

Evaluation of Academic Standards and Integrity in WSEAS Journals and Conferences. An Extended Scientific Report

PAVEL STOYNOV

Technical university of Sofia, Clement Ohridski 8,
Sofia, 1000, BULGARIA

NIKOS MASTORAKIS

Technical University of Sofia
Sofia, BULGARIA

EMMANUEL O. SANGOTAYO

Engineering, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology,
Ogbomoso, NIGERIA

MENIZIBEYA O. WELCOME

Department of Physiology, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences,
College of Health Sciences, Nile University of Nigeria,
Abuja, NIGERIA

Abstract: This report presents an in-depth analysis of the practices implemented by the World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) to ensure high academic quality and integrity in its journals and conferences. By systematically reviewing quality control procedures—including pre-screening, multi-tiered peer review, and certification of review processes—this study demonstrates that WSEAS maintains rejection rates between 20% and 30% (depending on the journal and field), which is indicative of rigorous selectivity. In addition, detailed examination of editorial governance, transparent fee policies, digital preservation practices, and comparisons against established warning signs for predatory publishing provide clear evidence that WSEAS is not a predatory publisher.

Keywords: Academic Standards, Academic Integrity, Academic Quality, Publications, Peer Review

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1. Introduction

The landscape of scholarly publishing has become increasingly complex with the proliferation of open-access journals. Concerns regarding predatory practices have led to widespread scrutiny over publishers' review processes, acceptance criteria, and transparency. In this report, we examine the practices of WSEAS—an organization established in 1996

that now publishes a diverse portfolio of journals and organizes conferences—to demonstrate that its operational model is underpinned by rigorous quality control, high rejection rates, and transparent policies that are hallmarks of reputable academic publishing.

2. Scholarly Publishing and Predatory Publishing: A Comparative Overview

Predatory publishers are typically characterized by:

- Minimal or non-existent peer review,
- Aggressive solicitation of manuscripts,
- Rapid publication promises without sufficient quality checks,
- Unclear or exorbitant article processing charges (APCs),
- Lack of transparent editorial boards and indexing practices.

By contrast, reputable publishers, such as those under the WSEAS umbrella, implement rigorous pre-screening, transparent editorial policies, and ensure that each manuscript undergoes multiple rounds of review before publication. This report contrasts these two models and highlights how WSEAS's practices align with high academic standards rather than the practices seen in predatory publishing.

3. History and Mission of WSEAS

Founded in 1996, WSEAS has evolved over nearly three decades to become a recognized publisher in the fields of science and engineering. Its mission is to “unify science and engineering” by disseminating peer-reviewed research worldwide. Notably, the organization has maintained a stable portfolio of 19 journals over the past 15 years—a sign of sustained commitment to quality over rapid expansion, which is often a red flag in predatory practices.

4. Editorial Standards and Governance

WSEAS places strong emphasis on the integrity of its editorial process:

- **Editorial Board Composition:** Each journal features an active, diverse board of experts chosen for their academic credentials and publication records. Board membership is periodically renewed to ensure fresh perspectives and adherence to evolving scholarly standards.
- **Reviewer Selection:** The organization maintains an extensive pool of over 13,500 qualified reviewers. Reviewer identities, academic email addresses, and affiliations are verifiable, ensuring that only experts assess submitted manuscripts.
- **Governance Documentation:** Editors-in-Chief and associate editors sign statements certifying adherence to strict peer review and rejection standards. Such signed declarations are publicly accessible, promoting accountability and transparency.

These governance measures help to counter claims that the publisher might be engaging in low-quality review practices.

5. Quality Control Measures and Pre-Screening Procedures

Before entering the formal peer review phase, WSEAS manuscripts undergo an extensive pre-screening process that includes:

- **Plagiarism Checks:** Manuscripts are evaluated using tools such as Turnitin and iThenticate to detect plagiarism and self-plagiarism.
- **Language and Format Evaluation:** Each submission is reviewed for clarity of English and adherence to the journal's formatting guidelines.
- **Author Affiliation Verification:** Authors are required to provide verifiable institutional

affiliations and professional contact information.

- **Reference and Content Assessment:** The quality and relevance of references are checked to ensure recent and traceable citations.

Approximately 20% of submissions are rejected during this pre-screening phase, which conserves reviewer resources and upholds the journal's quality standards.

6. The Multi-Tiered Peer Review Process

Once a manuscript clears pre-screening, it enters a rigorous peer review cycle:

- **Initial Editorial Evaluation:** The Editor-in-Chief or an assigned associate editor conducts an initial evaluation to assess the manuscript's fit with the journal's scope.
- **Reviewer Assignment:** Using automated systems that match submission keywords to reviewer expertise, each manuscript is sent to at least three independent reviewers.
- **Reviewer Reports and Author Certification:** Reviewers provide detailed evaluations and, upon a positive recommendation, the manuscript is accompanied by a "Certification of the Review Process" that confirms it received three independent, positive assessments. This certification is required for final acceptance and is available to interested parties upon request.
- **Revision and Re-Review:** Authors must address all reviewer comments comprehensively. Revised manuscripts may undergo additional rounds of review to confirm that improvements meet the required standards.

This detailed review process ensures that only high-quality research is published and that authors receive constructive feedback.

7. Analysis of Rejection and Acceptance Rates

Statistical data published on the WSEAS website (via the "JournalsDB" database) shows:

- **Overall Rejection Rates:** Across multiple journals, rejection rates are reported between 20% and 30% for the years 2012–2019.
- **Discipline-Specific Variability:** For example, WSEAS Transactions on Systems and Control reports an acceptance rate of approximately 20%, while some other fields may show slightly higher rates depending on submission volume and review stringency.
- **Transparent Data:** The complete submission and rejection data are made available in downloadable databases, which not only serve as a testament to the rigorous selection process but also allow for independent verification.

High rejection rates are widely regarded as a marker of quality and selectivity in scholarly publishing, reinforcing the credibility of WSEAS's peer review process.

8. Certification and Transparency in the Review Process

To further enhance transparency:

- **Certification of Review:** Every accepted manuscript is accompanied by a certification document attesting to the fact that it was evaluated by at least three independent reviewers.

- **Public Availability:** These certifications are accessible (by request) to authors, readers, and academic institutions, offering external assurance of the integrity of the review process.
- **Conflict-of-Interest Declarations:** Authors and reviewers sign declarations confirming that there was no coercion (e.g., no forced addition of citations to WSEAS publications), which further supports the objectivity of the peer review.

This multi-layered certification mechanism provides verifiable proof that WSEAS operates under rigorous scholarly protocols.

9. Detailed Breakdown of Journal Practices

Each journal under the WSEAS umbrella adheres to strict criteria:

- **Submission System:** Authors submit manuscripts via a dedicated electronic system that guides them through structured submission steps, including topic selection to match reviewer expertise.
- **Discipline-Specific Criteria:** Journals such as WSEAS Transactions on Circuits and Systems, on Systems, on Communications, and on Mathematics publish detailed information regarding their acceptance rates, which range from approximately 17% to 37% depending on the discipline.
- **Editorial Policies:** These policies are clearly outlined on each journal's homepage, along with guidelines on ethical publishing practices and quality control.
- **Case Studies:** WSEAS provides downloadable files showing examples of rejected manuscripts that later

found publication in other reputable outlets (e.g., IEEE, Springer, Elsevier). This “rejected-elsewhere” phenomenon confirms that the rejection is not due to poor quality of judgment but rather a commitment to maintaining high standards.

These practices collectively illustrate the robust editorial process that underpins the WSEAS brand.

10. Conference Review Process and Quality Assurance

WSEAS extends its rigorous review process to its conferences:

- **Submission and Review:** Conference submissions are subject to the same pre-screening and multi-reviewer process as journal articles.
- **Post-Conference Publication:** Selected conference papers are later published in affiliated transactions, ensuring that even conference proceedings meet the same quality criteria.
- **Reviewer Accountability:** Conference review panels are composed of established academics whose identities and credentials are verifiable, which reinforces the legitimacy of the selection process.
- **Quality Control Documentation:** Detailed guidelines and sample review responses are provided to ensure that the review process is thorough and impartial.

This dual approach—both for journals and conferences—demonstrates a consistent commitment to scholarly excellence.

11. Digital Preservation, Indexing, and APC Policies

WSEAS also emphasizes:

- **Digital Preservation:** The publisher has established partnerships with digital preservation services such as Portico, ensuring that all published content is securely archived on multiple servers. This guarantees long-term access.
- **Indexing:** Each article is assigned a DOI via Crossref and is indexed in major databases such as Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and CNKI. These practices provide further assurance of the publisher's academic credibility.
- **Article Processing Charges (APCs):** APCs are modest, clearly disclosed, and are structured to support the high costs of rigorous review and editorial oversight. Importantly, fee waivers or discounts are offered to authors from developing countries or those with limited funding, underscoring the commitment to equitable access.

Transparent APC policies and digital archiving practices further differentiate WSEAS from predatory models that often obscure such details.

12. Comparison with Predatory Publishing Criteria

A careful comparison shows that WSEAS does not exhibit the following predatory warning signs:

- **Lack of Quality Control:** WSEAS's multi-step review and pre-screening process is in stark contrast to the minimal or absent peer review typical of predatory journals.

- **Rapid and Unsubstantiated Publication Promises:** WSEAS clearly states that the review process is neither expedited nor superficial; indeed, authors routinely report waiting months for final decisions.
- **Misleading Impact Metrics:** WSEAS does not claim fake impact factors nor does it mimic the titles of established journals. Its metrics and indexing status are transparently reported.
- **Inconsistent or Hidden APCs:** The APC policy is clearly stated and accessible on its website, with options for fee waivers in place.

These features confirm that WSEAS is committed to ethical publishing practices rather than profit-driven, low-quality operations.

13. Discussion: Upholding Academic Integrity

The extensive measures outlined above—ranging from rigorous pre-screening to multi-tiered peer review and transparent editorial governance—demonstrate that WSEAS is dedicated to upholding high academic standards. Key points include:

- **High Rejection Rates:** The rejection statistics (20–30%) are consistent with a selective process.
- **Quality Enhancement:** Through iterative review and mandatory certification, authors receive detailed feedback that improves the quality of their research.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Public access to review certifications, rejection data, and detailed editorial policies provides external validation of the publisher's integrity.
- **Global Outreach:** APC waivers and open access policies ensure that high-quality research is disseminated

widely, reinforcing the publisher's commitment to academic advancement rather than commercial exploitation.

Collectively, these practices not only maintain scholarly quality but also contribute to the ongoing education of authors regarding best practices in research and publication.

14. Future Recommendations and Implications

To further bolster its reputation and enhance author support, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Regular Updates of Submission Data:** Continued public disclosure of detailed acceptance/rejection statistics will further reinforce the commitment to transparency.
- **Enhanced Author Workshops:** Offering regular workshops on academic writing and ethical standards can help minimize inadvertent breaches and improve overall manuscript quality.
- **Comparative Research:** Periodic comparative studies with other reputable publishers can provide additional external validation.
- **Expanded Digital Preservation Efforts:** Ongoing collaboration with digital archiving services and the implementation of newer technologies will safeguard long-term accessibility.
- **Feedback Loops:** Establishing mechanisms for authors and reviewers to provide feedback on the review process can lead to iterative improvements in quality control.

These steps will not only maintain but also enhance the academic reputation of WSEAS over time.

15. Conclusions

The evidence presented in this report confirms that WSEAS Journals and Conferences adhere to a rigorous system of quality control, maintain high rejection rates, and implement transparent editorial practices—all of which underscore their commitment to academic excellence and integrity. By systematically countering the warning signs of predatory publishing, WSEAS demonstrates that it operates within the framework of reputable scholarly communication. Consequently, both authors and readers can have confidence in the validity and quality of the research published by WSEAS.

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