



Research and Publication Ethics: Developing Procedures to Avoid Questionable and Poor Academic Activities*

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to evaluate and reinstate preventative guidelines necessary for a sound academic journal (or academic conference) for the articles published by KODISA and its branch journals. As questionable or predatory academic journals and academic conferences are rapidly increasing, preemptively establishing preventative standards have become essential to obviate questionable academic activities. **Research design, data and methodology:** This is an analytical study that explores and examines research, publication ethics, and misconducts. For this purpose, research ethics related data in overseas and domestic academic journals have been examined and analyzed. **Results:** The issues identified from this research are as follows: enhancing the expertise of editor-in-chief (no concurrent jobs for major and non-major area); clarifying the index; complying with the review policy (The review policy should be publicly announced); complying with anonymous review process; complying with 3 peer-review policy, complying with the publication policy as per field of study; avoiding conference hosting at holiday resorts unless unavoidable; complying with the planned programs and cancelling events if not feasible; following proper review standards and management for all journals, including the journals publishing large number of articles (all materials should be prepared in case explanatory data is required); complying with the marketing policy standards; complying with the impact factor; excluding personal solicitation; and complying with the general policy. **Conclusions:** Questionable and predatory academic activities by academic organizations and journals will continue, and it is the responsibility of the individual scholars to identify and reject these types of dubious academic activities. This study provides standards to prevent the possibility of questionable academic activities that have been conducted in the past. The analysis and findings will strengthen the continued efforts of KODISA as it strives to be a transparent, ethical, and professional academic association, and the association will continue to foster an academic environment that is well-respected by scholars and practitioners throughout the world.

Keywords: KODISA Journals, Publication Ethics, Publication Misconducts, Journal of Research and Publication Ethics (JRPE)

JEL Classification Code: Y2, Y8, Y9.

1. Introduction

Led by the National Research Foundation of Korea, a government-funded institution, there has been a continuous effort in Korea to establish a sound academic ecosystem, as the number of questionable or predatory academic journals and academic conferences has rapidly increased throughout

the world. The government and the academia have been trying to identify issues and resolve the systemic problems, and finding it necessary to set out preventative guidelines to prevent questionable academic activities, KODISA has preemptively established standards and distributed data for its journals. Through continuous research and discussions, KODISA is building and maintaining an advanced system to

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establish sound academic journals and academic conferences that are trusted by the relevant academic community.

2. Scope of Questionable Academic Activities and Definition of Terms

2.1. The Scope of Questionable Academic Activities

Questionable academic activities by publishers, such as WASET, have become a widespread problem, and there have been several cases wherein researchers took advantage of a poorly managed academic conference or journal publisher for their personal gains, such as job promotion, reappointment, and even travel credits. Therefore, this study intends to review and establish overall academic activity management guidelines for KODISA's academic journals and academic conferences, thereby developing KODISA into a well-respected academic organization.

2.2. Terms and Definition

First, "questionable academic activity" refers to all activities that occur in the process of receiving, reviewing, and publishing a thesis that cannot be accepted as it is outside the normal scope from the point of view of a third party.

Second, "predatory academic journals and academic conferences" refer to exaggerated, unscrupulous marketing activities for the purpose of monetary profit in publishing academic journals or hosting academic conferences, and there is an absence of peer review for publication or presentation, which violates publication ethics.

Third, "naïve contributors" refer to those who lack sufficient experience or awareness and, thus, lack awareness of predatory journals and academic conferences.

Table 1: Key Terms and Definitions

Terms	Derived Problems
Questionable academic activities	all activities that occur in the process of receiving, reviewing, and publishing a thesis that cannot be accepted as it is outside the normal scope from the point of view of a third party
Predatory academic journals and conferences	exaggerated, unscrupulous marketing activities for the purpose of monetary profit in publishing academic journals or hosting academic conferences, and there is an absence of peer review for publication or presentation, which violates publication ethics

Naïve contributors	those who lack sufficient experience or awareness and, thus, lack awareness of predatory journals and academic conferences
Cognizant contributor	One who recognizes that a journal and/or academic conference is predatory but pretends to be ignorant of the fact that it lacks credibility for the purpose of personal interest, such as job promotion, employment, or re-appointment
Pseudo-scientist	One who misuses and publishes claims or results that have not been proven as if it is one's own theory due to incorrect ideas about research and scholarship
Hijacked Journal	A journal that confuses others by using the journal name similar to that of a well-known journal
Mass publishing academic journal	a journal that is listed in KCI, SCI, or SCOPUS and publishes articles in large quantities every time a journal is published. These types of academic journals are often found to have violated publication ethics.

Fourth, a "cognizant contributor" is a researcher who is aware that the journal and/or the conference are predatory and questionable but pretends that he/she does not know its lack of credibility and participates for the purpose of personal interest, such as job promotion, employment and re-appointment.

Fifth, "pseudo-scientist" refers to the case where a person has an incorrect idea about academic achievement and misuses the original purpose of the academic publication by asserting unproven claim or results as if it is his/her own theory.

Sixth, "hijacked journal" refers to a journal that uses a journal name that is similar to a famous journal and confuse others.

Seventh, "mass-publishing journal" refer to a journal that is listed in KCI, SCI, or SCOPUS and is publishing large quantities of articles every time a journal is published. These types of academic journals are often found to have violated publication ethics.

3. Preventive Strategy for Questionable Academic Activities

1. The expertise of the editor-in-chief is important. Therefore, in principle, the editor-in-chief should not be

appointed for two or more journals. This means that an editor-in-chief majoring in one area must not take the role for other fields of study. For example, person majoring in business should not be appointed as the editor-in-chief for an academic journal of information technology.

2. The journal index should be clarified. For example, if a journal is dropped from SSCI, SCOPUS, or KCI journals, the journal should remove the index details promptly.

3. Prompt review and publication should not be guaranteed. At least 45 days must be complied with, and the case of an expedited processing, where unavoidable, should only be about 10% of the entire journal articles to be published.

4. Easy peer-review and procedures should not be guaranteed. For example, where a collaborative review by 3 people is the requirement, it would be absolutely unacceptable to have less than 3 people participate in the review process for convenience or to skip the entire review process. Moreover, the reviewer should not be from the same organization as the other reviewer or reviewee for the convenience of the review process.

5. Journals dealing with various fields of study should emphasize convergence and divide the subjects into subdivided majors. Moreover, multiple topics should not be discussed in one conference room. It must be consistent with one field of study.

6. Hosting a conference at a holiday resort should be avoided because of the possibility that an event can become distorted and misused for a vacation purpose.

7. During an academic conference, registration fees should not be charged as a condition for publication on a famous overseas website. The act of notifying such facts and guaranteeing publication must not be allowed.

8. The conference should be scheduled with a contingency plan. If a non-face-to-face academic conference is held due to the various reasons (e.g, COVID-19), all presenters must attend the event and operate the event as per the usual program. If it is deemed to be not feasible to hold the event as it would normally, the event should be cancelled in advance to prevent any confusion and inconvenience.

9. If a journal has a large number of articles to be published, the submission, the review, and the selection for publication should be carefully managed using the online submission system. If there is a part that has not been processed through the online submission system, all materials, including the results of the review by 3 evaluators, must be prepared on paper. In particular, it is necessary to thoroughly prepare for a case where National Research Foundation of Korea, Elsevier, or Clarivate may request explanatory materials for parts that have not been processed through the online submission system.

10. When calling for papers or promoting an academic conference, use of specific and concise language is necessary to avoid confusion.

Table 2: Expected Cases of Major Questionable Academic Activities and the Counter Strategy

Item	Details
Identified Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of expertise of the editor-in-chief; 2. Unclear journal index; 3. Advertising prompt publication and review guarantee; 4. Easy peer-review guarantee; 5. Inconsistent field of study between the article and the journal; 6. Inveterately hosting conferences at holiday resorts; 7. Charging registration fees as a condition of publication in other SCI-level journals; 8. Inconsistent event operation from the planned programme (e.g. not attending due to the COVID-19 etc.); 9. High risk of poor review and management of journals in publishing large numbers of articles; 10. Possibility of problems due to unscrupulous marketing; 11. Inaccurate influence indicator; 12. Personal solicitation.
Counter Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing the expertise of editor-in-chief (No concurrent position for major and non-major areas); 2. Clarification for the journal index; 3. Compliance with the review policy (Review policy to be public); 4. Comply with the anonymity of reviewer and 3 peer-review policy; 5. Comply with the publication policy as per field of study; 6. Avoid hosting conferences at a holiday resort unless unavoidable; 7. No publication to the journal that is inconsistent with the field of study of the article and comply with the publication conditions. 8. Comply with the planned programs and cancel the event if not feasible; 9. Proper review standards and management for all journals, including the journals publishing large number of articles (all materials should be prepared in case explanatory data is required); 10. Comply with the marketing policy; 11. Keep the impact factor accurate; 12. Complete exclusion of personal solicitation and policy compliance.

11. The impact factor must be accurately stated. For example, when introducing journals with impact factors of KCI, Scopus, and SSCI (Clarivate Analytics), it must be stated correctly.

12. Solicitation using personal acquaintance is one of the biggest causes of questionable academic activities. Therefore, any personal request should not be accepted. The editor-in-chief must always be conscious of publication ethics and act with a sense of duty.

4. Conclusions

Identifying the problematic issues common in the cases of major questionable academic activities has enabled this study to explore the insufficient measures that had been taken by other academic societies and to provide counter strategies. A well-established academic organization should act responsibly, and it is hoped that this study and publication will inspire more awareness and attention to the issues of academic integrity. In reviewing and providing standards for excluding the possibility of questionable academic activities, KODISA is continuing in its effort to be a transparent, ethical, and professional academic association that will foster an academic environment that is well-respected by scholars and practitioners throughout the world.

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