students get to know better about the learning materials. This was consistent with Bouman’s (2009) experiences as a writing center tutor. He explained by using his tutoring experiences in the writing center that ESL/EFL students and other novice writers normally used patchwriting to learn the terminologies in a certain discipline.

Some studies showed that ESL/EFL students used patchwriting as a survival strategy when their language could not meet the academic standards required by their professors. This opinion was supported by the study done by Currie (1998). Currie conducted a case study to examine the writing practice of an ESL student and found this student used patchwriting continuously as a strategy to survive in the academic setting because of her low language proficiency; otherwise she may fail the course and could not stay in the school anymore. Similarly, the study by Li and Casansave (2012) also revealed that in the study, two ESL Chinese students used patchwriting as a learning strategy to interact with the sources when they first entered the English mediated academic institution. Additionally, Bloch and Chi (1995) argued that ESL writers had difficulties to meet the academic requirements to completely avoid plagiarism when they
were not linguistically prepared for the academic writing and at the same time unfamiliar with the target culture; therefore they used patchwriting as a strategy to learn and survive. Similarly, the study by Abasi and Akbari (2008) revealed that ESL/EFL graduate students’ writing relied on varying level of patchwriting and this was because of various reasons, including their language level was not high enough to produce completely patchwriting-free sentences, the high expectation from their professors has given them too much pressure, and the looming deadlines of their assignments.

To summarize, the discussions on the topic of patchwriting inform us that the behaviors of imitation and borrowing texts in students’ writing do not necessarily indicate vicious and deceitful plagiarism. Patchwriting could be the students’ learning process of improving their writing abilities and gain an access in a discourse community. As Pecorari (2003) argued that “today’s patchwriter is tomorrow’s competent academic writer, given necessary support to develop” (p. 338). Teachers should provide more support to help students to get rid of patchwriting in their writing and be a successful academic writer in the future.

**Intertextuality in Academic Writing**

According to Still and Worton (1990), the term of intertextuality was coined by Kristeva in 1966. Her notion of intertextuality referred to “the literal and effective presence in a text of another text”, and suggested that intertextuality means “everything, explicit or latent, links one text to others” (Still & Worton, 1990, p. 22). The concept of heteroglossia proposed by Bakhtin (1988) can also be borrowed to explain intertextuality. By heteroglossia, Bakhtin believed that all languages were made up of fragments from other language speakers and all writings, to some degree, were intertextual. Similarly,
Randall (2001) pointed out contemporary literary critics believed that genuine originality was impossible and intertextuality was everywhere.

According to Pecorari and Shaw (2012), intertextuality was an “unavoidable complex aspect of academic writing” (p. 150). Also, Currie (1998) summarized that “intertextuality of discourse renders it difficult indeed for any writer to be the sole originator of his or her words or ideas” (p. 1). According to their argument, inadvertently, intertextuality could turn into plagiarism. To further explore the nature of intertextuality, Chandrasoma, Thomason and Pennycook (2004) argued that “the judgment of the nature of inertextuality is contextually contingent” (p. 171). Also the study by Chandrasoma, et al. (2004) suggested that ten factors needed to be taken into account to better understand the moment of transgressive intertextuality. The factors include “intentionality, development, identity, resistance, student epistemologies, common knowledge, mediated discourse, interdisciplinarity, variability, and task type” (p. 189–190). In their study, Chandrasoma, et al. (2004) suggested that instead of employing a punitive method to intertextuality like detection, prevention or teaching the correct citation practices, educators need to adopt a more complex, time-consuming, consultative and explorative process to understand plagiarism in it. Moody (2007) also believed that teachers would be able to assist students to build up their writing skills if they put more focus on the intertextuality rather than the punishment.

Another way to understand intertextuality was proposed by Pecorari and Shaw (2012). In their study, they categorized the participants’ understandings of intertextuality, into a four-way typology, gain a better perception of the participants’ understandings. The four-way typology included: indirect intertextuality, conventional intertextuality,
unconventional intertextuality and deceptive intertextuality. Pecarori and Show (2012) proposed that this four-way typology could accommodate most if not all instances of intertextuality. They proposed this four-way topology to understand intertextuality because it “may enable the criteria to be verbalized accurately, and thus discuss within agreed boundaries” and it can serve as “heuristic in staff training” (p. 161).

To summarize, intertextuality was not transgressive in nature. The determination on whether intertextuality turned into plagiarism was based on the students’ identity, development, and various factors.

**Paraphrasing in Academic Writing**

Another challenge faced by student writers is to paraphrase properly in the academic writing (Pecorari, 2008). Student writers are expected to use academic language to participate in a discourse community. As indicated by Bartholomae (1985), student learners need “learn to speak our language, to speak as we do” (p. 134). Pecorari (2008) pointed out that learning how to paraphrase appropriately by using different sources in their writing and citing appropriately in academic research is very difficult. The major challenge for the student writers is that the boundary of paraphrase and plagiarism is not clear (Angelil-Carter, 2000, p. 45). Even within the circles of academic writing, the rules and conventions vary from one to another. For example, *the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed) defined paraphrasing as “summariz[ing] a passage or rearranging the order of a sentence and [changing some words]” (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 349). However, some scholars suggest that the rules of appropriate paraphrasing are more restrictive than the definition in APA manual (Howard, 1995). Specifically, Howard (1995) suggested, “academic
writers may not paraphrase a source by using its phrases and sentences, with a few changes in grammar or word choice - even when the source is cited” (Howard, 1995, p. 799). The confusion on the standard of paraphrase was discussed in some studies. For example, Roig (2001) examined the instructors and professors’ perceptions on plagiarism. The results from the study showed that the correct criteria of paraphrase maintained by some professors are considered plagiarism by some of their colleagues. Roig (2001) concluded in his study that, “the absence of a general operational definition for paraphrasing leaves plenty of room for disagreement as to when a paraphrase might be considered as an instance of plagiarism” (p. 320). These results responded to the findings of Howard (1993). In his study, he wrote:

If faculty members have difficulty in comprehending and manipulating the languages of the various academic cultures, how much more difficult a task do undergraduate students face as they are presented with a bewildering array of discourse, none of which resonates with the languages of their homes and secondary schools? (p. 233)

In this regard, the task of paraphrasing can be even more challenging for ESL/EFL students due to their language barriers. In the study by Liao and Tseng (2010), they examined EFL writer’s performance and perceptions of paraphrasing and inappropriate text borrowing in Taiwan. Even though the participants reported that they knew the importance of paraphrasing, they failed to produce acceptable plagiarism-free texts in the survey. Shi (2004) concluded that it is more difficult for ESL writers to summarize a text and paraphrase a sentence than state an opinion. Similarly Bouman (2009) pointed out, that “L2 writer’s developing English can make summarizing and
paraphrasing more difficult” (p. 162). Also he said the “accusation of plagiarism may come as a shock to an L2 writer who felt confident that she had paraphrased correctly” (Bouman, 2009, p. 49). In the book by Myers (1998), paraphrasing was described as “arguably the highest and most synthetic language skill of all” (p. 9). She also indicated that a successful paraphrasing requires a writer to possess “a large sophisticated vocabulary” and can “recognize (as not to repeat) sometimes very subtle stylistic features of writing” (p. 9). Similarly, the study by Shi (2012) revealed that students had difficulties in understanding the paraphrase in order to avoid plagiarism and paraphrase is very complex skill depending on “one’s knowledge of the content, disciplinary nature of citation practices, rhetorical purposes in a specified context of disciplinary writing” (p. 134). Regarding the confusion on the standard of paraphrase and source uses, I present some standards for legitimate use of sources in the next part.

**What is Legitimate Use of Sources?**

Inappropriate use of sources may lead to the accusation of plagiarism. But the question is how to interact with the sources legitimately as an academic writer? Bouman (2009b) proposed the following standards for the writers:

1. They need to understand the meaning of all the words and ideas in a source text.
2. They need to accurately discern the author’s tone and stance in the writing.
3. They need to come up with lexical and syntactic equivalents of the source text (alternative words and sentence structures so that they can express the source’s meaning in original language). (p. 166)
Also, Pecorari (2003) suggested the concept of “transparent” to indicate appropriate use of sources, and the other side is plagiarism. “Transparency” means “signaling the relationship between sources and citing text accurately; the opposite is often termed plagiarism” (p. 324). Also transparency addresses “three sometimes overlapping areas: (1) the identity of the text’s origins; (2) the language of the text; and (3) the content of a source” (p. 324).

She narrowed down the standard of determining whether a writing piece is plagiarism or not:

1. That language which is not signaled as quotation is original to the writer;
2. That if no citation is present, both the content and the form are original to the writer;
3. That the writer consulted the source which is cited; (p. 324).

However, Shi (2012) suggested that following the same rules of using sources in some contexts may not be valid because his study revealed that there were disciplinary differences in terms of referencing sources, paraphrasing sentences and summarizing the passages. Despite the fact that scholars and academic conventions have not reached an agreement in terms of how to use sources in the academic circle, it is still important to credit authors by using certain rules. The academic conventions not only help regulate writings in the same writing pattern, but also, as Angeli-Carter (2000) argued, let us know “who said what” and this can help us get an essential understanding that knowledge is constructed, debated and contested.
Autonomous Authorship and Collaborative Writing

Pennycook (1996) argued that plagiarism is no longer a “black and white issue” because the concept of authorship and ownership understood in the Western context is a “particular cultural and historical development” (p. 201). This part presents how the Western notion of authorship came into shape today and the emerging conflict of the traditional single authorship with the collaborative writing.

Development of the Western Authorship

Before the Statute of Anne, the authorship and copyright was not protected and the writings were perceived as a shared knowledge (Sutherland-Smith, 2008). People perceived knowledge as “given freely to us by God and should be freely shared for the common good” (Lunsford, 1996, p. 264). An author was a “craftsman,” “a vehicle or instrument” who can skillfully manipulate the rules handed down in rhetoric by poets to achieve the goal dictated by the audience (Woodmansee, 1984, p. 426). It is not until the eighteenth century when the middle classes began to rise that a group of writers tried to make a living by selling their writings (Woodmansee, 1984).

Contemporary authorship, as defined by Ede and Lunsford (1990), is “directly related to the Western philosophical tradition defining the autonomous individual as the source or foundation of all knowledge” (p. 73). The contemporary concept of author means an “individual who is solely responsible-and therefore exclusively deserving of credit-for the production of a unique work” (Woodmansee, 1984, p. 426). The emergence of the modern concept of authorship dates back to the eighteenth century when a group of writers in Germany sought to make a living with their pens by selling their writings to the expanding reading population. Woodmansee (1984) wrote:
In Germany this new group of individuals found itself without any of the safeguards for its labors that today are codified in copyright laws. In response to this problem, and in an effort to establish the economic viability of living by the pen, these writers set about redefining the nature of writing. Their reflections on this subject are what, by and large, gave the concept of authorship its modern form. (p. 426)

According to Woodmansee (1984), authorship was redefined in eighteenth century and a writer was no longer a craftsman who can only transmit knowledge. An author was perceived as original and creative and their work was made “peculiar and distinctively the product—and the property—of the author” (Woodmansee, 1984, p. 427).

After the emergence of the western notion of autonomous authorship, more emphasis was given to the originality of the writing, and authors were required to credit the ownership of the texts by using referencing conventions. For example, according to Angelil-Carter (2000), “Originality and autonomy as values are based on an ideology which tends towards individualism and competition, rather than community and cooperation, independence rather than interdependence, analysis rather than synthesis, commodification rather than intrinsic value” (p. 27–28). In other words, a lot of emphasis was put on individualism and independence in the contemporary notion of authorship. “Individualism” is term coined by Tocqueville (2007), which means “a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the main of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friend” (p. 506). Elbow (1999) pointed out that “if students want to prosper in the US culture or one like it, they will need to learn engage in the academic practices of individualism to some considerable degree” (p.
However, as Ede and Lunsford (1990) pointed out, a lot of discursive practices in writing such as “corporate authorship, the increasing attribution of honorary authorship in the sciences, and electronic media” have challenged the traditional concept of authorship (p. 93). Next part will introduce the challenge which is seen as collaborative authorship nowadays.

**Collaborative Authorship**

In this part, I introduce the conversations on collaborative authorship, a concept that challenges the traditional sense of single authorship in the Western countries. Ede and Lunsford (1990) argued that, “the concept of author at present was radically destabilized in theory” and the status of single authorship was problematic (p. 93). This argument was drawn from their eight-year-long empirical study, which revealed that,

Much or most of the writing produced in professional settings in America is done collaboratively, and that, in fact, much of what we call “creative” writing is collaborative as well, thought it almost always flies under the banner of single authorship. (Lunsford & Ede, 1994, p. 418)

In another word, the study by Lundsford and Ede (1994) revealed that most writings produced in the U.S were the product of collaborative authorship. However, collaborative authorship is challenged by the traditional sense of single authorship, which emphasizes originality and individual thinking. Jaszi and Woodmansee (1994) pointed out the conflict between traditional sense of authorship and collaborative authorship in classroom teaching by writing that “most writings today—in business, government, industry, the law, the sciences and social sciences—is collaborative, yet it is still being taught as if it were a solitary, original activity” (p. 9). Collaborative writing may be
categorized as plagiarism under the traditional view of single authorship. For example, Bruffee (1972) said, “in the extreme, collaboration is the worst academic sin, plagiarism” (p. 636). Afraid of being accused of plagiarism, a certain number of students suffer from making every effort to avoid plagiarism when working in a group. As Spigelman (2000) observed, the students in the writing group developed a complex set of rules, criteria and methods for revising their papers to avoid plagiarism, which “served to inhibit their full collaborative engagement” (109). However, collaborative learning has been proven to be an effective method in classroom teaching (Dewey, 1954; Spigelman, 2000). Also based on the theory of Vygotsky (1987), all learning is interactive. However, moving collaborative learning to collaborative writing challenges the traditional values of single authorship and presents a challenge for teachers (Lunsford & Ede, 1994). Therefore, Angelil-Carter (2000) called for “creative forms of assessment” in the curriculum, which can legitimize collaborative writing in classroom.

**Culture, Writing and Plagiarism**

The conversation of whether culture influence students’ understanding and behaviors of plagiarism never stops. A certain number of assertions showed that many people do believe that people from different cultures have different understanding of plagiarism. For example, Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) pointed out that “students from other cultures with different orientations of cheating and plagiarism may not realize that sanctions for such behaviors in the United States are harsh and are shocked to find themselves facing severe penalties for actions that were considered minor in their home cultures” (p. 162). Also this phenomenon was suggested by Pecorari (2003), that, “no
evidence exists that non-native English speakers plagiarize more than their native English speaker counterparts, it has sometimes been asserted that they do” (p. 321).

Many scholars support the idea that culture plays a role in affecting students’ understanding of plagiarism. For example, Pennycook (1996) argued that the text, memorization and authorship had been a product of certain historical and cultural development in a certain context. That is to say, people may carry different ways to interact with the texts and to perceive the western notion of authorship. Similarly, Scollon (1995) suggested that there were ideological differences in a certain culture to influence people’s conceptualization of plagiarism. Specifically he argued that “the apparent difficulty that at least some non-native writers of English have in correctly using reference, quotation, and paraphrase, and in avoiding plagiarism, might better construed as reflecting a different ideological based” (p. 6). Moreover, by drawing the tutoring experiences in the writing center, Hayward (2004) explained that the language acquisition process formed in the ESL/EFL students’ native countries, may lead to their producing unacceptable writings and even plagiarism. Sowden (2005), too, contended there were cultural reasons, which might lead to ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism. Sowden (2005) gave examples, such as “good students in China do not challenge their teachers or other authorities but faithfully copy and reproduce them” (p. 277). Similarly, Matelene (1985), an American teacher who had taught in a Chinese university, used Chinese traditional values to explain the university students’ practices of plagiarism in academic writing. Matelene (1985), through analyzing the journal writings from her students, explained that their unacceptable writing practices had been influenced by the certain educational philosophy and history inherent in that culture.
Some scholars believed that Confucian tradition have influenced China and Japan (Alford, 1995; Butterton, 1996; Dryden, 1999). Dryden (1999) summarized that Japanese followed the Confucian thought and believed that knowledge was learned by memorization and diligent study. Alford (1995) concluded that the Confucian education valued emulation and learning from the past experiences. Furthermore Butterton (1996) argued that the behaviors of plagiarism were regarded as a practice to reinforce the community values. Furthermore, scholars pointed out, there was not a corresponding word of plagiarism in Japanese (Dryden, 1999; Wheeler, 2009; Rinnert and Kobayashi, 2005). Shi (2006) commented that cultures with Confucianism as a tradition put an emphasis “open and broad access to knowledge as common knowledge” (p. 265). Additionally, Hayes and Introna (2005) concluded from their empirical study that Asian students believed that they copied from the author out of reverence.

However, some scholars disagreed with the idea that plagiarism was accepted in certain cultures. For example, Ha (2006) and Liu (2005), refuted Sowden’s (2005) assertion that plagiarism was accepted in a culture with a Confucian tradition. Wheeler (2009), similarly, contravened that plagiarism was culturally acceptable in Japan. He found that it was a lack of understanding of plagiarism that led to the students’ practices of plagiarism rather than a belief that plagiarism was acceptable in the Japanese culture. Pecorari (2003) also found that in her empirical study, culture could not explain the plagiarism in the writings from the post-graduate ESL participants. Additionally, Maxwell, Curtis and Vardanega (2008) found there were no apparent differences between Asian students and Australian students in terms of understanding plagiarism and perceiving the seriousness of plagiarism.
The scholars above did not reach an agreement in terms of whether culture is the root of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism. The scholarship in the discussions is not sufficient and strong enough to determine culture exerts an influence or not upon ESL/EFL students’ perception of plagiarism. Regarding this deficiency, my study aims to produce empirical data on whether students from different nationalities have different orientations in terms of understanding plagiarism and further strengthen the argument in the discussions about the culture influence.

**Plagiarism, Gender, and Educational Level**

In the discussions on students’ understanding of plagiarism, gender and educational were reported to make a difference on students’ perception and understanding of plagiarism (Crown & Spiller, 1998). I discuss the influence of gender and educational level on the students’ perception of plagiarism in this part and present the possible reasons.

**The Influence of Gender on Students’ Perception of Plagiarism**

Some studies revealed that there was a difference between male and female in terms of how they understood plagiarism and in these studies male students were reported more likely to commit plagiarism than female students (Caron, Whitbourne, & Halgin, 1992; Crown & Spiller, 1998; Hendershott, Drinan & Cross, 1999; Gilligan, 1982; Lin & Wen, 2006; Ward & Beck, 2001; Whitley, 1998, 1999). Lin and Wen (2006) surveyed to 2038 students and investigated their attitudes towards plagiarism in Taiwan and found that male students had a more tolerant attitude towards plagiarism than female students. Also, male students were reported a higher rates of plagiarism than female students. Lin and Wen (2006) implied that the differences of understanding and behaviors between
male and female students may be because of the Chinese tradition, according to which women should be honest and obey the rules; otherwise, they would carry the shame throughout their life. Similarly, Caron et al. (1992) used questionnaires to investigate the university students’ attitudes to fraudulent excuses and plagiarism. The results showed that male students were more likely to make fraudulent excuses and had a more tolerant attitude to plagiarism than the female students do. Likewise, in the study by Ward and Beck (2001), the results also supported that male tend to be more tolerant and more likely to plagiarize than female students. Hendershott et al. (1999) revealed in their study that male students’ motivation of committing plagiarism is higher than those of the female students. Gilligan (1982) tried to explain the difference between male and female students’ understanding and behaviors of plagiarism by using sex role socialization theory, which means that women had been socialized to obey the rules and resist temptations, however, male were less restricted by the rules and not bounded by the conventions. However, some studies indicate that gender did not make a significant difference in male and female’s perception on plagiarism. For example, the study by Wheeler (2009) revealed that gender did not make a difference in Japanese students’ perception of plagiarism.

The Influence of Educational Level on Students’ Perception of Plagiarism

Many studies have shown that students from a higher educational level or a senior grade are more capable in recognizing plagiarism, have a more serious attitude of plagiarism and are less likely to commit plagiarism (Deckert, 1993; Lin & Wen, 2006; Rinnert & Kobayahi, 2005; Sims, 1995). The study by Deckert (1993) showed that the ESL students from a higher grade in the tertiary school were more capable in recognizing
plagiarism. Also, Lin and Wen (2006) investigated students’ perception of plagiarism in Taiwan and the results showed that the senior students had a lower rate of committing plagiarism and were less tolerant of plagiarism than the freshmen. Similarly, the study of Rinnert and Kobayashi (2005) also showed that students from the graduate level showed more concern about plagiarism compared to their undergraduate counterparts. Likewise, Sims (1995) discussed the phenomenon in his study that students at a graduate level were less likely to plagiarize compared to the undergraduate ones. Sims (1995) explained that maybe graduate students had invested more money, energy and capital in the education so they had more to lose than gain by committing plagiarism. Also, it could be because students at graduate level had more practices with academic writings and were more familiar with the conventions so they knew how to avoid plagiarism better than the undergraduate participants.

**Empirical Studies on Plagiarism Related to ESL/EFL Students**

The previous review on the scholarship introduces the origins and definitions of plagiarism; the development and the challenges of western authorship; the debate on whether culture, gender and educational level influenced ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism. In this part, I present the empirical studies that have investigated plagiarism related to ESL/EFL students and pointed out the gap in the exist scholarship.

Deckert (1993) did a quantitative study to investigate ESL/EFL students’ perception of plagiarism in a Hong Kong tertiary school. The participants were 170 first-year students and 41 third-year students enrolled in the EAP (English for Academic Purpose) course. They completed a questionnaire in which they were required to recognize plagiarism and rate for what they thought of those who plagiarized. The results
showed the participants had little knowledge about western notion of plagiarism and had poor ability to recognize them. The results also showed that third-year students were better in recognizing plagiarism and showing more concern about original idea and being honest. However, in this study, the participants were all Chinese students and the questionnaire only addressed the textual features of plagiarism. It did not examine students’ understanding on plagiarism in other aspects. In my study, I designed 21 scenarios which represent different plagiarism in different situations. Then I distributed questionnaires to ESL/EFL students from various cultural backgrounds and explore their understandings of plagiarism. This gave me a chance to see whether students from different nationalities have different understandings and whether gender and educational level plays a role in influencing students’ perception of plagiarism.

Wheeler (2009) did a study to investigate Japanese ESL students’ perception of plagiarism in a university in Japan and contravened the idea that plagiarism was considered culturally acceptable there. To illustrate, she distributed survey to 77 students at Hokkaido University at the beginning of academic semester. During the survey, students were asked to read three writing assignments of plagiarism and grade them before and after reading the published article, from which the assignments copied chunk of texts. The results revealed that students’ evaluation dropped suddenly after they read the published article and it revealed that students showed their disapproval for the practice of copying from a published article and presented it to be their own writing. This study revealed that it was a lack of knowledge of plagiarism rather than the culture belief that lead to students’ practice of plagiarism. In this study, the participants were from one single population in Japan. Also the study only examined students’ perception on copying
from a published article and this cannot represent the whole definition of plagiarism. My study will provide a wide range of scenarios to represent plagiarism and solicit students’ understanding for each scenario.

Rinnert and Kobayashi (2005) investigated Japanese ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism in their L1 context in Japan by using questionnaires and interviews. The participants included 605 undergraduate and 110 graduate students in a Japanese university. The responses from the participants were compared across disciplines and across academic levels. Additionally, the results were compared with the responses of 76 undergraduate students from the U.S. The results showed Japanese students generally did not feel citing from the sources were as important as the American participants did. Additionally, graduate participants generally believed that citations were more important than the undergraduate participants. This study examined the participants’ understanding of citation and source uses in different situations but did not examine the participants’ holistic understanding of plagiarism. My study will improve this by providing different scenarios of plagiarism and solicit the ESL/EFL participants’ understanding of plagiarism.

Maxwell, Curtis and Vardanega (2008) examined 242 undergraduate’s understanding of plagiarism and the seriousness of plagiarism in two Australian universities by using self-reported questionnaires. The participants included 152 Australian students and 90 Asian students from China, Japan, Indonesia, and Philippines. The questionnaire consisted of seven scenarios of plagiarism and the participants were required to select from the Likert-scales from 1 to 7. This study compared the results between the two groups of participants from Australia and Asian, and the results showed
that there was not apparent difference between the understandings of Asian students and Australian students in terms of understanding plagiarism and perceiving the seriousness. This study was very interesting because it compared the responses of the students from Australia and the students from Asia. My study uses similar instrument of a questionnaire, but my study compares the results based on the nationalities instead of grouping them into Asia and Australian. Moreover, I used 21 diversified scenarios to represent the definition plagiarism which is more diversified than the 7 scenario in the study by Maxwell, Curtis and Vardanega (2008).

Pecorari (2003) examined the writings of 17 post-graduate students from different disciplines in Britain including students who used English as their first language and students who used English as an additional language. At first, the writing samples were collected from the participants who were completing a thesis. Then the completed PhD dissertations were collected for analysis. The parts of the source uses in their writings were compared to the original sources and the results showed that all of the writings from the participants had textual features of plagiarism. Interviews were used to solicit participants’ understanding of plagiarism, too. The results showed that all the participants had an awareness of plagiarism at least at the abstract level and they did not intend to plagiarize. The findings support Howard’s (1993) notion of patchwriting and revealed that patchwriting is a learning stage for the students’ to improve their writing abilities. This study also compared the writings between students who used English as the first language and those who used a second language. The results revealed that culture did not emerge as a reason to explain students’ textual plagiarism. My study aims to explore
ESL/EFL student’ understanding of plagiarism by using 21 scenarios not restricted to the textual plagiarism.

Shi (2006) conducted interviews with 46 undergraduates to explore their perceptions of plagiarism. This study also aimed to uncover whether participants from different cultural backgrounds, speaking different languages, perceive plagiarism differently. The participants included 11 students whose first language was English, 35 ESL/EFL students including ten German, eight Chinese, nine Japanese and eight Korean. She used focus group discussions and interviews as the method and the results showed that participants were generally not sure about how to credit ideas in the writing. Additionally, participants from non-western background found the definitions of plagiarism foreign and unacceptable. The findings show L2 students from China, Japan and Korea perceived plagiarism as a challenge in terms of language and culture. At the same time, they admitted that they did not always do citations based on different guidelines in their home countries and received little instructions on this concept. This study, similar to the previous ones, only focused on the students’ understanding of the textual features of plagiarism. My study explore more aspects of plagiarism and address a holistic understanding by using 21 scenarios in the questionnaire.

Shi (2004) examined the writings of 87 undergraduates to investigate how first language and writing task influence their behaviors of textual borrowings. The participants consist of 39 students whose English was first language from a North American University and 48 from 3rd-year Chinese ESL students from a university in China. Half of the participants were required to complete a summary task while the other half were required to complete an opinion task after reading a passage. The results
showed that there was a tendency for the Chinese students to borrow texts from the reading without reference in both summary and opinion task. Also the results showed that all the participants who wrote summaries borrowed much more text than those who wrote opinion essays. This study compared the practice between Chinese and students from a western context. My study extends the scope of nationalities and compares the students’ understanding of plagiarism across different countries.

Hayes and Introna (2005) examined the 126 master students’ past practices and judgments on situations of plagiarism in the university at their home country at post-graduate program in a Lancaster University. The participants were from India, Pakistan, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Greece, France, Ukraine, Germany, Brazil, Iceland, Columbia and the United Kingdom. The research employed questionnaires to start and use focus groups and interviews to follow up. This study explored students’ understandings on different types of plagiarism in course work and examinations. The results showed they had various experiences and perceptions on plagiarism in relation to learning, English proficiency, unpermitted collaboration, memorizations when they were in their home country. The results showed that Asian and Greek Participants generally perceived unpermitted collaboration in the exam was common and regarded the behaviors as common and trivial. Also this research revealed the challenges faced by ESL/EFL students when combatting with plagiarism included low language abilities, a lack of knowledge on the academic writing conventions, the transformational pressure from academic, finance and language. This study focused on analyzing ESL/EFL students’ past experiences and understandings of plagiarism and revealed the challenges they had when they arrived at U.S. In my study, I explore ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism
in the setting of the university in the U.S. and solicit the participants’ present understanding of plagiarism.

Abasi and Akbari (2008) conducted a naturalistic study to examine how ESL graduate students used sources in their writings and how professors’ pedagogical practices mediating plagiarism policies within the discipline as well as the corresponding consequences educational practices. The participants were seven ESL/EFL students from a Canadian university and the methodology included observing courses, conducting semi-structured and discourse-based interviews with professors and students and collecting materials used in the course. The results showed that students’ writings relied on varying levels of patchwriting, including language and ideas. Additionally, the students were found to use patchwriting as an academic survival strategy due to their struggling language proficiency, heavy reading-load, looming deadlines for assignments and high expectations from professors. The results also show senior academic participants were better in terms of using sources appropriately in the writings. This study only focused on the textual feature of plagiarism without touching other areas of plagiarism; my study explores students’ perception of different scenarios of plagiarism.

Currie (1998) conducted a case-study to explore the apparent plagiarism of an ESL student writer, Diana, in a business class throughout a semester. This study used interviews and textual analysis as the methods. Specifically, the researcher interviewed Dina and her professor and collected Dina’s assignment, notes and preliminary drafts for analysis. The results showed that the participants spent tremendous time, effort and patience to do patchwriting and used it as a strategy continuously to survive in the academic setting. This study examined the reasons of why this ESL student plagiarized in
the academic setting, but did not present the student’s understanding of plagiarism. My study bridges this gap by focusing on the ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.

Evans and Youmans (2000) investigated ESL students’ beliefs and attitudes towards plagiarism. The methods adopted included questionnaires, interviews, tape-recording the teaching sessions, and tape-recording the ESL student group discussions. The results showed that the students’ reported understandings of plagiarism were consistent with the western notions of plagiarism and they believed the notion was the same all over the world. The results revealed that students’ understanding of the western plagiarism is still under development implied that the only way for instructor and student to reach a mutual understanding is through interaction. This study used multimodal methodology to solicit ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism but the agreement is their understanding is not fixed. My study uses questionnaire to text the participants’ understanding of plagiarism and analyze using a predesigned framework. This methodology can help collect more concrete information about ESL/EFL students’ understanding.

To conclude, most of the above studies focused on ESL/EFL students’ understanding of the source uses and paraphrase, which are the textual features of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a concept that includes a wide range of behaviors, which is not restricted textual plagiarism. My study aims to bridge this gap in the scholarship by using 21 scenarios in the questionnaire to explore ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. Specifically I deconstruct the difficult definition of plagiarism into 21 scenarios and used an online questionnaire to solicit information from the participants.
The design of the questionnaire is aimed to help answer the following research question:

What is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism?

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the scholarship on plagiarism and the conversations going on related to plagiarism of ESL/EFL students. First of all, universities in the United States have very serious penalties on plagiarism and students may face life-long expulsion from universities once they are found plagiarizing. In addition, ESL/EFL students are an important body of the student population in many universities in the United States and there are many accusations on them because of plagiarism. Therefore, getting to know ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism can help lectures, professors and teachers who work with ESL/EFL students to improve their curriculum design and better prepare their lessons. Finally the empirical studies at the end of the chapter revealed the gap in the previous scholarship: most studies focused on the investigating students’ understanding of textual plagiarism; few studies have deconstructed the definition of plagiarism into different scenarios and examined ESL/EFL students’ holistic understanding of plagiarism. The next chapter presents the methodology of this study.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to explore ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism in an academic setting in the US. This chapter describes the methodology employed in the research. First of all, I introduce the research design. Then I present a description of study site and target population. Thirdly, I describe the procedures of recruiting participants, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the methodology is designed to answer the following research question: what is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism?

Research Design

In order to explore the ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism, a quantitative methodology was adopted. Specifically, the instrument of questionnaire was designed on the website of Qualtrics.com and distributed as an online survey through email. According to Van Peer, Hakemulder, Hakemulder and Zyngier (2012) and Creswell, (2014), using survey is a good method when the purpose of the study is to investigate the opinions, attitudes of a large number of people by asking a large number of the same questions. Perry (2005) also corroborated the effectiveness of employing questionnaires in his book by emphasizing that “questionnaires are surveys that can capture a lot of information in a short period of time” and “are considered instrumental equivalents to interviews” (p. 122). Similarly, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) argued, questionnaires were useful in terms of collecting “structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher” (p. 377).
In the present study, an on-line questionnaire is preferred because it can reach the large number of ESL/EFL students in the study site efficiently and the their responses can be downloaded from the website efficiently. The next part describes the site of the study and the targeted population.

**Study Site and Population**

The target population is about 800 ESL/EFL students in the Western Rock University. Western Rock University is a state university which recruits international students every year. At the time I conducted the study, there were around 800 international students from more than 70 countries over the world in this university. Some of them were learning English in American Language Institute (ALI). Others were studying in different majors in undergraduate or graduate schools. That is to say, these potential participants are from different cultural background and have different language proficiencies, which add to the diversity of the study. As Perry (2005) demonstrated, “selecting a representative sample is important for making use of the findings outside of the confines of the study” (p. 60). He also argued that representative sample paradigm help the researcher generalize the findings and interpretations of the study to a larger population (Perry, 2005). The study is conducted through distributing an on-line questionnaire through emails; therefore there will be no physical contact of me and the participants. The Office of International Education helped me distribute this email protocol (Appendix D) to the potential participants once I have the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter (Appendix A). The procedures of recruiting participants are described in the next part.
Recruitment of the Participants

The participants were 80 students including 44 male and 36 female students. Before starting the recruitment, the research topic was approved by the School of Graduate Studies and Research in Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Appendix B). Also the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the human subjects review protocol of this study. Upon the approval of IRB, the Office of International Education (OIE) agreed that they could help me with my research (Appendix C) and helped me distributed the email protocol (Appendix E) to all the ESL/EFL students in the university. This email protocol was designed to invite potential participants to participate the study. In the protocol, first of all, I explained the purpose and significance of the study; then I clarified the standard for participation. Again, to be eligible for participation, the students were required to be 18 years old or older. There was no gender restriction for the participation. To illustrate, the age restriction was set to help recruit participants legally mature enough to make informed decisions. Also participants need to have educational experiences in schools or institutions in their home country before. The requirement of having educational experience in their home country before was to ensure the participants could provide their understanding of plagiarism from the perspective of an ESL/EFL student. The link of the on-line questionnaire was also included in the email. I clarified in the email that the students had the right to choose to participate or not and they were totally free skip a question if they did not feel comfortable or they were free to quit whenever they want. The confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed too. To participate, they could click the link of the questionnaire and go to the informed consent form online protocol (Appendix D). To quit, they can simply close the webpage anytime.
The OIE distributed the email protocol to all the ESL/EFL students via email twice with 7 days as an interval. Then I downloaded the data from the Qualtrics website. Altogether 80 valid responses were collected.

**Instrument**

In order to explore ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism, an on-line questionnaire was designed. The instrument of questionnaire was chosen in this study because it was a better choice in terms of measuring attitudes, perceptions and understandings of the participants in a limited period of time (Cohen, Manion, & Marrison, 2011). A modified version of Bouman’s (2007) *Survey of College Student Attitudes toward and Experiences with Plagiarism* was used. Modifications to the original survey were made to meet the purpose of this present study. First of all, I used detailed scenarios of plagiarism instead of brief statements in my questionnaire to make them more comprehensible. The questionnaire (Appendix F) was comprised of twenty-eight items altogether. The part consists of four questions which were designed to collect demographic information of the participants. The second part consists of Likert-scale scenarios which were designed to examine ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. The third part of the questionnaire was comprised of three open-ended questions that were intended to solicit students’ perceptions of plagiarism. To explain, the demographic questions were aimed to collect participants’ information of gender, educational level, and nationality. This information was crucially important in data analysis since they served as independent variables. The second part of the questionnaire was comprised of 21 Likert-scale questions that described scenarios of plagiarism.
Participants were asked to select their response based on a five-point Likert scale. Table 1 is one example of the Likert-scale questions.

Table 1

| Sample Questionnaire Table on Understanding Textual Practice and Plagiarism |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Definitely Plagiarism | Probably plagiarism | Not sure/undecided | Probably not | Definitely not |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

A student submitted the same paper to different classes. Table 1 shows that the Likert scale was designed as follows: 5 = definitely plagiarism, 4 = probably plagiarism, 3 = not sure/undecided, 2 = probably not, 1 = definitely not. Based on Peer et al. (2012), Likert scale is among the most frequently used instruments to measure attitudes. Also, the use of Likert Scale has been supported by Oppenheim (1992) that “Likert scales tend to perform well when it comes to a reliable rough ordering of people with regard to a particular attitude” (p. 200). Oppenheim (1992) also believed that Likert Scale is more advantageous in terms of providing the precise information that to which extent the respondents agree or disagree with the statements. My study employed Likert scales because they can help measure the ESL/EFL students’ attitude and understanding towards the scenarios of plagiarism. In this way, I can further analyze ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism based on the responses from the Likert-scale questions and achieve the purpose of the research, which is to investigate ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. In the end, the questionnaire includes three open-ended questions to solicit students’ inner thoughts about plagiarism.
Pilot Testing

In order to ensure the comprehensibility and validity of the questionnaire, figure out the time it takes to complete the questionnaire, I used the draft questionnaire for a pilot study among fourteen MA TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) students and seven C&T (Composition and TESOL) students of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The questionnaire was thoroughly analyzed and critiqued by the students. First of all, they were given 10 minutes to read through the questionnaire. Then they started asking questions, pointing out the ambiguity of the language in the questionnaire and providing suggestions. Based on their feedback, eleven statements were changed into brief descriptions of real life scenarios of plagiarism for better comprehensibility. Also the layout of the questionnaire was reformatted to present a tidier, more concise and reader-friendly outlook on-line. As a result, this questionnaire was revised to get rid of ambiguous sentences, irrelevant questions and present a more reader-friendly layout. The final version of the questionnaire included three parts of questions.

Description of the Questionnaire

Part I: Demographic Questions

This part consists of two multiple-choice questions, one dichotomous question and one gap filling question. These questions were aimed to collect participants’ information of educational level, gender, nationality and the language they spoke in their home country. This information helped the researcher group the data based on gender, educational level and nationality in the analysis. Also positioning the demographic
questions at the beginning help the participants know better the purpose of the research and minimize their anxiety.

**Part II: Likert-Scale Questions**

The second part of the questionnaire comprised of twenty-one likert-scale questions. They were divided into two parts, which were (1) the understanding of textual borrowing practices and plagiarism and (2) understanding the severity of plagiarism.

**Understanding of textual borrowing practice and plagiarism.** The question in this part was worded as “Which of the following do you consider to be plagiarism? Click on the best response from scale 5 = definitely plagiarism scale 1 = definitely not plagiarism”. This part was designed to uncover ESL/EFL students’ understanding and conceptualization of the definition of plagiarism. In order to achieve this purpose, 11 scenarios of plagiarism were provided for rating from “definitely plagiarism=5” to “definitely not=1”. These 11 scenarios altogether was aimed to uncover participants’ understanding of plagiarism in real-life scenarios.

**Understanding of the severity of plagiarism.** The question of this part was worded as “Comparing the severity of plagiarism: how serious is plagiarism compared to the following? Click the best scale in the column on the right based on your understanding from scale 5 = plagiarism is much worse to scale 1= plagiarism is not nearly as bad”. This part was designed to find out participants’ understanding of the severity of plagiarism. In this regard, 10 statements describing the behaviors of apparent plagiarism were provided for rating from “plagiarism is much worse =5” to “plagiarism is not nearly as bad =1”. These 10 scenarios were developed to uncover participants’ perceptions on the severity of apparent plagiarism in real-life scenarios.
Part III Open-ended Questions

This part included three open-ended questions. These open-ended questions were designed to solicit participants’ original and in-depth feeling of what is plagiarism, explore what thought was the reason of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism and examine their knowledge of the policy related to plagiarism. The three questions were designed as follows:

26. “Please define plagiarism.”
27. “Why do you think ESL/EFL students plagiarize?”
28. “What you know about the university’s policy about plagiarism?”

In order to understand the data collected from the participants and get a clear idea of the results, find answers to the research question, I describe the procedures of data analysis in the following part.

Data Analysis

In this study, I first used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 20 software) to analyze the data from Likert-scale questions. Then I categorized the responses from open-ended questions and group different categories together to find the participants’ knowledge of plagiarism.

Data Analysis of Likert-Scale Questions

First of all, I downloaded the data from the website of Qualtrics and open the data set by SPSS. Then I grouped the data three times by the participants’ gender, educational level and nationality, respectively. Thirdly, I generated the descriptive and inferential statistics by using SPSS for each group. To explain, the descriptive statistics here included mean and standard deviations for each of the group. The inferential statistics
here referred to the one-way MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) tests. One-way MANOVA tests were chosen in my study to determine the significant difference in each of the group. Specifically, I used the gender, educational level and nationality as the independent variables, respectively, in each of the one-way MANOVA tests. At the same time, I used the 21 Likert-scale scenarios as the dependent variables for each of the one-way MANOVA tests. As pointed out by Peer et al. (2012), a MANOVA test is used to “examine the influence of more than one independent variable on more than one dependent variable” (p. 257). In my test, I have two independent variables and twenty-one dependent variables; therefore, a MANOVA test is better choice. Furthermore, the one-way MANOVA test here is chosen rather than running a number of the one-way ANOVA because it can reduce the chance of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis (Peer et al., 2012).

After exporting the results from the data in SPSS, I first described the trend of the mean and standard deviations of the participants for each group. Then I described the scenarios that were reported a significant difference from the one-way MANOVA test. Informed by the results of the one-way MANOVA tests, I went back to the descriptive statistics again and analyzed the significantly different scenarios in detail.

**Data Analysis of the Open-ended Questions**

In order to analyze the responses from the open-ended questions, first of all, I copied these answers from the file downloaded from the website of Qualtrics and grouped them together based on the questions. Then I read the answers carefully from each question and categorized the answers based on the meanings. After that, calculated
the numbers and frequencies of the answers under each category and reported the results in the tables.

**Summary**

This chapter described the methodology adopted for this study, which was aimed for investigating ESL/ESL students’ understanding of plagiarism. A Quantitative methodology was adopted as the research design and an on-line questionnaire was used as the instrument to achieve the goal of the research. Specifically, twenty-one Liker-scale scenarios were suggested for rating. Also this questionnaire collected demographic information and solicit participants’ understandings through open-ended questions. Then data collection started from getting the approval letter of IRB. Firstly, the Office of International Education of the university distributed the questionnaires through emails for me. After that, I downloaded data from the website of Qualtrics and grouped the responses three times by the participants’ gender, educational level and nationality, respectively. Finally, I analyzed the data by using SPSS to generate the mean, standard deviation and run the one-way MANOVA tests for each group. I also analyzed the responses from the open-ended questions by categorizing. All the results of the data analysis were reported in tables.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of statistical analysis of the data collected from the on-line questionnaire completed by the participants. The data were analyzed in order to investigate the participants’ understanding of plagiarism. The findings were aimed to answer the following research question: What is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism? In order to answer this question, I describe the descriptive statistics and then report the results of the one-way MANOVA test. Next, I present the analysis of the open-ended questions’ data. Finally, I summarize the major findings from the results.

Statistical Analysis of the Quantitative Data

The statistical analysis was based on the data collected from the questionnaire completed by the participants. A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the participants’ understanding of plagiarism in the questionnaire. Specifically, twenty-one Likert-scale scenarios of plagiarism were used to investigate the participants’ understanding of plagiarism. The potential answers from the participants in these Likert-scale scenarios ranged from 5 to 1.

Procedures of the Quantitative Data Analysis

The computer Software SPSS was used to calculate the statistics. To explain, I first grouped the participants three times by their gender, nationality, and educational level, respectively. Then I used SPSS to calculate the descriptive statistics for each group to measure the overall tendency and the dispersion of their responses. The descriptive statistics here included the mean and standard deviation of the 21 Likert-scale scenarios and they were reported three times based on the participants’ gender, educational level.
and nationality, respectively. Next I conducted the test of one-way MANOVA three times to determine the significant differences. To explain, I used the participants’ gender, educational level and nationality, respectively, as the independent variable in each one-way MANOVA tests and the 21 scenarios of plagiarism as the dependent variables.

**Interpreting the Quantitative Data**

The presentation of descriptive statistics was divided into two parts. In the first part, I present the results of understanding of textual practices and plagiarism (Scenario 1 to Scenario 11); in the second part I present the understanding the severity of the apparent plagiarism (Scenario 12 to Scenario 21). In the part of understanding textual practice and plagiarism, the ratings for the scenarios were from “definitely plagiarism=5” to “definitely not=1” based on the question of “which of the following scenarios do you consider to be plagiarism.” Table 2 is an example of the questions in this part.

Table 2

*Sample Question on Understanding Textual Practice and Plagiarism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely Plagiarism</th>
<th>Probably Plagiarism</th>
<th>Not sure /undecided</th>
<th>probably not</th>
<th>definitely not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student submitted a paper to his professor, but a part of the paper was written by another student.

As a consequence, a mean score above 3.00 indicates that the participants believed this scenario was plagiarism, whereas a mean score below 3.00 means that the participants believed that the scenario was not plagiarism. A mean score of 3.00 represents a neutral attitude, indicating that the participants were not sure whether this scenario was plagiarism or not. Similarly, in the part of understanding the severity of
plagiarism, the participants were asked to “compare the severity of the plagiarism” and the ratings for the questions were from “plagiarism much worse =5” to “plagiarism is not nearly as bad =1”. Table 3 is an example of the question in this part.

Table 3

*Sample Question on Understanding the Severity of Plagiarism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>plag. is much worse</th>
<th>plag. is somewhat worse</th>
<th>neutral/unsure</th>
<th>plag. is not bad</th>
<th>plag. is not nearly as bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on a quiz</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result, a mean score above 3 indicates that the participants believed that plagiarism in the scenario was bad, whereas a mean score below 3 means participants believed the plagiarism was not bad. A mean score of 3 indicates a neutral attitude, meaning the participants had not decided or were not sure about the severity of plagiarism in this scenario. In order to understand the participants’ understanding of plagiarism thoroughly, the following part describes the results based on the participants’ gender, educational level and nationality, respectively and explore the possible variances in the participants.

**Understanding of Plagiarism Based on Gender**

In order to know the participants’ understanding of plagiarism based on their gender, I first describe the trend of the mean and standard deviation of their understanding, and then report the results of the one-way MANOVA test to determine the statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of their understanding of plagiarism.
Descriptive Statistics Based on Gender

Demographics. Table 4 shows that among the 80 participants, there are 44 male participants and 36 female participants.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding of textual practices and plagiarism based on gender. In order to understand the participants’ understanding of textual practices and plagiarism based on gender, the mean and standard deviation of the male and female participants in each scenario from Scenario 1 to 11 is presented in Table 5.
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Male M</th>
<th>Male SD</th>
<th>Female M</th>
<th>Female SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  A student submitted the same paper for two different classes.</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  A student submitted a paper to his professor, but a part of the paper was written by another student.</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  A student asked a tutor for help to revise his/her paper and then turn in the paper to his/her</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  A student copied a few sentences from another article when writing a paper but he did not reference the source.</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  A student asked someone else to write the whole paper for him/her and submit this paper to the</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  A student worked together with his/her classmate to plan the main idea of the paper.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  A student wrote a paper and all the paragraphs in the paper are from several different articles. The student use citations and quotation marks around the paragraphs.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  A student wrote a paper and the thesis statement of the paper was developed by another student</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  A student wrote a paper and asked somebody else do the proofreading or editing the paper.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 A student included one sentence from another source in his/her article and did not use quotation marks or a citation.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 A student did a research and presented the same research results in two different conferences.</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 reveals that the mean scores of male and female participants range from 1.92 (Female in Scenario 4) to 3.61(Female in Scenario 9). Most scores cluster around 3, which indicates that the participants’ understanding of plagiarism were close to the neutral attitude of “not sure whether the scenarios were plagiarism or not.” The following part presents the tendency of the high and low scores from the participants.

**The tendency of the high scores.** Female participants in Scenario 9 (M=3.61 SD=1.2) have the highest mean score under the category of understanding textual practices and plagiarism. This indicates that female participants perceived Scenario 9 “writing a paper and asking somebody else to do the proofreading or editing the paper” as plagiarism.
**The tendency of the low scores.** Female participants for Scenario 4 “copying a few sentences from another article when writing a paper without referencing the source” (M= 1.92 SD=1.03) have the lowest score under this category, which indicates that female participants did not regard “copying a few sentences from another article when writing a paper without referencing the source” as plagiarism. Similarly, female students did not consider Scenario 2 “submitting a paper partially written by another student to the professor” (M=2.08 SD=1.13) or Scenario 5 “asking somebody writing a whole paper and submitting to the professor as his/her own” (M=2.08 SD=1.12) as plagiarism.

**Understanding the severity of plagiarism based on gender.** In order to understand the male and female participants’ understanding of severity of plagiarism, the means and standard deviations based on gender is presented in Table 6 from Scenario 12 to 21.
Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M and SD of Understanding the Severity of Plagiarism Based on Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 cheating on a quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 cheating on a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 cheating on a homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 shoplifting a shirt from a department store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 buying a set of test questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 helping a friend cheat on a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 making a copy of a computer program without buying it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 storing math formula in your calculator for use on a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 stealing a book from the campus library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 downloading copyrighted music or video files</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 reveals that the mean scores for male and female participants’ understanding of the severity of plagiarism range from 2.16 (Male in Scenario 1) to 2.69 (Female in Scenario 16, 17 and 21). It shows that even the highest score (M=2.69) is below 3 and very close to the neutral score 3. This indicates that neither male nor female participants thought plagiarism in these scenarios was very bad.

It is worth noticing in Table 6 that male participants for Scenario 12 “cheating on a quiz” have the lowest score (M=2.16 SD=0.94), a score further from the neutral attitude represented by 3, which means male participants did not think the plagiarism in this scenario was bad. The other participants, including male and female, can be moderately categorized as “perceiving the plagiarism in these scenarios as not bad” due to the fact that their scores were slightly below 3.

**Inferential Statistics Based on Gender**

In order to evaluate the descriptive data and determine whether significant differences existed between male and female participants, I conducted a one-way
MANOVA using gender as the independent variable and the 21 scenarios as dependent variables. Results revealed no significant MANOVA, Hotellings’ Trace = .44, sig=.27 (p >.05). However, follow-up univariate F test revealed 5 scenarios that differed significantly at the .05 level. They were Scenario 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10. For a number of the scenarios, it appears that there is a statistical significance and not necessarily meaningful difference. For example, Scenario 10, which is “A student included one sentence from another source in his/her article and did not use quotation marks or a citation”, was rated 2.89 by male participants, and 2.25 by female participants, yet was different in statistical significance. This difference was not meaningful because both of their scores fell into the category of “not plagiarism”. Of the scenarios that are significantly different, only Scenario 7 stands out as being meaningful. To explain, for Scenario 7 “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from several different articles by using citations and quotation marks”, the score of male participants falls into the scope of “not plagiarism” (M=2.70 SD=0.90) while female participants falls within the scope of “plagiarism” (M=3.22 SD=1.42). At the same time, the value of standard deviation shows that in the female group, there are more disagreements than in the male groups.

**Findings Based on Gender**

First of all, both male and female participants’ understanding of plagiarism tell into the category of regarding the plagiarism as not bad and at the same time their attitudes were close to the neutral attitude “not sure”. Also, female participants perceived “writing a paper and asking somebody else to do the proofreading or editing the paper” as plagiarism, but did not regard “copying a few sentences from another article when writing a paper without referencing the source” and “submitting a paper partially written
by another student to the professor” as plagiarism. Also, the description above reveals that male and female participants have different opinions in terms of “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from other sources by using quotation marks and citations”.

Female participants perceive as plagiarism while male participants not.

**Understanding of Plagiarism Based on Educational Level**

In this part, in order to explore participants’ understanding based on educational level, first I present descriptive and inferential statistics from the participants grouped by educational level. As shown in table 7, of all the 80 participants, 10 participants were at undergraduate level while 70 participants at graduate level.

Table 7

*Distribution of the Participants Based on Educational Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Descriptive Statistics based on Educational level**

**Understanding of textual practices and plagiarism.** In order to understand the undergraduate and graduate participants’ understanding of textual practices and plagiarism, I present the mean and standard deviation from the participants from Scenario 1 to 11 based on their educational level in Table 8.
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Textual Practices and Plagiarism</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 A student submitted the same paper for two different classes.</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A student submitted a paper to his professor, but a part of the paper was written by another student.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A student asked a tutor for help to revise his/her paper and then turn in the paper to his/her professor as his/her own work.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 A student copied a few sentences from another article when writing a paper but he did not reference the source.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 A student asked someone else to write the whole paper for him/her and submit this paper to the professor.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 A student worked together with his/her classmate to plan the main idea of the paper.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 A student wrote a paper and all the paragraphs in the paper are from several different articles. The student use citations and quotation marks around the paragraphs.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 A student wrote a paper and the thesis statement of the paper was developed by another student.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 A student wrote a paper and asked somebody else do the proofreading or editing a paper.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 A student included one sentence from another source in his/her article and did not use quotation marks or a citation.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 A student did a research and presented the same research results in two different conferences.</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that the mean scores of undergraduate and graduate participants range from 1.80 (Undergraduate in Scenario 2) to 3.50 (Undergraduate in Scenario 6). Most of the scores cluster around 3, the score that represents the neutral attitude of “not sure about whether it is plagiarism or not”. A few scores were not within a close range of 3 and the tendency of high and low scores is presented as follows.

The tendency of the high scores. In Scenario 6, undergraduate participants have the highest mean score in Table 8 (M=3.50 SD=1.50), which means undergraduate
participants perceived Scenario 6 “working together with a classmate to plan the main idea of the paper” as plagiarism.

The tendency of the low scores. In Scenario 2, undergraduate participants have the lowest mean score in this category (M= 1.80 SD=1.32), which means undergraduate participants did not perceive Scenario 2 “submitting a paper partially written by another student to the professor” as plagiarism.

Understanding of the severity of plagiarism. In order to understand the undergraduate and graduate participants’ understanding of the severity of plagiarism, I present the mean and standard deviation of the participants from Scenario 12 to 21 based on the educational level in Table 9.

Table 9

<p>|M and SD of Understanding Severity of Plagiarism Based on Educational Level|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 reveals that the mean scores in understanding the severity of plagiarism range from 1.70 (undergraduate in Scenario 12) to 3.20 (Undergraduate in Scenario 17). It shows that the majority of the mean scores are below 3, except undergraduate in Scenario 17 (M = 3.2 SD = 1.48), which means the major trend is that neither graduate
nor undergraduate students considered plagiarism in these scenarios to be very bad (M < 3). Based on the statistics, three points need to be pointed out as follows.

First of all, undergraduate participants have a low score for Scenario 12 “cheating on a quiz” (M= 1.7 SD=0.68) and Scenario 12 “cheating on a test” (M=2.00 SD=0.94). It means undergraduate participants did not regard the plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz” and “cheating on a test” as bad. Secondly, in each of the scenarios, except for Scenario 16 “buying a set of test questions”, the mean of undergraduate participants was lower than that of the corresponding graduate participants, which indicates that the participants at undergraduate level generally believed that the severity of plagiarism in these scenarios was less worse than their corresponding graduate participants. To put it in another way, graduate participants believed the plagiarism in these scenarios worse than the undergraduate participants did. Thirdly, for scenario 16 “buying a set of questions”, undergraduate and graduate participants had different opinions. Undergraduate participants regarded it as plagiarism while graduate participants did not.

**Inferential Statistics Based on Educational Level**

In order to evaluate the descriptive data and determine the statistically significant significances between undergraduate and graduate students in these scenarios, I conducted a one-way MANOVA test using educational level as the independent variable and the 21 scenarios as the dependent variables. The results revealed a significant MANOVA, Hotellings’ Trace = .0.68,  sig=. 031 p < .05. The significant value being below .05 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between graduate participants and undergraduate participants’ understanding of plagiarism. Follow-up univariate F test revealed 2 scenarios differed significantly at the .05 level. They are
Scenario 8 and Scenario 20. Similar to the results regarding the differences between male and female participants, the scenarios achieved a statistically significant difference do not necessarily achieve meaningful difference. In this case, scenario 20 “stealing a book from campus library” was rated 2.10 by undergraduate participant and 2.69 graduate participants, both of which fell into the same category of “plagiarism is not bad”, yet achieves a statistically significant difference. Therefore, the statistically difference in Scenario 20 is not meaningful. Only Scenario 8 stands out as being meaningful. To explain, for Scenario 8 “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by another student”, the score of undergraduate participants fell within the scope of “perceiving it as plagiarism” (M=3.20 SD=1.33), while the score of graduate students fell into the scope of “perceiving it as not plagiarism” (M=2.57 SD=0.84).

Findings Based on Educational Level.

The results reveal that undergraduate participants regarded “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by others” as plagiarism, whereas graduate participants regarded it as not plagiarism. Secondly, the descriptive statistics informed us that, undergraduate participants perceived buying a set of questions as plagiarism while graduate participants perceived it as not plagiarism. Additionally, for the majority of the scenarios from Scenario 12 to 21, graduate participants thought the plagiarism was worse than their undergraduate counterparts.

Understanding of Plagiarism Based on Nationality

In this part, in order to know the participants’ understanding of plagiarism when they were grouped by nationalities, I present descriptive and inferential the participants’ understanding of plagiarism based on their nationality. As shown in Table 10, the
participants were from at least 13 countries (one category is others) including China, Ghana, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Syria, Taiwan and the others. The category of others housed the participants who did not specify his nationality in the questionnaire.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics of Understanding of Plagiarism Based on Nationality

Understanding of textual practices and plagiarism. In order to gain an insight of the understanding of textual practices and plagiarism of the participants from different countries, I present the mean and standard deviation of the participants from Scenario 1 to 11 in Table 11 based on the participants’ nationality.
Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Libya</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 M</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 M</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>1.60</td>
<td>2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 M</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 M</td>
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<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 M</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 M</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 M</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 M</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 M</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 M</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 M</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *a* There is only one participant from Mexico; therefore no SD value is available for Mexico group.

Table 11 reveals that the mean scores of understanding textual practices and plagiarism of the participants from different nationalities ranges from 1.60 (mean score of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia in Scenario 2) to 4.2 (mean score of Saudi Arabia for scenario 6). Most of the scores cluster around 3, the score that represents a neutral attitude of not sure whether this scenario is plagiarism or not. Participants from some of the nationalities had a mean score that was not within a close range of 3.

The tendency of high and low scores is presented as follows.
The tendency of the high scores. Participants from Saudi Arabia perceived Scenario 6 “working together with a classmate to plan the main idea of the paper and submitted to professor” to be plagiarism (M=4.2 SD=1.1). Also, participants from “others” perceived Scenario 7 “writing a paper with all the paragraphs are from several articles by using citations and quotation marks” as plagiarism (M=4.00 SD=1.00). Additionally participants from Taiwan regarded Scenario 8 “writing a paper with the thesis statement developed by another student” (M=4.00 SD=1.31) and Scenario 9 “writing a paper and asking somebody do the proofreading or editing the paper” (M=4 SD=1.31) to be plagiarism.

The tendency of the low scores. For the understanding of Scenario 1 “submitting the same paper for two different classes”, participants from Korea (M= 1.83 SD=0.75) thought it was not plagiarism. For Scenario 2 “submitting a paper to the professor with a part of it written by another student”, participants from Indonesia (M=1.60 SD=0.55), Korea (M=1.67 SD=0.82) and Saudi Arabia (M=1.60 SD=0.89) perceived it as not plagiarism. For Scenario 4 “coping a few sentences from another article when writing an article but did not reference the source”, participants from China (M=1.77 SD=1.09), Indonesia (M=1.8 SD=0.84), Saudi Arabia (M=1.8 SD=0.84), Taiwan (M=1.88 SD=0.64) and “others” (M=1.78 SD=0.84) thought it was not plagiarism.

Understanding the severity of plagiarism. In order to understand the participants’ understanding of the severity of plagiarism based on their nationality, I present the mean and standard deviation of the participants based on their nationality in each scenario from Scenario 12 to 21 in table 12.
Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *There is only one participant from Mexico therefore, no SD value is available.

Table 12 reveals that most scores fell below 3, which is the scope of “plagiarism is not bad”. The mean score of participants from different nationalities in understanding the severity of plagiarism ranges from 1.50 (mean score of Korea in Scenario 12) to 3.67 (mean score of Syria in Scenario 18). The following part described tendencies of the mean scores that were not within a close range of 3.

**The tendency of the high scores.** For Scenario 18 “making a copy of a computer program without buying”, participants from Syria (M=3.67 SD=0.58) perceived the plagiarism in this scenario as bad.
The tendency of the low scores. For Scenario 12 “cheating on a quiz”, participants from China (M=1.62 SD=0.87), Japan (M=1.75 SD=0.96), Korea (M=1.50 SD=0.55) and “others” (M=1.89 SD=0.93) did not regard the plagiarism in it as bad. For Scenario 13 “cheating on a test”, participants from China (M=1.62 SD=0.96) and Korea (M=1.83 SD=0.75) did not think the plagiarism was bad. For Scenario 17 “helping a friend cheat on a test”, participants from Jordan (M=1.75 SD=0.96) did not perceive the plagiarism in this scenario as bad.

Inferential Statistics Based on Nationality

In order to evaluate the descriptive data and determine statistically significant differences in these scenarios, I conducted a one-way MANOVA test using nationality as the independent variable and the 21 scenarios as the dependent variables. The results revealed no significant MANOVA test, Hotelling’s Trace = 4.96 sig=.99 p > .05. However the follow-up univariate $F$ tests showed that Scenario 12 and Scenario 13 made a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. Table 11 shows that both of statistical significances in the two scenarios were meaningful because the scores of the participants fell into different categories. To explain, Table 12 shows that in Scenario 12 “cheating on a quiz”, the mean score ranges from 1.5 (Korean) to 3.33 (Ghana). In Scenario 13, “cheating on a test”, the mean score ranges from 1.62 (China) to 3.33 (Ghana and Syria). In these two scenarios, the highest score is 3.33, and it is very close to 3, the neutral attitude.

Specifically in Scenario 12 “cheating on a quiz”, the mean scores of participants from China, Japan, Korea and Others are below 2, which indicate they considered the plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz” as not bad. Mean scores of Indonesia, Jordan, Libya,
Niger, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Taiwan were slightly below 3, which means they can be moderately categorized as perceiving the plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz” as not bad. The mean score of Mexico is 3, which means the participant from Mexico was not sure about the severity of plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz”. Only participants from Ghana have a score slightly more than 3, which indicate they can be moderately categorized as perceiving plagiarism in cheating on a quiz as bad.

In scenario 13 “cheating on a test”, the mean scores of participants from China and are below, which indicate that they considered plagiarism in “cheating on a test” as not bad. Mean scores of participants from Korea, Indonesia, Jordan, Libya, Mexico, Nigeria, Taiwan and others are slightly below 3, which indicate they can be moderately categorized as perceiving the plagiarism in “cheating on a test” as not bad. Participants from Niger had a neutral score of 3, which means they were not sure about the severity of plagiarism in “cheating on a test” and participants from Ghana and Syria had a score slightly more than 3, which indicate that they can be moderately categorized as regarding the plagiarism in cheating on a test as bad. Most scores cluster around 3 but several nationalities have a score no more than 2, including China, Japan, Korea, Mexico and Others.

Findings Based on Nationality

This result shows that the participants from China, Japan Korea and others had a firmer opinion in believing plagiarism in cheating on a test was not bad. Participants of the other nationalities were close to the neutral attitude of not sure. Secondly, participants from China and Japan had a firm attitude in believing that plagiarism in cheating on a test
was not bad, while participants from other countries were close to the neutral attitude of not sure.

**Summary of the Analysis for the Likert-scale Questions**

The findings based on the results from the quantitative data analysis are presented as follows. The results are summarized in the same sequence as the data was analyzed, which is the results from the participants grouped by gender, educational level, and nationality, respectively.

- Male and female participants had a slightly different understanding of “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from several different articles by using citations and quotation marks”. Female participants believed it was plagiarism while male participants did not think it was plagiarism.

- Educational level had a significant influence on participants’ understanding of plagiarism in the 21 scenarios as group.

- Undergraduate participants perceived “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by another student” as plagiarism while graduate participants did not perceive it as plagiarism.

- Undergraduate participants perceive buying a set of questions as plagiarism while graduate participants regarded it as not plagiarism.

- Generally speaking, graduate participants thought the apparent plagiarism in scenarios from 12 to 21 was worse than their undergraduate counterparts.

- Participants from China, Japan, Korea, and “others” considered plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz” as not bad.
Participants from China and Japan perceived the plagiarism in “cheating on a test” as not bad.

In the following parts, I present the data analysis and results of the three open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, which is aimed to solicit participants’ in-depth understanding of plagiarism.

**Perceptions and Knowledge in Understanding Plagiarism**

The final part of the questionnaire consists of four open-ended questions, which is aimed to solicit participants’ personal knowledge plagiarism based on their understanding. I analyzed the data by starting from reading the responses from the participants based on each question. These open-ended questions are worded as follows:

1. Please define plagiarism.
2. Why do you think ESL/EFL students plagiarize?
3. What do you know about our university’s policy about plagiarism?

**Procedures of Analyzing Open-ended Questions**

There were 37 responses from participants for the first open-ended question, 32 responses for the second open-ended question and 32 responses for third open-ended question. I analyzed these responses based on the procedures described as follows.

**Step 1: Reading the data.** The answers for each question were grouped into different tables based on the question. Since the number of the responses for each question was relatively small, I read the responses under each question one by one to have a general idea of the participants’ responses.

**Step 2: Identification of categories.** After reading the answers for each question, several emerging categories were identified based on their similarity of the meaning.
Each category was assigned a different color to facilitate the process of generating the number and frequency of the answers. Each time the answer falls into one category, it is marked with the same color assigned to that category. By doing this, I categorize all the answers under each question.

**Step 3: Further categorization:** Most responses from the participants were grouped into the categories created based on their meanings. For those responses that did not answer the question or were not meaningful, they were grouped into the category of “miscellaneous”.

**Step 4: Generating numbers and frequencies.** After categorizing answers for each question, I count the numbers of the responses and calculate the frequencies of the answers in each category. The data are presented in Table 13, Table 14 and Table 15.

**Results of the Analysis from Open-ended Questions**

In order better comprehend the participants’ personal understanding and knowledge about plagiarism, the responses from the open-ended questions are grouped into tables and their corresponding numbers and frequencies were calculated. The results of each question are presented in the following part.

**Question 1: Please define plagiarism.** Altogether 37 responses were collected for this question. Two of them were unrelated to the question so they grouped into “miscellaneous”. The other answers from the question were grouped into four categories based on their meanings. Table 13 presents the frequencies of the answers in each category.
Table 13

Participants’ Definition of Plagiarism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Deliberately using other’ idea/work for its own interest, without giving a credit to the author</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>35(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Cheating on exam/homework/paper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Unacceptable intertextuality/crime</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Using the words without understanding or knowing how to use them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Not knowing how to cite</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 reveals that there were 35 valid responses for the question. Among them, 25 participants gave definitions similar to “deliberately using other’s idea/work and use for its own interest without giving a credit”. Four examples, one student wrote “using some words from other people without referencing”. Similarly, another student put it like “For their own interests, intentionally put other people’s achievements as their own”. Likewise, one student wrote, “taking someone else’s work/quote/sentence in your work without citing the sources of the information used”. The second category of the answers was “cheating on the exam/ homework/ research paper”. Four participants fell into this category and they answered the questions like “cheating on the exam”, “not doing homework by oneself”, and “Plagiarism is cheating on a research paper”. The third category was “unacceptable intertextuality or crime”. Two participants mentioned, “Plagiarism was unacceptable in academic writing”. Another participant wrote “it was unacceptable intertextuality” and also one other put it as “it was unacceptable and crime”. The fourth category only incorporated one answer which was “plagiarism is using others’ words without understanding and knowing how to use and cite”. The final category also has one answer, “not know how to cite”.
Table 13 shows that most answers were in the category of “Deliberately using other’ idea/work for its own interest, without giving a credit to the author”. In their perception, plagiarism refers to use the work/idea without not citing their works or giving any credit to the original author. Some others gave concrete examples like “cheating on the example/homework and research paper” and a few of them mentioned it was unacceptable and crime.

The results showed that most participants had some knowledge or knew the basic definition of plagiarism. For example the participants from the first four categories could give the definition or the example of plagiarism. Informed by the answers from the participants, they defined plagiarism as “deliberately using other’s words without referencing” “cheating” “crime” and “unacceptable”. Their definitions of plagiarism showed that they perceived plagiarism negatively. Only one answer was related to writing convention “not knowing how to cite” and one answer was about do not have a clear knowledge when using the original material which is “using somebody else’s words and ideas without understanding them and know how to use them”. Therefore, these responses revealed that most students have some knowledge about plagiarism, at least in the abstract level.

**Question 2: Why do you think ESL/EFL students plagiarize?** Altogether 32 responses were collected for this question. One of them did not answer this question so it was grouped into the category of “miscellaneous”. The other 31 answers can be grouped into 7 categories based on the meanings. The numbers and frequencies of each category of the responses are reported in Table 14.
Table 14

Participants’ Perceptions of ESL/EFL Students’ Plagiarism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unfamiliar with definitions and rules of plagiarism</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every plagiarizes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different literacy practice in different country/cultures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language proficiency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weakness of human being</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher GPA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not confident</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 shows that there are 31 valid responses for this question. Nine participants expressed the idea that ESL/EFL students plagiarized because they were not familiar with the rules and definitions related to plagiarism. For example, the answers under this category included “they do not know how to cite and have no concept of patchwriting”, “they are not exposed to the concept of plagiarism”, “they do not know the rules”, “lack of knowledge of how to use sources”, and “weakness in following the method and ways in doing research”. The second category was that “everyone plagiarizes”, which means the participants believed that plagiarism is a universal phenomenon which is not only restricted to ESL/EFL students. Several responses were in this category. For example, one participant wrote like “everyone plagiarizes”, and “I do not think ESL/EFL student plagiarize. It is an educational direction.” The third category is “different literacy practice in different countries and cultures”. Four participants fell into this category and their answers included “cultural differences”, “students from different countries have different understandings”, and “personally I do not, but it could be where they come from have different literacy practices /process”. The fourth category is language proficiency and four participants fell into this category. They answered the question like “they are not confident about their language proficiency” “a lack of
language proficiency”, and “probably because of language barriers”. The fifth category was weakness of human being. Four participants were in this category and they wrote like “weakness of human being”, “they are lazy”, and “laziness”. Two participants were in the category of “higher GPA” because their answers included “desire higher GPA” and “want a higher grade”. Finally two participants fell into the category of “not confident”. Their answers were “not sure about their own capacities” and “not confident in their language”.

These responses revealed that most participants believed that ESL/EFL students plagiarized because of the unfamiliarity with the rules of plagiarism. Also another equally dominant answer was everyone plagiarizes and plagiarism is not restricted to ESL/EFL students. Also they gave other answers like different literacy practice in a different culture, a low language proficiency, a desire for higher GPA and not confident. This revealed that participants had different opinions on the reasons leading to ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism.

**Question 3: What do you know about the university’s policy about plagiarism?** Altogether 32 responses were collected for this question. But three of them were not related to the question so they were grouped in the category of “miscellaneous”. The other 29 responses can be grouped into 6 categories based on the meanings. Table 15 presents the frequencies of the answers in each category.
Table 15

Knowledge about Policy of Plagiarism in the University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 expelled/failed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 not sure/no knowledge</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 not clear but know very serious penalty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 banned/forbidden</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 no regulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Not copying from others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 shows that there are 29 valid answers for this question. Eleven participants reported that the policy about plagiarism was they would be expelled or failed the course. For example their answers were like “maybe expelled”, “consequences start from getting an F to be kicked out of the program” and “failed the class”. Seven participants said they were not sure or had no knowledge about the policy about plagiarism. They put it like “I am not sure”, “sorry I do not know”, and “not very clear”. Four participants said they were not very clear but they knew the penalty was very serious. For example their answers were like “I have no idea, but I heard the US plagiarism can have serious penalty”, “it not good”, and “do not know much, but generally American universities take plagiarism seriously. The punishment can be very harsh”. Four participants said plagiarism was forbidden or banned in their university. Their answers included “it is forbidden”, “forbidden”, “banning plagiarism” and “our school has banned plagiarism”. One participant said there is “no regulation” about plagiarism in their university. The other participant answered the question like “not copying from others”.

Table 15 indicates that most participants who answered this question had some idea about the severity of the policy in the university about plagiarism. Their answers
ranged from “expelled” “failed” “banned” to “not very good”. Only six participants from Category 3 and Category 5 did not have clear knowledge about the university policy on plagiarism. All the other answers provided by the participants showed that they knew the university policy was against plagiarism. To summarize, most participants believed that the policy in the university was against plagiarism and plagiarism could lead to serious consequences.

**Summary of the Findings**

The summary of the findings is organized in the same sequence as the data was analyzed. The summary of the findings from quantitative data analysis come first and then come the findings from the analysis of the open-ended questions. They are presented as follows.

- Male and female participants had a slightly different understanding of “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from several different articles by using citations and quotation marks”. Female participants believed it was plagiarism while male participants considered it as not plagiarism.

- Female participants perceived “writing a paper and asking somebody else to do the proofreading or editing the paper” as plagiarism, but did not regard “copying a few sentences from another article when writing a paper without referencing the source” and “submitting a paper partially written by another student to the professor” as plagiarism.

- Educational level exerted a significant influence on the participants’ understanding on the 21 scenarios of plagiarism.
• Undergraduate participants regarded “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by others” as plagiarism while graduate students did not perceive it as plagiarism.

• Undergraduate participants perceived buying a set of questions as plagiarism while graduate participants perceived it as not plagiarism.

• Generally, graduate participants perceived the plagiarism in scenarios from scenario 12 to 21 was more serious than their undergraduate counterparts.

• Participants from China, Japan, Korea, and “others” considered plagiarism in “cheating on a quiz” was not bad.

• Participants from China and Japan perceived the plagiarism in “cheating on a test” as not bad;

• Most participants knew the basic definition of plagiarism at least at the abstract level.

• In the perspective of the participants, the dominant reason of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism was “unfamiliar with the definition and rules of plagiarism” and “everyone plagiarizes”.

• Most participants knew that the university policies were against the plagiarism and the dominant policy provided by the participants was “expelled/failed”.

In the next chapter, I discuss these findings and expand the implications for teaching ESL/EFL students. I will also address limitations and future research directions concerning ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of this study is to investigate ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. This study is aimed to answer the following research question: What is ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism? In order to answer this question, I present the discussion of the major findings and give recommendations for the future research in this chapter. First of all, I present a summary and discussion of the major findings from the results. The summary and discussion are organized in the same order as the findings from the results. In the discussion, I also compare and contrast the findings of this study with the previous studies in the literature review. Secondly, I addressed the implications and discuss the limitations of the present study. Finally, I suggest avenues for future research and make final comments.

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

This part presents a summary of the major findings and a discussion of the major findings. The summary is organized in the same way as the data was analyzed which means the findings from the quantitative data are summarized first and findings from the open-ended questions second. Specifically, this part presents the participants’ understanding of plagiarism based on their gender, educational level and nationality, respectively, and then discusses the participants’ personal knowledge of plagiarism. I also compare and contrast the findings of this present study with the previous studies in the literature review.
Male and Female Participants’ Different Understanding on Citations

The findings revealed that there was a significant difference between male and female participants’ understanding of plagiarism in the scenario of “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from several articles by using citation and quotation marks”. Female participants believed it to be plagiarism while male participants believed it to be not plagiarism. This could be that female participants had a good understanding of textual practices concerning plagiarism while male participants not. It could also be that female participants always strictly followed the rules of plagiarism while male participants did not obey the rules strictly, or more tolerant of the practices of not obeying the rules of plagiarism. I only found two studies that had mentioned the influence of gender on ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. Firstly, the finding of my study is against the results of the study by Wheeler (2009), which showed gender did not make a statistically significant difference in the Japanese ESL students’ understanding of plagiarism. To illustrate, Wheeler (2009) investigated the Japanese students’ understanding of plagiarism by surveying 77 first-year students from four separate classes in a university in Japan. They were asked to give scores for the writing assignments, which were plagiarized from a published article and the data were analyzed by one-way ANOVA. The results showed that gender did not make a statistically significant difference in the participants’ understanding of plagiarism. However, the finding of my study is in agreement with the results of the study by Lin and Wen (2006), whose study revealed that male students had a higher rate of tolerating plagiarism than their female counterparts. To explain, Lin and Wen (2006) investigated the students’ attitudes of plagiarism in academic settings by analyzing the surveys from 2069 college
students. The results showed that male students were more tolerant of the practices of plagiarism than the female students were. Lin and Wen (2006) implied that the reason of the gender difference in understanding the boundary of plagiarism could come from the tradition from Chinese history, which dictates that “women were strongly bound to be honest, and traditionally, dishonest women would be shamed throughout their lives” (Lin & Wen, 2006, p. 94).

In addition to the previous two studies, the findings from several other studies, which focused on college students’ perception and attitudes of plagiarism, also showed that male students were more likely to commit plagiarism and have a more tolerant attitude of plagiarism than the female students (Caron, Whitbourne, & Halgin, 1992; Roig, & Caso, 2005; Whitley, 1999). In the study of Caron, et al. (1992), 261 undergraduate students including 159 women and 102 men were surveyed by a questionnaire investigating making fraudulent excuses for writings in academic setting. The results showed that male students were more likely to make fraudulent excuses than female participants. Similarly, in the study by Roig and Caso (2008), 565 undergraduate students including 218 male and 346 female were surveyed by two questionnaires, which were Questionnaire on Academic Excuses and Academic Practice Survey. The study showed that male participants were more likely to use fraudulent excuses to commit plagiarism than female participants. The difference between male and female students’ attitudes of the practice of plagiarism was explained by Gilligan (1982) using the sex role socialization theory, which indicated, “women had been socialized to obey rules and temptations but male were less bounding” (p. 3). This theory indicates that male students are relatively less restricted by the rules but female students are always cautious and pay
more attention in following the rules. This theory could be borrowed to explain the finding of the present study of why male participants were more tolerant of the practice of plagiarism, while female participants were not. However, future studies are needed to validate the finding in this study.

Undergraduate and Graduate Participants’ Different Perceptions

Different understanding on collaborative writing. The findings showed that educational level has made a statistically significant difference on the participants’ understanding of plagiarism in the 21 scenarios. First of all, undergraduate participants regarded “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by others” as plagiarism, while graduate participants had a tendency of not perceiving it as plagiarism. This revealed that undergraduate and graduate participants had different understandings towards collaborative writing or collaborative authorship. In this case, graduate participants supported collaborative writing and believed it was not plagiarism. While the undergraduate participants did not support collaborative writing and thought it was plagiarism.

Different understanding on buying test questions. Additionally, undergraduate participants believed the plagiarism in “buying a set of test questions” was bad, while graduate participants did not think plagiarism “buying a set of questions” was bad. This finding are marginal to the findings from previous scholarship concerning the concerning ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism based on their educational levels. One reason may be related to the fact that the instrument of the questionnaire in this study allowed the possibility for comparing participants’ understanding of each specific instance of plagiarism according their educational level. Future researches are recommended to validate this finding and explore the reasons behind it.
Different Understanding on the severity of plagiarism. Another finding in the group divided by the educational level was that the undergraduate participants perceived plagiarism less serious than their graduate counterparts in most scenarios from 12 to 21, with one exception of the Scenario 16 “buying a set of questions”. This finding suggested that undergraduate participants were less concerned about the severity of plagiarism than their graduate counterparts. To put it in another way, graduate participants were more concerned about the severity of plagiarism than their undergraduate counterparts. It revealed the participants from a higher educational level showed more concern on plagiarism. This finding was consistent with the finding of the study conducted by Rinner and Kobayashi (2005), which revealed that graduate ESL participants showed more concern about plagiarism than the undergraduate participants in the academic setting. To explain, Rinner and Kobayashi (2005) surveyed 715 Japanese students including undergraduate and graduate students to investigate their understanding of plagiarism and then compared the results between different academic levels in the study. The results showed that graduate students paid more attention to plagiarism than the undergraduate students and graduate students were less tolerant of the practice of plagiarism than the undergraduate counterparts. Similarly, the finding of the present study is also in line with the study by Deckert (1993), who surveyed 214 ESL students in Hong Kong to investigate their perceptions of plagiarism. The results from Deckert (1993) showed that students from a senior level were more capable in recognizing plagiarism in different instances and had a more serious attitude towards plagiarism. Additionally, the finding of my present study is also consistent with finding from the study by Lin and Wen (2006), which found that students from senior years had a lower rate of tolerance towards
plagiarism behaviors and a lower rate of committing plagiarism than their freshmen counterparts.

At the same time, the findings from some other studies, which were not restricted to the population of ESL/EFL students, also supported the finding that students from a higher educational level were less likely to plagiarize and had a more serious attitude on plagiarism issue. For example, the study of Wajda-Johnston, et al. (2001) found that students at graduate level had a lower rate of plagiarism than the undergraduate students. To explain, in the study by Wajada-Johnston et al. (2001), 246 students from all year levels pursuing different degrees completed the survey of Cheating/Academic Dishonesty, and the results were computed based on the educational level of the students. The results supported the finding of this present study that students at graduate level had had a more serious attitude of plagiarism and were less likely to commit plagiarism than the undergraduate students. Wajda-Johnston et al. (2001) inferred that the different attitudes towards the severity of plagiarism from students of different educational levels can be related to the fact that students at the graduate level had invested more time, energy and money in education so the risk of plagiarizing outweighed the benefit. Also it could be because students have had more practice on writing with sources so they had a better understanding of plagiarism. Similarly, Sims (1995) found that graduate students were less likely to plagiarize than the undergraduate students. In his study, he surveyed 131 students and 45 faculty members to investigate and compare their attitudes of plagiarism. The results showed that freshmen reported that plagiarism was less severe than sophomores, who reported plagiarism practices less severe than juniors, who reported plagiarism practices less severe than seniors and graduate level students. Sims
(1995) explained that inadequate educational instruction on the severity of academic plagiarism was a significant factor in influencing the understanding of plagiarism of students from all educational levels.

Regarding Cheating as Not Bad: Understanding of Plagiarism Based on Nationality

Regarding cheating as not bad. The findings showed that participants from China, Korea, Japan, and “others” regarded cheating on a quiz as not bad. Additionally, participants from China and Japan regarded cheating on a test as not bad. The category of “others” here includes the unspecified nationalities of the participants; therefore here I only discuss the nationalities that were specified by the participants. The findings indicated that participants from China, Korea and Japan were more tolerant of plagiarism in the situation of cheating in exams.

Being consistent with previous studies. The finding from the current study is in line with the results of the study by Shi (2006) who found that ESL/EFL participants from China, Japan and Korea perceived plagiarism as both linguistic and cultural challenges. Shi (2006) investigated 46 undergraduate students’ perception of plagiarism by conducting interviews and tried to uncover the possible influences from their cultural backgrounds, languages they spoke at home, and the ideological reasons. The participants include 11 native English speakers and 35 ESL/EFL students. Ten of them were from German, eight Chinese, nine Japanese, and eight Korea. The results showed that participants from non-Western (Chinese, Japanese and Korea) background found western notion of plagiarism very strange and not acceptable. Also these non-Western background students had received little instruction on plagiarism in their home country before they came to study abroad. The finding of this present study is also consistent with
the study by Rawwas, Al-Khatib and Vitell (2004), who did a cross-cultural comparison between American and Chinese business students. They investigated the beliefs, values, and opportunism of the American and Chinese marketing students of plagiarism. To illustrate, they used self-reported questionnaires as the instrument and the participants included 291 students from US and 166 students from China. The results of the study showed that Chinese marketing students showed more acceptances to plagiarism behaviors than their counterparts from the U.S. Similarly, the finding of my present study is also in line with the study by Rinner and Kobayashi (2005), which did a cross-cultural comparison between Japanese students and the undergraduate students from the U.S. in the study. They used surveys to investigate Japanese students’ attitudes and perceptions of plagiarism, and in the study they also surveyed 76 undergraduate students from the U.S. Then they compared the results of the responses from two groups of students. The results showed that 64% of the Japanese participants in the study regarded the plagiarism in the questionnaires as conditionally acceptable; at the same time only 5% of the participants from the U.S expressed any acceptance of plagiarism. Rinner and Kobayashi (2005) implied that Japanese students were more tolerant of plagiarism because they received few instructions or training on the topic of plagiarism before.

**Being similar as well as different from Wheeler’s (2009).** However, the finding of the present study had some similarities at the same time some difference with the findings from the study by Wheeler (2009), who contradicted the idea that plagiarism was culturally acceptable in Japan. The finding from this present study is similar with that of Wheeler’s (2009) study because he pointed out it was a lack of understanding on the topic of plagiarism that has led to the students’ plagiarism. Given that being said, he
admitted that plagiarism did exist in Japanese students but was resulted from students’ insufficient understanding on the topic of plagiarism. The finding of the present study is different from that of Wheeler’s study because Wheeler (2009) finally concluded that Japanese students did not perceive plagiarism as acceptable and when they were given some information on plagiarism, they perceived the plagiarism in the same way in the western notion of plagiarism. In another word, Wheeler believed that plagiarism was perceived as a serious issue by the Japanese students when more information on plagiarism was provided. To explain, Wheeler’s (2009) study found that when the Japanese students had the information that the writing assignments presented to them were copied from a published article, they believed that the assignments did not meet the writing standard and their justification for this was that the writing assignments had copied from others, which showed that their idea was consistent with the western notion of plagiarism. Wheeler (2009) argued that it was a lack of understanding on plagiarism that led to the students’ inappropriate behaviors rather than an inherent cultural belief in Japan. Also he contradicted the idea that plagiarism is resulted from a cultural difference.

**Explanations from the cultural perspectives.** Aside from the findings of the previous empirical studies, some scholars tried to explain the ESL/EFL students’ behaviors of plagiarism from a cultural perspective. They believed the culture and traditions in some countries influenced the students’ understanding of writing and plagiarism (Matalene, 1985; Pennycook, 1996; Scollon, 1994, 1995; and Sowden, 2005). Matalene (1985) used her teaching experiences in China and her interactions with students’ journals to explain that the literacy practice there is influenced by the education value and cultural beliefs. Matalene (1985) explained that Chinese students did not
perceive imitation and copy as an academic violation; rather they believed it was a kind of reverence to the author and original text. Also imitation and copy was an important way of learning and memorizing the facts and knowledge imparted by the textbooks and teachers. Similarly, Scollon (1995) argued that students from a collectivist culture valued group work and collaboration rather than individualism and independent work.

Furthermore, Sowden (2005) used the tradition of Confucianism in some Eastern countries to explain Chinese and Japanese ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism. Additionally, Pennycook (1996) argued that students from countries with a different historical development and context may carry different approaches in understanding texts and the western notion of authorship.

**Having a General Knowledge of Plagiarism**

**Understanding the definition at the abstract level.** The findings of the present study showed that participants who responded the open-ended questions knew the basic definition of plagiarism, at least at an abstract level. Some defined plagiarism by giving an example like cheating in the exam/test/assignment. Also, some participants defined plagiarism as an unacceptable crime or defined it as not knowing how to cite. These findings implied most of them had some basic knowledge of plagiarism. But they failed to provide my detail explanations of their understanding of plagiarism. Combined with Bakhtin’s (1988) suggestion that all languages are intertextual to some degree and languages were made up of fragments of other languages, together with the abstract definition given by APA manual and dictionaries, it is not difficult to understand the participants’ confusion on the boundary and definition of plagiarism. The participants showed that they possessed basic knowledge of plagiarism but had poor ability in
connecting the definition to the examples and presented their confusion about the definition.

**Being unfamiliar with the rules of plagiarism.** Concerning the reasons of ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism, most participants believed it was because of the unfamiliarity with the rules of plagiarism. Some participants put the answers like plagiarism was a universal phenomenon not restricted to ESL/EFL students. Also some participants wrote ESL/EFL students plagiarized because the literacy practice in another culture was different. In addition, some participants believed that plagiarism was a result of laziness, a desire for higher GPA, or not being confident about their own writing. This could go

**Understanding the serious penalty of plagiarism.** As to the understanding of the university policy, most of the participants understood that plagiarism could lead to the failure of a course or being expelled from the school. Some put it the answer like “forbidden” and “banned”. Their responses showed they understood the university policy was against plagiarism and plagiarism could lead to serious penalty.

To summarize, participants could provide the basic definition of plagiarism at an abstract and general level. Based on their knowledge, ESL/EFL students’ plagiarism is resulted from a variety of reasons, including unfamiliarity with the rules, influence from another kind of literacy practice, human weaknesses. Some other reasons provided by the participants included a desire for a higher GPA and not being confident. Finally, they knew the university policy was against plagiarism and they could fail a course or even be expelled from the school.
Conclusion of the Findings

The findings of the study showed, generally speaking, ESL/EFL participants knew the definition of plagiarism at the abstract and general level. Also they understood plagiarism could lead to serious penalties of plagiarism. Also, the results from analyzing the participants’ responses based on their gender, educational level and nationalities, respectively, showed that generally speaking the participants had a tolerant attitude towards plagiarism in the scenarios from Scenario 12 to 21. At the same time, they did not think the plagiarism in those scenarios were very bad. Furthermore, the participants’ understanding of plagiarism varied according to their gender, educational level and nationality.

First of all, male participants believed “writing a paper with all the paragraphs from several articles by using citations by using citation and quotation mark” was not plagiarism but female participants believed it was. It could be that male participants were not very familiar with academic conventions concerning textual practices of plagiarism but female participants were very familiar with them. It could also be that male and female participants had different orientations in terms of obeying the rules of plagiarism (Gilligan, 1982; Lin & Wen, 2006; Ward & Beck, 2001). Secondly, graduate participants regarded “writing a paper with thesis statement developed by others” as not plagiarism but undergraduate participants thought it was plagiarism. This means graduate participants supported collaborative writing and did not believe it to be plagiarism while undergraduate students did not support collaborative writing and thought it was plagiarism. This finding is marginal to the findings of previous studies and more research is recommended to investigate this dichotomy. Thirdly, generally speaking, graduate
participants were more concerned about the severity of plagiarism in scenarios from 12 to 21 than their undergraduate counterparts. It could be that graduate participants had invested more time, money and energy in education so they had more to lose than to gain (Sims, 1995; Wajda-Johnston, et al., 2001). Also it could be that they had more practices with academic writings so they knew the rules better (Wajda-Johnston, et al., 2001). Finally, participants from China, Japan and Korea believed plagiarism in cheating in a quiz was not so bad than the participants from other countries did. Additionally participants from China and Japan believed that plagiarism in cheating in a test was not so bad than the participants from other countries did. It could be that they did not receive enough instructions on the rules of plagiarism (Rawwas, Al-Khatib & Vitell, 2004; Rinner & Kobayashi, 2005). It could also be that they were from a context with a different historical development that have influenced their ways of using sources and presenting themselves as authors (Matalene, 1985; Pennycook, 1996; Scollon, 1994, 1995; Sowden, 2005). The responses from open-ended questions showed that most participants had a general idea of plagiarism at the abstract and general level and could name a number of reasons of why ESL/EFL students committing plagiarism. Additionally, they knew that the university policy was against plagiarism and the consequences of committing plagiarism could be very serious.

**Implications and Recommendations**

This findings of the study implied several reflections for policy makers, teachers and curriculum designers who work with ESL/EFL students. The implications are summarized as follows.
Implications for Policy Makers

Informed by the findings, most participants had a general idea about plagiarism at the abstract level, but their responses for the scenarios of plagiarism in the questionnaire showed that they had poor ability in connecting the abstract definition of plagiarism to the real life instances of plagiarism. At the same time, the study by Pecorari (2001) showed that most university policies shared similar ways of defining plagiarism but did not indicate how the definition of plagiarism could be applied. That being said, the ESL students may not be able to connect the abstract definition to the real life situations by themselves and they could not find specific explanations from the university policy in the handbook or in the catalog either. It gives the policy makers an alarm that they should improve this current situation by enriching the definition of plagiarism with specific examples and clear explanations to make the concept of plagiarism easily comprehensible so there will be no questions or ambiguities for any students.

Theoretical Implications

Reaching agreement in academia between scholars. The previous scholarship showed that the rules and academic conventions of using a source appropriate did not reach a verbal agreement by professors, scholars or the manual books (Angelil-Carter, 2000; Howard, 1993, 1995; Roig, 2001). Also the finding of this study informed us that students were not able to connect the abstract definition of plagiarism to different scenarios and instances of plagiarism. That being said, an agreement and consensus need to be reached on the rules and regulations of plagiarism such as the standard of using sources and paraphrasing. A theory that can help teachers and students clearly
differentiate plagiarism which can be applied in different situations to determine the boundary of plagiarism should be proposed.

**Definition of plagiarism concluded from this study.** Based on the findings of this study, the definition of plagiarism should be described more specifically. In addition to being defined as “presenting the work of another as if it were their own work” (American Psychological Association, 2012, p. 16), I suggest plagiarism is explained with some detailed explanations. From the statistically difference suggested by the data, I recommend, plagiarism is “wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one’s own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another” (Simpson, 1990, p. 947), including writing a paper with thesis statement developed by others, writing a paper with citing most paraphrase from other articles with quotation marks, buying a set of questions of the exam, etc and all forms of plagiarism are very serious offense of academic integrity and university policy. I also recommend further researchers to do a further study on which specific issue concerning plagiarism stimulates disagreements among teachers, professors and students so that improvements can be made regarding the current situation by proposing more solid and fundamental theories.

**Pedagogical Implications**

At the same time, even if catalog had incorporated a lot of specific examples and explanations for defining the concept of plagiarism, the school and educational institutions could not guarantee that all the students would read the university policy hidden deep in the student handbook and the graduate catalog. Therefore, it is the the paramount responsibility for the teachers who work with ESL students to extend the explanation of plagiarism in the classrooms. Most often the plagiarism is on the syllabi as
a course policy, however, that is far from enough. Awareness among teachers should be raised that ESL/EFL students may not have a very clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism or understanding the severities of plagiarism. Therefore teachers should devote more time in classroom teaching to explain the wide range of behaviors that is incorporated by plagiarism and connect it to the real life scenarios to help this population of students. Teachers could even teach the information of plagiarism as a genre (Hyland, 2007). Additionally, teachers can use the example scenarios, such as the ones in the questionnaire of this present study, and ask students whether it is plagiarism or not. Or teachers could use the scenarios to do a background investigation of their target students so they know where their students are in terms of understanding of plagiarism.

Secondly, informed by the results from participants grouped by the gender, male participants did not think “writing a paper with all paragraphs from different articles without citation or quotation” as plagiarism but female participants thought it was plagiarism. Regarding this finding, teachers should devote more time and classroom teaching to emphasize the rules and severity of plagiarism when there are many male students in the classroom. Finally, the finding from the participants grouped by educational level informed us that graduate participants were generally more concerned of plagiarism than undergraduate participants. This finding is helpful for teachers who teach different educational levels of students or who have different levels of students in the same class. To explain, teachers should devote more time in explaining the rules, definitions, and applications of plagiarism when there are a lot of undergraduate students in the class. Teachers should also pay attention to some special situations where graduate showed support for collaborative writing and believed buying a set of test questions were
not plagiarism while undergraduate thought these two scenarios were plagiarism. Future researches are recommended to investigate the ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism based on educational levels concerning these two scenarios to examine this finding here and explain why graduate and undergraduate participants had different attitudes towards these two instances.

**Methodological Implication**

First of all, my study used an online questionnaire which consisted of 21 Likert-scale scenarios to examine ESL/EFL participants’ understanding of plagiarism. Then the responses from the participants were analyzed by SPSS using one-way MANOVA tests. This suggests that for future studies which focused on investigating a large group of people’s the attitudes on a certain number of questions, Likert-scale and questionnaire is a good methodology to choose. Also, future studies that focuses on a quantitative data analysis with more than one independent variable and many dependent variables, a MANOVA test is recommended because it produces more accurate results and it is very useful to determine the significance of the dependent variables (van Peer et al., 2012). Regarding the instrument of the study, future researchers can use more open-ended questions or more scenarios to solicit understandings from the participants to scaffold the analysis and interpretation. It is also helpful for the future researchers to consider using follow-up interviews, focus group discussions and thinking-aloud protocols to solicit the in-depth understanding of ESL/EFL students about the concept of plagiarism. These multimodal methodologies will help explain why the participants select certain responses in the questionnaire and produce more information for what are they thinking and how they analyze the problem.
Limitations of This Study

This study is only a preliminary exploration of ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism and therefore the findings of the study could not be generalized. To explain, firstly, the sample of the participants in each group was small and may not represent the whole populations that this group of participants came from. Secondly, the number of undergraduate and graduate participants were not equally distributed (10 undergraduates and 70 graduates); therefore the finding may not be representative to whole population they were from. Thirdly, the response rates for the open-ended questionnaire were low therefore the qualitative data were limited in terms of understanding of ESL/EFL students’ perception of plagiarism. Future researchers may use follow-up interviews and focus-group discussions to better solicit ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. Additionally, in order to better explore ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism, a longitudinal study may help us gain a better insight of the possible transformations the participants have experienced. Future researchers can also do comparative studies according to nationalities to explore possible variations of the ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism.

Final Comments

Doing this research helped me gain a global perspective on how the ESL/ESL participants understood plagiarism. This research will also be useful for policy makers and curriculum designers in terms of improving the current situation on the definition of plagiarism. Also, the results of this research will be helpful for teachers who work with ESL/EFL students to gain a better insight of their understanding of plagiarism. Especially the results will be useful for teachers who teach ESL/EFL students from all levels of
academic studies and both genders because the results of this research informed the
difference in the understanding of plagiarism among ESL/EFL participants based on
gender or educational levels. For teachers who work with participants from certain
countries, this result will help them understand that some of the students may have
different understanding on the severity of plagiarism. Generally, this study is a useful
reference for teachers, policy makers and curriculum designers, and it opens up avenues
for future studies.
References


APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

November 20, 2013

Wenxi Yang
1302 Oakland Ave., Apt. 213EH
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Ms. Yang:

Your proposed research project, "A Quantitative Study of ESL/EFL Students' Understanding of Plagiarism," (Log No. 13-279) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved as an expedited review for the period of November 20, 2013 to November 20, 2014.

It is also important for you to note that IUP adheres strictly to Federal Policy that requires you to notify the IRB promptly regarding:

1. any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented),
2. any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects, and
3. any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).

Should you need to continue your research beyond November 20, 2014 you will need to file additional information for continuing review. Please contact the IRB office at (724) 357-7730 or come to Room 113, Stright Hall for further information.

The IRB may review or audit your project at random or for cause. In accordance with IUP Policy and Federal Regulation (45CFR46.113), the Board may suspend or terminate your project if your project has not been conducted as approved or if other difficulties are detected.

I wish you success as you pursue this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

John M. Mille, Ph.D., ABPP
Chairperson, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Professor of Psychology

CC: Dr. David Hanauer, Faculty Advisor
January 7, 2014

Wenxi Yang
1302 Oakland Avenue, Apt. 213EH
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Ms. Yang:

I have reviewed your Research Topic Approval Form and approved it.

Your RTAF indicates your anticipated graduation date as May 2014. This means that if your program requires a defense, you must defend no later than April 1, 2014 and all necessary documents are due by this date. A description of the required documents can be accessed at http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=115439. Your thesis must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies & Research by April 15, 2014 if you desire to graduate by your anticipated date. You must apply for graduation by May 1, 2014. For deadlines for subsequent graduation dates, please access http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=6683.


You are now eligible to receive a FREE copy of Adobe Professional! This software will help you to create an electronic thesis. Attached is a copy of the Adobe Agreement form that you need to print, fill out, and sign. Once you have completed the form, you can take the form to the IT Support Center in G35 Delaney Hall to obtain a copy of the software. If you are not able to come to campus, you will need to scan the completed form and send it as an attachment from your IUP e-mail account to il-support-center@iup.edu. You can also fax the completed form to 724-357-4683. Please indicate in your email or fax that you are a graduate student requesting the Adobe Professional software and include your Banner ID and mailing address so the software can be mailed to you.

Finally, if you change your topic, the scope or methodology of your project, or your committee, a new Research Topic Approval Form must be completed. I wish you well and hope you find this experience to be rewarding.

Sincerely,

Hillary E. Creely, J.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Research

xc: Dr. Yaw Asamoah, Dean
Dr. Sharon Deckert, Graduate Coordinator
Dr. David Hanauer, Thesis Committee Chairperson

HEC/bb
Hi Wenxi –

We usually request IRB approval before we send it out to students. Our criteria are listed on our website http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=136173. But yes, we can distribute to all international students once we have the IRB approval.

Jessica

Dear Jessica and Emma,

I hope this email finds you well. This is Wenxi Yang, a 2nd year MA TESOL student in IUP. I am writing this email to you to see could you perhaps me help me out with my quantitative study of ESL/EFL Students’ Understanding of Plagiarism? I designed an online questionnaire in Qualtrics and here is the link of my sample questionnaire: https://iup.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_03vcIJOGoh51ya9

My study is advised by Dr. Hanauer and the information in the questionnaire will be protected.

Could you perhaps help me distribute my questionnaire to the international students via email in IUP? I am now preparing my IRB and if you could give me permission to distribute my on-line questionnaire by sending out emails, I can perhaps send my IRB, which needs your permission to be included, to the graduate school to get it approved.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Best

Wenxi
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE: A Quantitative Study of ESL/EFL Students’ Understanding of Plagiarism

This study attempts to obtain the information about ESL students' understanding of plagiarism upon their entry into U.S. educational institutions. You are eligible for participating because you are an ESL/EFL student who is 18 or older studying in American educational institution.

For this study, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire to obtain your demographic information and your understandings of plagiarism. The questionnaire consists of 28 questions and will take approximately 20-25 minutes. Questions are designed to explore how you understand plagiarism in the settings of American educational institution based on your overall study experience.

Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. However, you may feel slightly embarrassed when asked to choose the scales for the described plagiarizing scenarios because you might find that you have unintentionally committed plagiarism before. There are no direct benefits for participation. However, it is hoped that through your participation, you may learn more about the definitions of plagiarism in American education institutions.

All data obtained from you will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than then primary investigator and faculty advisor listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until deleted by the primary investigator.

There is no direct compensation; however, participants can email the researcher for her final project paper or further questions.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA or standing with the university. You may choose to skip a question if it makes you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw from the study at any time by simply closing the browser during the survey. You cannot withdraw after you have submitted the survey since the researcher has no way of connecting a specific individual to a specific survey.

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Wenxi Yang, at 724-541-7130, rpts@iup.edu.
If you have questions that you do not feel comfortable to ask the researcher, you may contact Dr Hanauer, 215D Leonard Hall, hanauer@iup.edu, 724-357-2274. Or contact the director of Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Institutional Review Board, irb-research@iup.edu, 724-357-7730.

**Researcher:**
Wenxi Yang  
M.A. Candidate  
TESOL Program  
English Department  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Indiana, PA 15705, U.S.A  
Phone: 724-541-7130  
E-mail: rpts@iup.edu

**Thesis Advisor**
Dr. David I. Hanauer  
Professor  
Composition and TESOL  
English Department  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Indiana, PA 15705, U.S.A  
Phone: 724-357-2274  
E-mail: hanauer@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subject (Phone: 724-357-7730)

I have read and understood this consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study. By clicking on the “yes” button below, I show my consent to participate in this study.

☐ Yes  
☐ No
Dear Ms. Jessica and Dr. Michele Petrucci,

This is Wenxi Yang, who has contacted you about my research study of ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism. I am writing this email to you to see could you perhaps help me distribute the following information of my research study to all the ESL/EFL students in IUP. I have just got the approval of IRB and I have attached the IRB protocol and the approval letter in this email.

Dear IUP ESL/EFL students,

My name is Wenxi Yang, and I am a Master candidate majoring in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am currently working on my project focusing on ESL/EFL students’ understanding of plagiarism upon their entry into US educational institutions.

I am writing this email to invite you to participate in my research study. You are eligible to participate because you are ESL/EFL students who are 18 or 18 years older. Also you are studying in an American educational institution and you have attended school in your home country before.

This study is very important because it may help to better understand plagiarism in US educational institutions.

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will be asked 28 questions on an on-line questionnaire designed by the researcher in Qualtrics addressing the purpose of the study.

If you are interested in and want to participate in this research, you will need to sign the Consent Form. The Consent Form is part of the IUP regulation of research works involving human subject. Its purpose is to protect the research participant’s information. You can access the Consent Form by clicking the link: https://iup.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_03vcIJOGoh51ya9

Please be reminded that, if you want to proceed to the survey after reading the Consent Form, click “yes” and the website will direct you to the questionnaire. Otherwise, you will click “no” to close the session.
If you have further questions, feel free to contact me at 724-541-7130 or via email rpts@iup.edu, I will answer all your questions about the study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely
Wenxi Yang
M.A. Candidate
TESOL Program
English Department
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705, U.S.A
Phone: 724-541-7130
E-mail: rpts@iup.edu
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Indiana, PA 15705

P: (724) 357-2281
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Informed Consent Form

Title: A Quantitative Study of ESL/EFL Students’ Understanding of Plagiarism

This study attempts to obtain the information about ESL students’ understanding of plagiarism upon their entry into U.S. educational institutions. You are eligible for participating because you are an ESL/EFL student who is 18 or older studying in American educational institution.

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All data obtained from you will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the primary investigator and faculty advisor listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until deleted by the primary investigator.

There is no direct compensation; however, participants can email the researcher for her final project paper.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA or standing with the university. You may choose to skip a question if it makes you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw from the study at any time by simply closing the browser during the survey. You cannot withdraw after you have submitted the survey since the researcher has no way of connecting a specific individual to a specific survey.

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Researcher:
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subject (Phone: 724-357-7730)

I have read and understood this consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study. By clicking on the "yes" button below, I show my consent to participate in this study.

[Yes] [No]
Section 1: Collection of Demographic Information

Click on the answer that best describes yourself or fill the information in the box below if no answer matches your demographic information.

1. What is your status at IUP?
   - American Language Institute
   - Undergraduate
   - Graduate

2. Which country are you from?
   - China
   - Japan
   - Indian
   - Taiwan
   - Saudi Arabia
   - Others

3. What language do you speak, please list all the languages you speak in your home country.

4. Which gender do you identify yourself with?
   - Male
   - Female
Section 2: Understanding of Textual Practices and Plagiarism

Which of the following do you consider to be plagiarism? Click on the best response on the right from scale 5 (definitely plagiarism) to scale 1 (definitely not).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>definitely plagiarism 5</th>
<th>probably plagiarism 4</th>
<th>not sure/undecided 3</th>
<th>probably not 2</th>
<th>definitely not 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A student submitted the same paper for two different classes.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A student submitted a paper to his professor, but a part of the paper was written by another student.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A student asked a tutor for help to revise his/her paper and then turn in the paper to his/her professor as his/her own work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A student copied a few sentences from another article when writing a paper but he did not reference the source.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A student asked someone else to write the whole paper for him/her and submit this paper to the professor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A student worked together with his/her classmate to plan the main idea of the paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A student wrote a paper and all the paragraphs in the paper are from several different articles. The student uses citations and quotation marks around the paragraphs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. A student wrote a paper and the thesis statement of the paper was developed by another student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. A student wrote a paper and asked somebody else to do the proofreading or editing a paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. A student included one sentence from another source in his/her article and did not use quotation marks or a citation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. A student did a research and presented the same research results in two different conferences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Section 3: Comparing the severity of plagiarism: How serious is plagiarism compared to the following? Click the best scale in the column on the right based on your understanding from scale 5 (plagiarism is much worse) to scale 1 (plagiarism is not nearly as bad).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. cheating on a quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. cheating on a test</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. cheating on a homework</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. shoplifting a shirt from a department store</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. buying a set of test questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. helping a friend cheat on a test</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. making a copy of a computer program without buying it</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. storing math formula in your calculator for use on a test</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. stealing a book from the campus library</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. downloading copyrighted music or video file</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: Open-ended Questions
26. Please define plagiarism.

27. Why do you think ESL/EFL students plagiarize?

28. What do you know about our university’s policy about plagiarism?