

An Extended Study: Evaluating Whether WSEAS is a Predatory Publisher

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Abstract: This study presents an in-depth evaluation of the World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) to determine whether it qualifies as a predatory publisher or represents a legitimate academic institution. Predatory publishing is defined by deceptive editorial practices, lack of genuine peer review, and prioritization of profit over scholarship. Using established criteria such as transparency, peer-review rigor, indexing status, editorial ethics, and academic reception, this investigation finds that WSEAS operates with high levels of academic integrity. The publisher maintains a double-blind peer review system, publishes detailed editorial information, and exhibits high rejection rates exceeding those of many commercial publishers like MDPI, Springer, Emerald, and Sage. WSEAS journals are indexed in respected databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, and Ei Compendex, and implement advanced measures to detect plagiarism and AI-generated content. Historical criticisms are acknowledged but shown to have been addressed through substantial reforms. Compared to several commercial publishers, WSEAS demonstrates stricter editorial scrutiny, greater transparency, and a firm commitment to research quality. The study concludes that WSEAS should not be categorized as a predatory publisher and deserves broader recognition as a credible contributor to the global academic ecosystem.

Key-Words: - Predatory Publishers, Predatory Conferences, Predatory Journals, Indexing, Genuine Journals, Scopus, WSEAS

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global academic community has become increasingly vigilant about the emergence of so-called "predatory publishers"—entities that exploit the open access publishing model primarily for financial gain while offering little or no quality control through peer review. These concerns are valid and warranted, particularly in light of the increasing pressure on scholars to publish frequently and rapidly. However, in the process of this scrutiny, some legitimate or alternative publishers are unfairly labeled as predatory, often based on outdated information, misperceptions, or biases against non-mainstream models of dissemination. The World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) is one such publisher that has been subject to controversy. This study examines whether WSEAS meets the criteria of a predatory publisher or if it represents a legitimate, independent academic organization. To begin, it is crucial to define what constitutes a predatory publisher. According to widely accepted academic definitions, a predatory publisher is one that prioritizes self-interest at the expense of scholarship, using deceptive practices such as fake peer review, hidden fees, aggressive solicitation, false editorial claims, and indexing manipulation. Predatory publishers typically undermine academic integrity by accepting low-quality or even fabricated papers in exchange for article processing charges (APCs), without genuine editorial oversight. With this definition in mind, we can analyze WSEAS using multiple criteria: transparency, indexing, peer review standards, editorial practices, and reputation in the academic community.

II. TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLICATION ETHICS

One of the primary indicators that a publisher is legitimate is the transparency of its editorial and publishing process. WSEAS provides comprehensive information on its journals' websites, including editorial boards, submission guidelines, review procedures, and timelines. Dates of submission, acceptance, and publication are published for each article, which reflects a commitment to openness. Unlike predatory publishers that often obscure such details or manipulate dates to appear more rigorous, WSEAS demonstrates transparency across its operations. Moreover, WSEAS clearly states that it follows a double-blind peer review process, a recognized standard in academic publishing. Reviewers are independent and anonymous, and authors are not aware of who evaluates their work. This process helps to maintain the impartiality and objectivity of the evaluation.

III. INDEXING IN REPUTABLE DATABASES

A strong indicator of quality is the inclusion of a journal in international indexing databases. Currently, at least 15 WSEAS journals are indexed in Scopus, one of the most reputable and widely used abstract and citation databases for peer-reviewed literature. Scopus employs a strict evaluation protocol based on metrics such as editorial quality, peer review, regularity of publication, citation impact, and international diversity. Journals that fail to meet these standards are not included or are later removed. The sustained inclusion of WSEAS journals in Scopus indicates that they meet essential criteria for scholarly legitimacy. It is worth noting that inclusion in other databases such as Ei Compendex, Google Scholar, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), and WorldCat further supports the visibility and credibility of WSEAS publications.

IV. HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND REFORMS

Criticism directed at WSEAS can often be traced back to the early 2010s. During that period, the organization faced allegations of accepting low-quality conference papers and journal articles, sometimes without sufficient scrutiny. Some of these claims were amplified by blogs, watchdog websites, and anonymous online sources, often without full context or evidence. However, in the

years that followed, WSEAS implemented significant reforms. It reduced the number of journals it published, restructured its peer review procedures, limited conference acceptance rates, and improved the editorial composition of its publications. These reforms, coupled with its re-acceptance into Scopus and improved citation metrics, show that WSEAS has responded to earlier criticisms with concrete action. In contrast, true predatory publishers rarely, if ever, take steps to improve transparency, peer review rigor, or indexing status.

V. PARTICIPATION OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL REACH

WSEAS organizes conferences that are often hosted or supported by respected academic institutions. Many participants are faculty members from universities across Europe, Asia, and Africa. The society has also partnered with various universities for conference co-organization, special issues, and invited sessions. While critics may question the geographical or institutional distribution of authors and editors, such criticism often reflects a Western-centric bias that unfairly discredits global or independent initiatives. Additionally, WSEAS is often seen as providing opportunities for researchers from developing countries or underrepresented institutions to publish and disseminate their work in an open-access format, which is a core principle of academic inclusivity.

VI. COMPARISON TO TRADITIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PUBLISHERS

It is important to differentiate WSEAS from both elite academic publishers (such as Springer, Elsevier, IEEE) and commercial predatory operations. While it lacks the brand prestige and historical legacy of the major publishing houses, it also does not exhibit the exploitative behaviors typical of predatory publishers. WSEAS charges modest APCs, provides prompt communication, and does not employ deceptive marketing tactics. Furthermore, its conference fees and journal policies are publicly available and comparable to other open-access publishers.

In this regard, WSEAS more closely resembles **independent, mid-tier academic**

publishers that fill a niche in the scholarly ecosystem—offering publication outlets for valid research that may not conform to the rigid commercial expectations of high-impact journals, without compromising integrity.

VII. COMPARISON TO PEER REVIEW OF MDPI AND SPRINGER VERLAG

WSEAS (mjournals have consistently demonstrated rigorous editorial standards and an exceptionally strict peer-review process that, in many aspects, surpasses the practices seen in numerous journals from larger commercial publishers such as MDPI and even parts of the Springer Verlag portfolio. The review process within WSEAS is both thorough and methodologically intensive, focusing not only on the technical correctness of the work but also on the originality, relevance, and long-term scientific contribution of the submitted manuscripts. Unlike many MDPI journals, which operate under rapid publication timelines and are often criticized for inconsistent editorial rigor and excessively high acceptance rates, WSEAS journals enforce a strict multi-stage peer review that includes a desk-rejection phase, double-blind expert review, and post-review evaluation by the Editor-in-Chief and additional Editorial Board members. This layered approach results in higher rejection rates—typically exceeding 70%, which is significantly higher than MDPI's average acceptance rates, which often hover between 40–60%, with some journals accepting over 70% of submissions. Springer journals vary greatly in quality depending on the specific title, but many of the lower-tier or conference-affiliated Springer journals have acceptance rates similar to or even higher than MDPI, particularly in open-access formats. Moreover, WSEAS has implemented advanced AI-detection systems to identify whether a submission contains artificially generated text. Tools like GPT detectors, semantic anomaly checkers, and AI-specific watermarking tests are routinely used during the editorial screening. Additionally, WSEAS uses robust plagiarism detection tools (iThenticate and proprietary pattern-match engines) not only for verbatim copying but also for self-plagiarism, which many publishers overlook. This includes identification of recycled figures, equations, and datasets from the authors' previous publications.

WSEAS maintains a clear and verifiable policy of independence from any predatory publishing networks. It has never operated under pay-to-publish schemes, and each WSEAS journal explicitly rejects submissions that lack scientific merit, regardless of the author's willingness to pay publication fees. WSEAS does not promise or guarantee acceptance or indexation and has consistently refused to dilute its standards for commercial gain. Its strict stance on academic integrity has also resulted in the removal of papers even after publication if post-publication reviews identify ethical or academic misconduct. This commitment to scientific quality, high rejection rates, AI-content detection, and ethical editorial conduct makes WSEAS journals uniquely qualified for inclusion in high-level bibliographic databases such as Scopus and the Web of Science (ISI). Many of its journals are already indexed in Scopus, and their bibliometric performance (citations, h-index, and impact on the scientific community) continues to justify broader recognition. In conclusion, WSEAS journals uphold a level of scholarly discipline and review quality that not only exceeds common practices in MDPI journals but often also those in parts of Springer Verlag. Their advanced editorial practices, ethical stance, and rejection policies stand as clear indicators of a high-quality scientific publisher deserving of wider academic and bibliometric acknowledgment.

VIII. COMPARISON TO PEER REVIEW OF EMERALD AND SAGE

In this session we will show that there is growing evidence that the journals published by the World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) uphold a higher level of academic scrutiny and peer-review rigor than many journals published by well-known commercial publishers such as Emerald, Sage, and, in some cases, even Springer. Contrary to outdated or misinformed opinions, WSEAS journals are neither predatory, nor bogus, nor fake. On the contrary, their editorial operations are characterized by transparency, strict academic filtering, and high rejection rates—traits that clearly distinguish them from predatory publishers and often place them above certain mid-

tier journals from large commercial houses. One of the most important indicators of the seriousness of a journal is its rejection rate. WSEAS journals operate with a rejection rate that hovers around 80%, a figure they openly publish and document. This level of selectivity is considerably higher than the acceptance rates reported—often vaguely or not at all—by many Emerald and Sage journals, where acceptance rates typically range from 30% to 60% depending on the journal. This stark difference illustrates the tighter editorial gatekeeping practiced by WSEAS. Furthermore, WSEAS journals provide open access to their archives of both accepted and rejected manuscripts, making them one of the few publishers in the world that publicly document every step of the editorial process. This transparency, where even the names and titles of rejected articles are recorded, serves as a robust countermeasure against any allegation of low-quality editorial practices or fake peer review. In terms of the review process itself, WSEAS is widely praised by its authors and editorial board members for its detailed and technical peer review. Reports often describe reviews that go beyond generic comments and involve deep analysis of mathematical derivations, modeling techniques, figures, and statistical soundness. Authors have noted that their papers, even if ultimately accepted, underwent multiple rounds of revision and received line-by-line commentary. The reviewer base is truly international and extensive, consisting of over 13,500 scientists and engineers, a number that allows manuscripts to be matched with domain experts capable of giving thorough, substantive feedback.

Since 2019, WSEAS has introduced a formal certification process for peer review. Each accepted article is accompanied by a certification statement signed by the Editor-in-Chief, verifying that the article passed through multiple, structured, and serious peer reviews. The certification includes information about the number of reviewers, dates of the review process, and the overall editorial workflow. This is further verified by the authors, who must confirm in writing that they received meaningful feedback and were required to revise their work substantially prior to acceptance. Very

few academic publishers, including Springer, Emerald, or Sage, offer such explicit documentation for every published article. Beyond internal documentation, WSEAS also publishes a unique list of manuscripts that it rejected, which were later accepted and published by major publishers such as IEEE, Springer, Elsevier, and Taylor & Francis. This not only proves the strict standards upheld by WSEAS but also dispels the myth that rejection from a WSEAS journal indicates a lack of academic merit; on the contrary, it often shows that WSEAS demands even more rigorous quality controls than some of the top-tier journals published by these multinational publishers.

Furthermore, WSEAS journals are indexed in prestigious databases such as Scopus, DOAJ, and EI Compendex, and the publisher strictly adheres to international ethical standards. The WSEAS editorial office does not impose hidden author fees, article processing charges (APCs), or engage in aggressive solicitation. These are typical markers of predatory publishers, and WSEAS avoids them entirely. Several independent academic bodies—including IARAS and various European university evaluations—have explicitly stated that WSEAS is not predatory and, in fact, offers one of the most transparent and rigorous review environments available in scientific publishing today. In contrast, there is growing criticism of certain Emerald and Sage journals for lacking transparency about their peer-review timelines, relying on underqualified reviewers, or being too commercially oriented. For instance, authors on academic forums like Reddit and ResearchGate often describe the peer review process at Emerald as inconsistent, generic, or focused more on expediency than depth. WSEAS, by comparison, offers tangible proof of editorial integrity by publishing reviewer lists, author confirmations, detailed reports, and even reviewer certifications. In conclusion, WSEAS journals are demonstrably legitimate, non-predatory, and scientifically robust. Their high rejection rates, deep peer review, editorial transparency, and ethical publishing model place them among the most respectable scientific outlets. In many critical aspects, WSEAS outperforms commercial

publishers like Emerald and Sage, particularly in terms of quality control, peer review verification, and academic transparency. It is essential for scholars, institutions, and indexing bodies to recognize the genuine academic contribution and professional standards upheld by WSEAS, and to dismiss outdated or false claims that associate it with predatory behavior.

IX. CONCLUSION

In light of the evidence, it is clear that WSEAS is not a predatory publisher. While it may differ from traditional publishing giants in its model and history, it meets essential academic publishing standards: peer review, transparency, indexing in major databases, and responsiveness to criticism. Any negative perception of WSEAS should be evaluated in context and updated to reflect its ongoing efforts to ensure quality and credibility.

Rather than attacking independent academic societies like WSEAS, the scholarly community should focus on improving peer review practices across the board, supporting transparency, and promoting diversity in scholarly communication. In an era where publishing models are rapidly evolving, such nuanced understanding is vital for the integrity and openness of science.

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