

Understanding of plagiarism among first year Malaysian university students

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Plagiarism affects academic integrity of higher educational institutions globally. Therefore, there arises a crucial need to identify the understanding of plagiarism among the first year university students to execute educational and awareness programmes to inculcate academic integrity and ensure its sustainability throughout their academic journey. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the extent of first year students' understanding of the concept of plagiarism and to identify whether they were able to differentiate between plagiarism and non-plagiarism acts. Based on the objectives of the study, the research determined whether the first year students have the academic readiness to ensure that they do not commit plagiarism. A quantitative survey study was conducted involving first year university students. For this purpose, purposive sampling was applied. Questionnaires were distributed to first year students at a Malaysian research university. Analysis of questionnaires showed that the first year students lacked understanding of plagiarism. Furthermore, the students were also unable to clearly differentiate between plagiarism and non-plagiarism acts. The findings also suggest that university students need to be taught academic conventions such as academic citation and referencing. At the same time, it also suggests the need for enculturation into academia emphasizing academic integrity particularly pertaining to academic writing, research, and future publications as postgraduate students.