IFRS 15 Implementation and Impact: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:

The literature review integrates findings from 32 studies which examined IFRS 15 adoption effects on different countries and industries. The implementation of IFRS 15 has achieved its main goal of creating better revenue recognition standards which enhance financial reporting excellence and transparency and promote comparability. The review demonstrates how IFRS 15 adoption modified revenue recognition timing while improving earnings quality and reducing earnings manipulation in industries with complex long-term contracts such as construction and telecommunications. The transition process was smoother for those companies serving developed markets but emerging economies had to contend with more issues due to scarce resources and lax enforcement mechanisms. Empirical evidence indicates that comparability and decision-usefulness of financial statements enhanced post-adoption but inconsistent disclosure practices and management judgment reliance remain issues. Research gaps with respect to longitudinal studies and user-behavioral responses are indicated in the review and provide avenues for further research.

Klíčová slova: IFRS 15; Revenue recognition; Financial reporting quality; Comparability; Earnings Management.

JEL klasifikace: M41, F65.

1 Introduction

Revenue recognition is central to financial reporting, but before IFRS 15 the landscape was a patchwork of prescriptive rules that often masked the economic reality and allowed scope for earnings manipulation (Napier & Stadler, 2020). The issuance of IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers, which was published in May 2014 alongside the respective U.S. GAAP counterpart standard (ASC 606) and became obligatory on January 1, 2018 (with early adoption permitted), replaced IAS 18 and IAS 11, thus remedying this fragmentation by creating a single principle-based framework centred on the concept of transfer of control (IASB, 2014). By shifting from the former "risks and rewards" approach to one based on the satisfaction of performance obligations, the new standard sought to improve

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comparability and transparency, and limit scope for manipulation (Sharma et al., 2014; Napier & Stadler, 2020).

Within the IFRS architecture at large, IFRS 15 belongs to the core standards. It anchors how entities think about revenue and, in practice, tracks closely with the IASB's Conceptual Framework (2018). The standard grew out of the long IASB/FASB project on revenue and by the time IFRS 15 was issued in 2014 (effective 2018), the aim was clearer: more consistent, transparent, and decision-useful reporting across jurisdictions. Seen in that light, IFRS 15 is best read alongside IFRS 9 Financial Instruments and IFRS 16 Leases. The three do not form a technical package, yet they share a principles-based posture and a concern for faithful representation of the underlying economics. IFRS 15 is therefore more than a tidy rewrite: it is one strand in the IASB's longer move toward a coherent, conceptually grounded system (Barth, 2018). And because it was developed with the FASB and aligned with ASC 606, it marks a notable moment in IFRS–US GAAP convergence.

Looking more closely at IFRS 15 offers a useful way to see how international accounting rules put broad ideas, such as comparability, consistency, and faithful representation, into practice across different reporting environments. Rather than being only a technical update, the standard has become a case through which to observe how well conceptual goals survive once they meet national institutions and enforcement systems. Recent research has questioned whether IFRS 15 actually achieved those aims or, conversely, created new areas of ambiguity and uneven application (Kabir & Su, 2022). By reviewing the growing body of empirical evidence, this study adds to the ongoing conversation about how effective and credible international accounting standards really are as tools for coordinating financial reporting on a global scale.

This review synthesises the fast-growing international evidence on the effects of IFRS 15. The examples encompass evidenced improvements in financial statement comparability in Korea (Lee & Choi, 2024) and evidence of reduced earnings management in the COVID-19 pandemic by reporters following IFRS compared to their U.S. GAAP counterparts (Yassin et al., 2022). In addition, it outlines areas where the standard has been shown to succeed, areas of inconclusive results, and areas where research gaps still persist. For researchers, the review summarises the theoretical and methodological advances within this field while identifying research questions insufficiently addressed. For practitioners, it presents an evidence-based evaluation of successful applications, probable issues, and emerging best practices to guide standard-setting, audit planning, and managerial policy. In this way, the review contributes to academic understanding about the effectiveness of accounting standard-setting and implementation complexities in varying settings. At the same time, it gives regulators, auditors, and corporate executives clear insights into the degree to which the standard is realising its transformative promise and the pathways through which this happens.

In brief, IFRS 15's purpose is to provide principles for reporting useful information regarding the nature, amount, timing, and uncertainty of revenue and related cash flows arising from customer contracts (IASB, 2014). In line with the IASB's desired outcomes, the standard was anticipated to: (1) enhance comparability of revenue recognition across entities, industries, jurisdictions, and capital markets; (2) eliminate the need for case-by-case interpretive guidance with a complete, principles-based approach; and (3) provide more decision-useful information through increased disclosure requirements (IASB, 2014; IASB, 2023). Empirical studies have since investigated whether these objectives have indeed manifested in the form of outcomes like increased reporting quality and less earnings management (e.g., Napier & Stadler, 2020; Lee & Choi, 2024; Yassin et al., 2022).

The main objective of this article is to consolidate the findings of empirical research on the implementation of IFRS 15 in different geographical areas and industrial sectors, providing thereby a comprehensive insight into the effects of IFRS 15 on financial reporting practice and outcomes worldwide. The secondary objective is to analyse and highlight inconsistencies or gaps in these findings, such as differences reported between developed and developing economic environments (Grosu et al., 2022; Ogunode & Salawu, 2021) or differences between transactions with high and low complexity. More specifically, the following research questions are answered:

1. What have been the effects of IFRS 15 adoption on financial reporting results, including revenues, earnings, and comparability of financial statements, reported across industries and geographies?
2. In what ways has IFRS 15 adoption affected the quality of financial reporting and of reported earnings, specifically regarding earnings management, earnings quality, and other measures of financial reporting quality?
3. What implementation barriers and challenges have organisations and auditors encountered in using IFRS 15, and how do these differ in different settings (e.g., between countries or industries)?
4. To what extent have the objectives of comparability, consistency, and transparency of revenue recognition as prescribed in IFRS 15 been achieved, based on the findings of the current body of literature?

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 introduces the conceptual foundations of IFRS 15, mapping its scope, core principles, and the five-step revenue model. It concludes with Section 2.1, which contrasts early adopters with entities that waited until the mandatory effective date. Section 3 provides details of the systematic review design, describing the PRISMA-guided search strategy, inclusion criteria, and descriptive statistics that frame the evidence base. Section 4 synthesises empirical findings on the standard's financial-reporting consequences, examining 4.1 changes in revenue and earnings-quality metrics; 4.2 shifts in cross-firm comparability; 4.3 progress toward global harmonisation; 4.4 alterations in the timing and pattern of revenue recognition; and 4.5 the decision-usefulness of the expanded disclosure regime. Section 5 broadens the lens by first comparing implementation experiences across jurisdictions, then analysing industry-specific effects in construction, telecommunications, software, healthcare, banking, and other sectors. Section 6 reviews the methodological approaches that dominate the literature before pinpointing unresolved research questions and under-explored contexts. Finally, Section 7 summarises the review's principal insights, reflects on the mixed success of IFRS 15 in achieving its objectives, and outlines directions for future enquiry and practice.

2 Overview of IFRS 15 Implementation: Scope, Principles, and Evolution of Revenue Recognition

IFRS 15 applies to all contracts with customers unless other standards apply, marking a notable evolution in how revenue is recognised. The aim was to create a consistent framework for revenue reporting across sectors, tackling problems with previous regulations. Implementation involves a five-step model:

1. Identify the contract(s) with a customer.
2. Identify the performance obligations.
3. Determine the transaction price.
4. Allocate the transaction price to performance obligations.
5. Recognise revenue when (or as) performance obligations are satisfied.

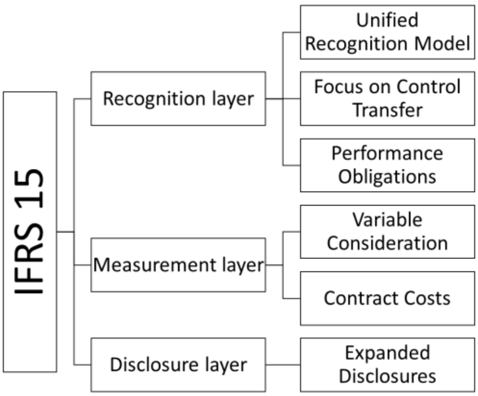
This principles-based methodology enhances comparability, providing stakeholders with a better understanding of revenue streams and reducing earlier ambiguities (Blanchette et al., 2011). With ongoing IFRS 15 adoption, entities need to diligently review contracts for applicability. Omissions can drastically change reported revenues. This change brings us in sync with international norms and necessitates revisiting current practices and controls, which highlights ongoing application and implementation issues (Phillips, 2010). Revisiting current accounting practices is extremely important.

Real-world applications of this model have brought to light the imperative necessity for technical training and interpretation, especially in complicated contractual situations. McNellis, Barone, and Herbold (2020) performed a case study in which financial experts worked through complicated contractual language using a five-step process. They reasoned that even experienced practitioners may not be able to identify performance obligations or properly allocate variable consideration without explicit guidelines or adequate experience—emphasising the importance of effective preparer education in conjunction with standard implementation.

IFRS 15 introduced several fundamental changes compared to previous standards (Figure 1):

- **Unified Recognition Model:** A single model replaced disparate rules for goods, services, and construction contracts (Napier & Stadler, 2020).
- **Focus on Control Transfer:** Recognition shifted from risk and rewards transfer to control transfer, which had a considerable effect on industries such as construction and real estate (Kabir & Su, 2022).
- **Performance Obligations:** Entities must separately identify unique goods or services, leading to the disaggregation of contracts, particularly in the telecommunications and software industries (Boujelben & Kobbi-Fakhfakh, 2020).
- **Variable Consideration:** Specific guidance on estimating and constraining variable consideration reduced aggressive revenue recognition practices (Yassin et al., 2022).
- **Contract Costs:** IFRS 15 introduced capitalisation rules for costs of obtaining and fulfilling contracts, enhancing the matching of revenues and expenses (Grosu et al., 2022).
- **Expanded Disclosures:** Companies are required to provide detailed disclosures on revenue disaggregation, contract balances, and performance obligations, improving transparency (Coetsee, Mohammadali-Haji, Van Wyk, 2022).

Fig. 1 IFRS 15 fundamental changes compared to the previous standards



Source: Author, based on the literature review.

2.1 Early Versus Mandatory Adoption Trends

Evidence supports that larger and more profitable firms with good governance structures were among the first to adopt new standards (Quagli et al., 2021), which corroborates the findings of Aladwey and Diab (2023). What was the driver of such action? It was the desire to demonstrate transparency to stakeholders and reduce information asymmetry, as well as adherence to U.S. GAAP globally (Trabelsi, 2018). For instance, Dubai's real estate companies witnessed a remarkable enhancement in the quality of accounting information following early adoption of IFRS 15—a clear signal of the advantages that accrue to timely compliance (Trabelsi, 2018). By the way, in the setting of emerging economies, these early adopters also demonstrated enhanced corporate governance and greater profitability, and thereby, they reestablished the connection between timely adoption and organisational performance supremacy (Aladwey & Diab, 2023).

However, many companies delayed adoption, commonly citing operational difficulties and probable negative financial statement effects on transition. Required adoption has realised far greater consistency worldwide, though Boujelben and Kobbi-Fakhfakh (2020) added disclosure quality convergence differed considerably between areas and sectors initially. Additional post-implementation studies in the years to come, especially with respect to early versus required adoption trends (Chen, 2024), will be needed for resolving remaining problems and ensuring its continued applicability in the face of changing business practices.

3 Review method and descriptive data

A review of implementation IFRS 15 literature was conducted, focusing on the impacts of IFRS 15 and their interactions with a variety of actors, where a systematic literature review approach was implemented to comprehensively identify, appraise, and synthesise all relevant studies on the topic (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021) guided our reporting to ensure transparency.

Scopus was selected as the sole information source because of its broad journal coverage. Records published between January 2015 and December 2024 were searched using the query "IFRS 15", and the query "revenue recognition" AND "IFRS" applied to titles, abstracts and keywords. Since IFRS used to be called IAS, we also used the query IAS 15 for comprehensiveness, in case the standard was accidentally mislabelled in the keywords. This query led to one additional relevant record. No automated text-mining tools were used; searches were performed manually.

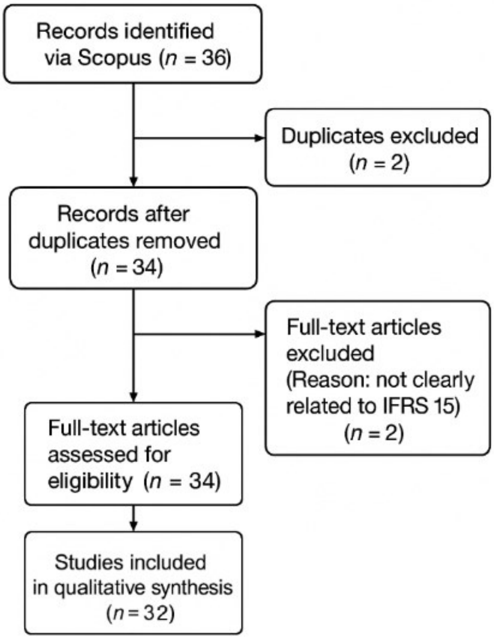
Studies had to meet four inclusion criteria:

1. Publication type – peer-reviewed journal article indexed in Scopus.
2. Language – English.
3. Period – 2015 – 2024 (including post-issuance research window).
4. Topical focus – empirical, theoretical or review work explicitly analysing IFRS 15 or revenue-recognition issues in an IFRS context.

Papers failing any criterion were excluded. One article retrieved by keywords was excluded at full-text review because it did not analyse IFRS 15.

Following PRISMA guidance (Page et al., 2021), a two-stage screening was undertaken. Titles and abstracts were screened against the inclusion criteria. Full texts of potentially relevant papers were then examined in detail. 32 articles satisfied all criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis; two excluded at full-text stage for irrelevance, producing the counts shown in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 2).

Fig. 2 PRISMA flow diagram – IFRS 15 implementation review



Source: Author.

For each included study was captured: author(s), year, region/country, industry context, study objective and research method. Owing to heterogeneity in design and outcomes, was performed a narrative synthesis, comparing themes such as compliance challenges, earnings-quality effects, disclosure changes and governance implications across different jurisdictions and sectors. The 32 studies span 27 journals in accounting, business management, economics and governance, demonstrating the multidisciplinary interest in IFRS 15, as illustrated in Table 1.

Tab. 1 Distribution of journal papers

Field	**Title**	**Number of Papers**
Accounting	Accounting and Finance	1
	Accounting and Finance Letters	1
	Universal Journal of Accounting and Finance	1
	International Journal of Disclosure and Governance	2
	Journal of Applied Accounting Research	1
	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation	2
	Qualitative Research in Financial Markets	1
	Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal	1
	Accounting Perspectives	1
	Accounting and Business Research	1
	Advances in Accounting	1
	Asian Review of Accounting	1
	Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal	1
	Issues in Accounting Education	3
	Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting	1
	South African Journal of Accounting Research	1
Business & Management	Cogent Business and Management	2
	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	1
	Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios	1
	SN Business and Economics	1
	Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research	1
	WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics	1
Economics	International Journal of Economics and Finance Studies	1
	Engineering Economics	1
Mathematics	Italian Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics	1
	Journal of Risk and Financial Management	1
Governance	Journal of Governance and Regulation	1
Total		**32**

Source: Author.

A review of the methodological approaches (Table 2) used in the examined body of literature indicates that most studies on accounting and financial reporting rely on data-driven, quantitative designs. Among the thirty-two papers analysed, fourteen employ empirical analyses, typically using panel data, regression techniques, or other statistical procedures to test relationships between accounting standards and financial outcomes. Another substantial group of studies, six in total, relies on survey methods, gathering perceptions and professional judgments from practitioners, auditors, or managers to complement the numerical evidence. Case studies account for five papers and provide detailed insights into organisational contexts or specific implementation processes of IFRS standards, helping to bridge the gap between theoretical assumptions and practice.

A smaller portion of the literature, represented by four papers, applies content analysis to investigate disclosure quality or reporting transparency in corporate documents. Only one paper used a qualitative empirical design, relying on interviews and interpretative techniques. Finally, two papers develop theoretical models that conceptualise relationships among key accounting variables without relying on empirical data. Taken together, this distribution of methods suggests that research on IFRS and financial reporting is still dominated by quantitative and positivist traditions, while interpretive and conceptual approaches play a more limited, yet complementary, role in the ongoing academic discussion.

Tab. 2 Distribution of research methods used in the reviewed papers

Method	Number of papers
Case Study	5
Content Analysis	4
Empirical Analysis	14
Qualitative Empirical Study	1
Survey	6
Theoretical Model	2
Total	**32**

Source: Author.

The geographical context of the reviewed studies is presented in Table 3. According to the statistics 18 % of the research focuses on Anglo-Saxon settings—1 study in the UK, 3 in North. America, and 2 in Australia & New Zealand, while 15 % adopt an international or multi-country perspective. Asian contexts (East, Southeast & South Asia) account for 18 % of the sample, and Middle East for 15 %. Research on European countries outside the UK represents 6 %, and African contexts 12 %.

Notably, there are no studies from Central Asia. This distribution underscores both the predominance of transnational analyses and the relative under-coverage of specific regions, suggesting opportunities for more comparative and developing-country research.

The uneven geographical spread of IFRS 15 research is not accidental. The stronger presence of Asian, Middle-Eastern, and African studies reflects where IFRS standards are applied directly and where the adoption process still generates visible diversity in practice in comparison to the more mature and institutionally stable IFRS reporting environments of European countries (Karim & Riya, 2022; Grosu et al., 2022). As for U.S., it has also much to do with the standard's shared roots with the U.S. ASC 606, developed through a joint project of the IASB and FASB and applied in most jurisdictions from 2018 onward. Although the two standards follow the same underlying principles, differences in national reporting regimes help explain why scholars have focused on some regions more than others. U.S.-domiciled listed companies follow U.S. GAAP and therefore report under ASC 606, while IFRS reporting in the United States is confined to foreign private issuers listed on U.S. exchanges (SEC, 2007). As a result, empirical studies originating in the U.S. generally focus on ASC 606 rather than IFRS 15.

Tab. 3 Regional analysis of the reviewed papers

Region of Investigation[1]	**2015–2018**	**2019–2024**	**Total (%)**
United Kingdom	0	1	1 (3 %)
United States	2	1	3 (9 %)
Latin America (Brazil)	0	1	1 (3 %)
Europe (excluding UK)	0	2	2 (6 %)
Australia & New Zealand	1	1	2 (6 %)
Asia (East, Southeast & South)	1	5	6 (18 %)
Middle East	1	4	5 (15 %)
Africa	0	4	4 (12 %)
International	0	5	5 (15 %)
General	0	3	3 (9 %)
Total	**5**	**27**	**32 (100 %)**

Source: Author.

[1] Asia (East, Southeast & South) includes Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand and India. Middle East includes Jordan, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates. African countries include South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria. International refers to studies conducted across multiple countries or regions.

4 Impacts of IFRS 15 on Financial Reporting

This chapter investigates the impacts of IFRS 15 from the perspective of its objective to establish principles an entity applies to report useful information about the nature, amount, timing, and uncertainty of revenue and related cash flows from customer contracts speaks directly to what capital-market users need to assess performance and prospects (IASB, 2021). At the same time, the IASB's post-implementation review (PIR) clarifies the standard-setters' intended effects: a comprehensive, robust framework expected (i) to improve comparability of revenue recognition across entities, industries, jurisdictions, and capital markets, (ii) to reduce the need for case-by-case interpretive guidance, (iii) to enable more useful information through improved disclosure requirements (IASB, 2014). These twin anchors, objective and intended effects, define the following chapters. Sections 4.1 (quality of reported revenue), 4.4 (timing and pattern of recognition), and 4.5 (decision-usefulness) examine the direct implications of the objective, whether IFRS 15's five-step model and disclosure regime curb opportunistic reporting, align recognition with performance obligations over time versus at a point in time, and yield more decision-relevant information about uncertainty and cash-flow profiles. Sections 4.2 (comparability) and 4.3 (harmonisation) evaluate the system-level aims emphasised in the PIR cross-entity and cross-jurisdiction consistency, and the dampening of ad hoc interpretive fixes that historically fragmented practice, thereby assessing whether IFRS 15's unified principles have delivered the comparability and reporting discipline the IASB envisaged (IASB, 2023). By juxtaposing these objective-driven and PIR-articulated outcomes, the chapter provides a structured, empirical assessment of how IFRS 15 has reconfigured revenue recognition, disclosure, and the broader informativeness of financial reporting.

4.1 Studies Examining Changes in Quality of Reported Revenue

The effect of IFRS 15 on the quality of financial reporting is not straightforward, and studies have had mixed findings based on the specific environment. More precisely, Chen (2024) demonstrated that the adoption of IFRS 15 in China led to improvements in revenue and earnings quality. This is because the standard was successful in precluding earnings management—practices that are commonly employed to mask a firm's true economic position. The emphasis placed on performance obligations and contract-based recognition limited management discretion over the timing of revenue recognition, which, in turn, led to more faithful representations of actual economic activity, thereby increasing the usefulness of financial statements. In the Iraqi hospitality industry as well, Hameed, Al-Taie, and Al-Mashhadani (2019) found a positive effect on earnings quality owing to IFRS 15 in that it mitigated the scope for income smoothing. They found a decrease in so-called abnormal accruals following the adoption of the standard, reflective of the presentation of more credible financial information and of greater stakeholder trust.

Notwithstanding the above positive attributes, it is worth mentioning that the overall image is not all positive; Yassin et al. (2022) discovered that, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, firms that applied both IFRS and U.S. GAAP employed earnings management strategies, an observation implying that exceptional external factors might weaken the ability of these standards in preventing opportunistic financial reporting. In addition, Soodsook et al. (2024), through their Thai study, illustrated that companies engaged in complex business transactions did not show a notable improvement in earnings quality. This translates to the fact that complex contractual structures can destroy the intended effect of IFRS 15. Concisely, such contrasts highlight the importance of an insight into the manner in which different market environments and organisational settings can affect the effectiveness of IFRS 15 in improving the quality of revenue reporting.

4.2 Empirical Evidence on Comparability Pre- and Post-Adoption

More broadly, an overriding motivation for IFRS 15 was the desire to improve the comparability of financial reporting across firms and industries. Indeed, Lee and Choi's (2024) paper presents strong Korean evidence that the adoption of IFRS 15 radically improved the cross-sectional comparability of financial reporting across industries. Their large-scale empirical investigation showed improvements both within and across industries and accounted for this largely in terms of the introduction of a coherent framework of revenue recognition that replaced the erstwhile fragmented practices.

Conversely, Boujelben and Kobbi-Fakhfakh (2020) found that there were still complexities within the telecommunications industry, despite the enhanced general comparability. This was suggestive of divergent interpretations and applications of the standard by companies. For this reason, a sector-based analysis is necessary to assess the effects of IFRS adoption.

4.3 Whether IFRS 15 Achieved Its Aim of Harmonising Reporting

Cumulatively, empirical studies confirm that IFRS 15 has succeeded to a great extent in its objective of promoting international harmonisation of revenue recognition approaches. In an extensive study covering a number of emerging economies, Grosu et al. (2022) observed that while there were considerable challenges in the early phases of its adoption, IFRS 15 has played a key role in facilitating convergence with global best practices over time.

That said, one has to remember that problems persist. Differences between sectors and inconsistencies within national enforcement environments still affect the implementation fidelity. As a result, this makes the wider goal of harmonisation between jurisdictions more challenging. All this indicates that, despite progress, the complete realisation of IFRS 15's aims of harmonised reporting is an ongoing process with a need for constant reviewing and revising (Cole et al., 2009), (Brüggemann et al., 2012).

4.4 Changes in Timing and Pattern of Revenue Recognition

Since the adoption of IFRS 15, a key question has been its effect on the timing and pattern of revenue recognition. Kabir and Su (2022), for example, studied Australian and New Zealand companies and identified significant changes in the timing of revenue recognition. The changes were most pronounced in technology and telecommunication, with revenue often recognised earlier as a result of identifying performance obligations fulfilled over a period instead of a point in time. Share prices of early adopters of IFRS 15 also changed, as observed by Aladwan (2019), which further suggests that markets are sensitive to perceived shifts in revenue profiles; this also calls for a more detailed examination of financial reporting. Trabelsi (2018) discovered that in Dubai's real estate market, early adoption sometimes resulted in revenue deferral relative to local GAAPs. This already shows that the impacts of IFRS 15 may be sector-specific. These differing sector-specific effects thus need to be examined more closely in order to determine IFRS 15's general effect on patterns of revenue recognition in various industries.

4.5 Decision-usefulness of financial reports under IFRS 15

A fundamental consideration in relation to any accounting standard changes is whether the changes can improve the decision-usefulness of financial statements. IFRS 15, together with its comprehensive disclosure requirements, was specifically designed to improve users' understanding of revenue sources, major judgments, and various attributes of contracts; hence, it aims to increase the general usefulness of financial statements. Empirical evidence seems to support this statement. For instance, Haddad and Dammak (2023) explained that in Iraq, the additional revelations with IFRS 15 indeed positively affected investor decision-making, depicting more informativeness and helping stakeholders make more informed decisions. A related study by Coetsee, Mohammadali-Haji, and van Wyk (2022) examined companies in South Africa, where the more extensive disclosures according to IFRS 15 were seen by analysts as significantly more useful for their decision-making, especially in relation to the nature, timing, and inherent uncertainties of revenue streams.

However, it is important to note several continuing limitations. According to Karim and Riya (2022), firms in emerging economies generally showed only a level of compliance with the strict disclosure requirements, thus limiting the benefits of the standard in these respective settings.

The literature reviewed reveals the following major impacts of IFRS 15 on financial reporting:

- **Quality Improvement**: IFRS 15 improved the quality of revenue disclosures significantly, hence helping to decrease earnings management in different markets. The benefits, though, were not that pronounced for companies involved in complex transactions or when there were external crises (Chen, 2024; Hameed et al., 2019).
- **Increased Comparability**: The use of one model has increased the comparability of financial statements across various corporations and industries amidst variations in interpretation and idiosyncratic characteristics unique to specific industries (Lee & Choi, 2024; Boujelben & Kobbi-Fakhfakh, 2020).
- **Timing and Patterns**: The timing of revenue recognition changed in most industries, especially technology and services, leading to earlier or more patterned revenue recognition patterns (Kabir & Su, 2022).
- **User Informativeness**: Financial reporting grew more informative in most instances, supporting users' decision-making, but lack of consistent compliance in some jurisdictions continues to be a hindrance (Coetsee et al., 2022; Karim & Riya, 2022).

5 Cross-Country and Industry Perspectives – IFRS 15 Implementation and Outcomes

This chapter reviews the literature on how IFRS 15 has been implemented in various national contexts and industries, the effects on financial reporting quality, and what case studies reveal about challenges and outcomes.

5.1 Geographic Variations in IFRS 15 Implementation

An analysis of the geographical distribution of research related to IFRS 15 shows a strong presence of emerging markets; this reflects the various challenges and results of its implementation. Empirical research has concentrated on nations such as Brazil (de Souza et al., 2022), Thailand (Soodsook et al., 2024), and Jordan, presenting enlightening results on the implementation challenges in less developed regulatory settings. Most often, these studies refer to deeper systemic issues, e.g., low proficiency among preparers and the presence of weak enforcement mechanisms, which may impede effective application of the newly formulated standards. For instance, Soodsook et al. (2024) established that IFRS 15 adoption in Thailand led to earnings quality improvement, notably through increased predictability and reduced earnings volatility, thus pointing to the potential gains of the standards under similar circumstances. Similarly, Salameh et al. (2022) established significant improvement in disclosure quality by Jordanian construction companies' post-adoption, echoing the perspective that IFRS 15 can yield desired impacts, even for emerging markets, as long as adequate support to companies is facilitated during the transitional periods.

Evidence from developed markets, while less plentiful, offers useful comparative perspectives that inform the discussion on the global ramifications of IFRS 15. According to Lee and Choi (2024) there were improvements in the consistency of financial reporting in Korea after the implementation of IFRS 15. Different results reported Kabir and Su (2022), who examined companies in Australia and New Zealand. They found that only around 36% reported significant impacts. This reflects differences in implementation even among developed markets. It is relevant to note that Western Europe and North America seem underrepresented in the current scholarly literature, which could be due to the perception that IFRS 15 poses fewer issues—a premise worth investigating to fully grasp geographic differences (Chen, 2024). Even so, singular examples from North America reveal sector-specific difficulties. In the digital gaming industry, for instance, Conrod and Cumby (2016) discussed how the principles of IFRS 15 created interpretive challenges on recognising virtual products and subscription-based services. Their findings suggest that even within sophisticated reporting environments, revenue recognition under IFRS 15 can be complicated when applied to non-traditional products or innovative delivery models.

Thus, the focus on emerging markets yields fertile contextual information but points to the necessity of more even geographical coverage, especially longitudinal and comparative research in industrialised economies.

5.2 Challenges in IFRS 15 Implementation

Countries with a long history of established accounting rules have found IFRS 15 harder to apply. Progress toward adoption has been uneven across the globe. Differences in local regulation, economic strength, and the presence of other standards can influence how IFRS 15 is taken up. In Europe, many large companies were ready by the time the standard took effect in 2018. Even so, research carried out beforehand showed that preparation was uneven. Some firms had already set up detailed disclosure processes. Others were still working to meet the new requirements (Salameh et al., 2022).

The implementation of IFRS 15 has unfolded unevenly across the world, and emerging economies have faced a particularly steep climb. In several of these markets, the standard has taken hold slowly; early assessments predicted that full compliance might be years away. Grosu et al. (2022) reported that many firms lacked the detailed guidance needed to apply the rules correctly. Where national reporting systems are still developing, meeting disclosure requirements has proved difficult. In one case examined, companies worked to align with the standard yet rarely achieved full conformity. Karim and Riya (2022) attribute these gaps to both limited organisational resources and the complexity built into the standard itself.

When IFRS-based systems are compared with those using US GAAP, the differences become clearer. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Yassin et al. (2022)

looked at companies in Jordan, which uses IFRS, and in the United States, which applies GAAP. In both settings, managers adjusted revenue recognition to manage earnings, but the methods differed. IFRS companies tended to make changes to both current and future contracts, while GAAP firms focused mainly on future ones.

Even with IFRS 15 and its GAAP equivalent, ASC 606, aiming for closer alignment, managers often end up applying the rules in different ways. Cultural habits and how strictly the rules are enforced may help explain this. A US study on managers' readiness to work with IFRS revenue recognition backs up the point. Bierstaker, Kopp, and Lombardi (2016) found that many struggled with the principles-based method and instead reverted to the GAAP approach they were used to. Switching to IFRS can be tough, especially in technical areas such as revenue recognition.

Country-level research also emphasises geographic variation in the implementation of IFRS 15. Within the Asia-Pacific region, Australia and New Zealand completed the implementation of IFRS 15 on time; studies demonstrated that companies in both nations significantly changed revenue recognition practices and financial statement presentations following adoption, attesting that companies altered accounting policies and estimates in order to meet the requirements of the new standard (Kabir & Su, 2022). More generally, Edeigba and Amenkhienan (2017) document that requiring IFRS enhanced comparability of reporting by New Zealand's largest firms but left enduring gaps in disclosure among smaller ones. That is, New Zealand's experience with IFRS 15 adoption demonstrates that whereas the reporting by large firms is fully aligned with IASB requirements, smaller firms' reports lack material information, thus undermining comparability of financial statements. The transition to IFRS 15 in Australia has generated mixed results for the value relevance of financial reports. While many companies reported insignificant effects during the transition period, some of them faced considerable declines in earnings and/or retained earnings. For these firms specifically, the value relevance of earnings was generally lower before adoption in comparison to those companies that experienced no considerable effects. After the adoption, there is little evidence to indicate that the standard enhanced the overall relevance of earnings (Onie et al., 2023).

The adoption of IFRS 15 in China, where IFRS-convergent standards were implemented, appears to have enhanced reported revenue and earnings quality. Although Chen (2024) finds that Chinese companies overall experienced improved earnings quality following IFRS 15, with reduced earnings manipulation via accruals, there is evidence that some may have turned to real earnings management, manipulating transaction timing, to achieve targets under the new standards. An example from the Middle East comes from Dubai's property sector. Trabelsi (2018) analysed its early adoption of IFRS 15. Companies that adopted the standard ahead of others revised how they recognised revenue. This shift also affected how useful their financial statements were for interpreting company performance. Salameh et al. (2022) examined Jordan’s construction and telecommunications industries and found that adopting IFRS 15 led to clearer reporting and greater transparency. Difficulties with applying IFRS 15 remain in a number of jurisdictions. Overcoming them is likely to depend on guidance shaped to local conditions and on continued academic and professional inquiry.

African markets also demonstrate distinctive IFRS 15 adoption experiences. In Nigeria, IFRS 15 created challenges for major industries because of complexity in some contracts; interviews with Nigerian companies identified difficulties interpreting the standard's application guidance for particular transactions, although the standard was widely regarded as an improvement for consistency of financial reporting (Ogunode & Salawu, 2021). Coetsee et al. (2022) analysed how South African companies reported the adoption of IFRS 15 in their financial statements. IFRS 15 disclosures do not all look the same. Some organisations explain the effects in detail so that readers can see more clearly what has changed. In some reports, detail is lacking. This can suggest that not all organisations meet the disclosure rules fully, or that enforcement is uneven. The core ideas behind IFRS 15 are applied worldwide, but countries differ in how they put them into practice, how workable they find them, and how much they influence reported results. Local factors, such as the strength of financial reporting systems, the training available to preparers, and whether IFRS or another GAAP is used, shape how the standard works in practice (Aladwey & Diab, 2023; Lim et al., 2015).

5.3 Industry-Specific Impacts of IFRS 15

Construction Sector

The application of IFRS 15 in the construction sector has significantly impacted its operational processes, given the industry's dependence on long-term contracts and the fact that IFRS 15 replaces IAS 11. The core element of IFRS 15 requires construction businesses to ascertain whether revenue should be recognised progressively (based on the stage of completion) or at a specific point in time, using criteria that could be different from past approaches. Research shows that many construction firms changed their revenue recognition policies to conform to these newer requirements. For example, property developers often experienced an immediate boost to equity, as IFRS 15 allowed earlier revenue recognition, thus improving their apparent financial position (Napier & Stadler, 2020). In contrast, many construction businesses faced initial reductions in retained earnings because IFRS 15 sometimes forced them to delay revenue that had been previously recognised too soon under earlier standards, as illustrated by Lee & Choi (2024).

Some construction companies have found the disclosure demands in IFRS 15 hard to follow, especially because of how much detail the standard expects. Back in 2020, Boujelben and Kobbi-Fakhfakh examined how companies handled required reporting and found big differences in their approaches. Even big players sometimes left out key points such as performance obligations, contract balances, or the judgments that shaped their revenue figures. That variety is not surprising. A single construction contract can bundle together several different jobs, add in bonuses or penalties, and change mid-stream, all of which have to be recorded with care under IFRS 15.

Salameh and colleagues (2022) examined the rule's rollout in Jordan and found it did sharpen financial reporting. Revenue was presented more clearly, and results could be compared more easily between firms. And the smaller players? They had a harder time staying in step. One example comes from a case study by Barua and Gujarathi (2022) on Prestige Projects Ltd., an infrastructure company. Managers at the firm had trouble figuring out which promises in their contracts counted as separate obligations. They also met push-back inside the company when they tried to update systems or train staff on the new requirements.

Telecommunications Sector

Telecom companies often work with complicated customer contracts. These can include handset sales combined with long-term service plans. When IFRS 15 came in, it changed the rules. Providers now have to split these deals into separate performance obligations, such as the phone, the service, and any extras, and then spread the revenue according to the standalone price of each part. The timing of revenue recognition changed for many deals. Rather than allocating the handset's value evenly across the contract term, companies can now record part of it upfront.

Many telecom providers ended up reworking their accounting systems just to keep up, according to recent studies. Henry et al. (2019), in their "Pirate Wireless" case, showed just how tricky it could be. Decisions about how to bundle or amend contracts could move the reported numbers in a noticeable way. Revenue may rise quickly with the sale of the handset, but the service side can weaken over time. That pattern can influence short-term metrics, including ARPU

During the pandemic, Yassin et al. (2022) studied Orange (Jordan Telecom) in Jordan. According to their findings, the company tweaked its revenue recognition to influence reported earnings. This illustrated how IFRS 15 allows room for judgment, but also how that room can be risky. At the same time, the rules have pushed the industry toward greater consistency in how contracts are recorded. Boujelben and Kobbi-Fakhfakh (2020) found broad agreement among operators on how to handle common contract types, which helped investors compare results. However, not every provider is meeting all the disclosure requirements, such as clearly explaining how they split the transaction price.

Other Sectors (e.g., Healthcare, Banking)

Outside the high-impact industries already discussed, IFRS 15 has also shaped areas like healthcare, hospitality, banking, and transport. In healthcare, providers with government contracts had to adjust to new rules for recognising revenue from bundled services, insurance payments, and other variable elements. The UK's NHS Foundation Trusts have had to adapt to IFRS 15, and Tenzer (2024) looked at how they did it and what that meant for tracking performance. It also explored what the change meant for measuring performance. The work looked at its impact on how performance is measured. According to the study, the overall financial impact was limited, IFRS 15 brought notable changes to how Trusts measure, report, and manage their results. There was a clear, measurable change in total operating income. It came from moving revenue to different periods and from altering contracts. While income from core patient care stayed fairly stable, the standard required Trusts to identify and break down performance obligations in more detail, which in turn affected budgeting and control systems. Many Trusts reshaped their internal reporting and performance indicators to fit the new framework.

In banking and financial services, IFRS 15 mostly affects fee and commission income. Interest income is covered by other rules. Credit card reward schemes can be a headache under IFRS 15. Back in 2023, Brink and Steenkamp looked into the issue. They realised it's not easy to figure out what the points are worth, or when people are likely to use them. In their 2023 work, Brink and Steenkamp showed that assigning a value to the points, as well as predicting redemption, can be a complex task. How do you put a value on reward points, and when will customers use them? Credit card schemes under IFRS 15 raise both questions. Figuring out how to handle credit card reward points under IFRS 15 has been a puzzle for banks. Brink and Steenkamp explored it in 2023. They learned that some institutions simply make rough estimates so the process does not drag on. Others take a different route. The way it is done can change from one bank to the next. In later interviews, managers and technical staff sometimes gave opposite answers on the "right" method. Later interviews suggested that managers and technical staff often disagreed on the right way to record the rewards. According to Brink et al. (2024), this divide highlights a broader gap between the standard's theoretical goals and the way it is put into practice in day-to-day banking.

The hospitality and tourism sector felt the impact of IFRS 15 too. Hameed et al. (2019) examined hotels in Iraq and established that the implementation of IFRS 15 enhanced earnings quality in the sector. Prior to this, some hospitality firms could recognise revenue at the point of booking or reservation, but IFRS 15 made it clear that revenue should be recognised when the guest effectively receives the service (i.e., occupies the hotel or utilises the facilities). This resulted in a change that put an end to some aggressive revenue practices and resulted in more conservative earnings reporting, which in Hameed et al.'s (2019) study was linked to greater quality of earnings (reduced volatility and lower likelihood of restatement).

The transport industry, generally, comprising airlines and shipping, has faced their industry-specific challenges due to IFRS 15. Likewise, in the shipping industry, Belesis et al. (2021) provided a fictional example that demonstrated the combined impact of IFRS 15 and IFRS 16 on the financial reports of a shipping firm. The findings of their study exhibited significant effects on reported revenue, liabilities, and EBITDA, highlighting the way that long-term contracts and capital-intensive activities amplify the effects of new accounting standards in transportation-related industries.

6 Methodologies and Research Gaps

Much of the work on IFRS 15 relies on financial datasets analysed with regression techniques. A common approach is to run difference-in-differences or panel models, contrasting data from before and after the standard's introduction and, in some cases, comparing IFRS firms with those following other rules. Lee and Choi (2024) analysed Korean firms from 2015 to 2020, using private companies as a control group in a difference-in-differences model. They reported that revenue figures for listed firms became more comparable once IFRS 15 came in. Using a difference-in-differences method, Chen (2024) analysed data from Chinese listed companies. The adoption of IFRS 15 appeared to lift accrual quality, yet it also coincided with greater use of real earnings management. This mix points to a trade-off between the reliability of reported figures and managerial behaviour. At the same time, firms engaged in more real earnings management, suggesting a behavioural trade-off. In Australia, Onie et al. (2023) found little change in the value relevance of earnings for most listed companies. Firms that suffered large revenue declines, however, saw comparability fall even before the new rules took effect.

Other regression studies include Kabir and Su (2022) (Australia/New Zealand firms' revenue recognition), Soodsook et al. (2024) (Thai firms' earnings quality), Aladwey and Diab (2023) (Egyptian firms' adoption determinants), and Quagli et al. (2021) (European firms' pre-adoption readiness). Overall, the quantitative evidence tends to show only limited average effects of IFRS 15 on earnings or comparability. Even so, results differ markedly between firms. For instance, Yassin et al. (2022) survey accountants in Jordan (IFRS) and the US (GAAP) and find that both groups used the revenue standard as an earnings-management tool during COVID-19, with IFRS preparers behaving more conservatively on existing contracts. Regression-based work makes up much of the IFRS 15 literature, spanning a wide range of countries and drawing mainly on broad industry datasets, such as those from Korea, China, Australia, and South Africa.

A second strand of research comprises single-firm or multi-firm case studies, often in specialised industries. A number of papers draw on detailed case examples to show how IFRS 15 works in real settings. Henry, Mest, and Safar (2019) developed a classroom case centred on a telecom operator known as “Pirate Wireless.” In another example, McNellis et al. (2020) examined a manufacturing company in the United States. Industry case reports cover diverse sectors: In their 2021 work, Belesis and colleagues examined how shipping companies applied IFRS 15 and 16. Barua and Gujarathi (2022) described how a construction company went through the transition to IFRS 15. Conrod and Cumby (2016) examined a revenue audit at an online gaming start-up. Both examples give a close, qualitative view of the standard in practice, and in some instances include straightforward before-and-after comparisons. The insights they offer are tied closely to the individual firms studied, so they cannot be generalised across the wider market. What they do show are recurring obstacles, like the bundled service deals often found in telecom or the complex, multi-part contracts typical in construction. As such, literature on digital or AI-driven revenue recognition remains nearly absent except for tangential studies (e.g. Brink et al. (2024) theorise IFRS treatment of credit-card reward programmes). In summary, case-based research offers rich stories (especially in telecom, construction, gaming, maritime, and manufacturing), but these methods are underused relative to archival studies.

Another major methodological category is content analysis of financial reports and disclosures. A number of studies take a systematic look at IFRS 15 disclosures across different firms and regions. Boujelben and Kobbi-Fakhfakh (2020), for instance, manually reviewed 2018 annual reports from EU telecom and construction companies. They found that many businesses fell short of full compliance, with disclosure quality varying by industry. In a broader South African review, Coetsee, Mohammadali-Haji, and van Wyk (2022) examined company reports and noted that most presented revenue information clearly, though key assumptions and interim-period data were often missing. (e.g. misaligned interim vs annual disclosures) that could impair decision usefulness. Other content studies include Ogunode and Salawu (2021) on Nigerian firms and Edeigba and Amenkhienan (2017) on New Zealand IFRS adoption. In the latter, the authors compare IFRS 15 (and others) under full IFRS vs NZIFRS and find little difference for large (Tier 1) firms, but larger disclosure concessions for small (Tier 2) entities. Overall, these disclosure analyses (often sector-focused on telecom/construction) demonstrate mixed compliance with IFRS 15 and rely on hand-collected qualitative data. They underline consistency benefits of IFRS 15 but also reveal weaknesses in practice (e.g. variation across industries). However, this approach has largely been used only in a few sectors and regions, with a noticeable gap in systematic studies of disclosure quality in, for example, technology, healthcare, or service industries.

A portion of IFRS 15 scholarship employs survey or interview methods to document perceptions and experiences. Grosu et al. (2022) surveyed firms in emerging economies on their readiness for adoption. Lim et al. (2015) collected responses from Malaysian auditors regarding anticipated effects. Hameed et al. (2019) investigated hotel managers' views in Iraq on the standard's impact on earnings quality. Salameh et al. (2022) studied construction firms in Jordan and found a positive link between adopting IFRS 15 and the quality of their financial reports. Much of the work in this area comes from Asia and the Middle East and offers insights tied to local conditions. These studies are usually limited to one country, use cross-sectional data, and rely on fairly simple statistical methods. Research using qualitative interviews is rare. Brink et al. (2024) carried out a Delphi study to gather expert opinions on issues in the financial services sector, with a focus on credit card reward programmes. In another project, Bierstaker et al. (2016) tested how U.S. financial professionals applied IFRS revenue recognition rules in a behavioural setting. Fewer than 40% gave answers in line with the standard, and many fell back on familiar GAAP treatments. The results suggest that, in practice, parts of the guidance remain hard to apply. Overall, there is relatively little survey or qualitative research on IFRS 15, and controlled experiments or behavioural fieldwork are rare. Where surveys have been carried out, they are mostly from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In contrast, the Americas and large parts of Europe have seen little coverage, apart from studies that review published documents. A few studies adopt conceptual or model-building methodologies. For example, Brink and Steenkamp (2024) develop a theoretical accounting model for credit card rewards programmes under IFRS, and Brink et al. (2023) propose an "IFRS decision heuristic" for complex revenue contracts. These papers use logical deduction to address niche IFRS 15 applications (in finance rather than core industries). Such theoretical works are novel but few. No experimental or simulation-based studies have been done to model managerial incentives under IFRS 15.

6.1 Research Gaps and Underexplored Areas

Despite the range of methods above, several approaches remain underexplored. Behavioral and perception studies are scarce: aside from Bierstaker et al. (2016) on managers' IFRS knowledge, no study tests how actual contract handlers or external users (investors, analysts) respond to IFRS 15 disclosures in experiments or choice experiments. Field experiments (e.g. varying how revenue information is presented to analysts) are virtually nonexistent. Longitudinal panel designs are limited: only a few studies (Lee & Choi 2024; Chen 2024) exploit multi-year pre/post data with diff-in-diff methods. Most work analyses a single transition year (2018/2019). Thus, the longer-term real effects of IFRS 15 (beyond initial implementation) remain unclear. Emerging topics like digital economy contracts (e.g. streaming, cloud services) sales have not been empirically studied in the IFRS 15 context, despite their growing importance. Key research gaps include:

Long-Term Effects and Behavioral Changes: More multi-year, cross-country panel studies are needed to assess sustained effects. Most empirical studies on IFRS 15 to date capture the transition period or the first year of adoption. There is a paucity of longitudinal research on how IFRS 15's impacts evolve over multiple reporting periods. There is still uncertainty about how the standard will affect the quality of financial reporting and the behavior of earnings patterns over the long term. For example, does the initial uptick in disclosure quality persist, or do firms revert to boilerplate language in subsequent years? Has IFRS 15 led to sustained changes in how firms structure transactions or manage earnings over time (beyond the one-time transition adjustments)? Early analyses have primarily documented immediate adjustments – such as one-off changes to retained earnings on adoption and short-term earnings management responses. Also, how has IFRS 15 influenced business practices? Early evidence suggested some companies might redesign contracts to simplify accounting (Napier & Stadler, 2020). Investigating whether contract terms have evolved in response to accounting (a "real effect" of the standard) would be valuable. The longer-term consequences, such as whether revenue reporting becomes more predictable and consistent or whether firms develop new ways to take advantage of judgement-based areas, remain insufficiently examined.

User Perspectives and Decision Usefulness: Evidence on how IFRS 15 has influenced the decision-making of financial statement users, including investors, analysts and lenders, remains scarce. Although survey-based studies, such as EFRAG's user survey and other stakeholder reports, suggest that users value the enhanced disclosures and often perceive an improvement in their forecasting ability, academic research has not yet established a direct link between IFRS 15 and outcomes such as analyst forecast accuracy, the pricing of earnings by investors, or levels of information asymmetry. Understanding how users of financial statements interpret and react to IFRS 15-related disclosures is underdeveloped. While Aladwan (2019) offered insights into market reactions, broader research is needed into how investors, analysts, and creditors process the new revenue figures. Key research gaps include behavioral studies that assess how well investors understand complex revenue disclosures, experimental work examining how analysts make decisions under the revised revenue models, and surveys or interviews that explore the level of user trust in financial statements prepared under IFRS 15.

Disclosure Quality, Effects and Compliance over Time: Although several studies examined first-year IFRS 15 disclosures, questions remain regarding compliance consistency and quality in subsequent years. At the outset, certain firms provided detailed transition disclosures in response to regulatory requirements and significant organisational changes. Whether this degree of transparency has been maintained over time, however, is still unclear. There is room for further content analysis research to assess disclosure evolution: Are companies providing more disaggregated revenue information and insightful narrative now than under prior standards? Are there areas of non-compliance or boilerplate wording emerging as the standard becomes “routine”? Additionally, comparing disclosure practices across jurisdictions could be valuable, since enforcement and guidance (or lack thereof) might lead to divergent interpretations of IFRS 15’s requirements. Future research could develop disclosure indices for IFRS 15 and correlate them with market outcomes or with qualitative characteristics like governance. Do companies with better corporate governance provide more transparent IFRS 15 disclosures? Does better disclosure correlate with lower information asymmetry or cost of capital? Early studies, such as those by Coetsee et al. (2022) and Karim and Riya (2022), provide useful evidence, but further in-depth research is needed to help shape the development of disclosure practices.

Sector-Specific Nuances: Some industries warrant deeper dives. For example, the technology sector (software, SaaS) and the media industry (licensing, subscriptions) have unique revenue models that IFRS 15 addresses, but academic research has only begun to scratch the surface in these areas. In-depth studies of specific industries would determine if IFRS 15 is successfully capturing the financial realities of digital goods and services, or if there are still transactions that continue to cause challenges.

Cross-Country Comparative Studies: Despite evidence from individual countries, comparative studies across jurisdictions remain sparse. Existing research (e.g., Yassin et al., 2022; Kabir & Su, 2022) illustrates contextual differences between IFRS and GAAP systems or among regions, but a comprehensive cross-country synthesis is lacking. Future studies should examine differences in implementation fidelity and disclosure compliance between developed vs. emerging markets (Karim & Riya, 2022; Grosu et al., 2022), institutional determinants of adoption outcomes (Quagli et al., 2021).

7 Conclusion

IFRS 15 was a milestone development in financial reporting that shifted global practice to a harmonised and consistent framework of revenue recognition. Comparative studies across countries indicate that, although IFRS 15 established a unified framework, its implementation and outcomes were shaped by local conditions. Market performance, the strength of regulatory oversight, and organisational readiness all played a part in this process. In many developed economies, the transition occurred with relatively few obstacles and yielded gains in financial statement comparability.

However, many emerging economies faced significant challenges in both complying with and interpreting the standard. Industry assessments suggest that IFRS 15 has had a significant impact on industries with complex revenue models, including construction, telecommunications, and service industries. In these specific industries, it led to significant changes in the timing of revenue recognition and the methods used for measurement. Other industries were affected relatively less; however, even in those cases, IFRS 15 worked to increase clarity and consistency, thus leading to better conceptual understanding and standardisation. Studies by Coetsee et al. (2022) and Quagli et al. (2021) provide evidence to the perception that IFRS 15 brought conceptual rigor, along with increased preparedness of companies for the standard, which worked to bring greater transparency and improvements in earnings quality (de Souza et al., 2022; Hameed et al., 2019). Moreover, Lee and Choi (2024) note that greater comparability and international alignment arguably mean that global accounting convergence has progressed.

IFRS 15 has overall improved the matching between revenue recognition and underlying economic activities, and therefore the quality of financial reporting. In many cases, earnings have become more conservative and are less prone to management manipulation, thereby giving investors and other stakeholders more reliable information. However, these gains have been achieved at the cost of increased complexity and reliance on managerial judgment, making strong disclosures and governance essential to ensure the objectives of the standard are fully met. Research literature suggests that the quality of disclosures has been mixed. Implementation success has shown variability. Variations in jurisdictional practices with respect to disclosure and compliance, especially among emerging markets (Karim & Riya, 2022; Grosu et al., 2022), suggest a critical need for stronger enforcement regimes and capacity-building initiatives.

Further, there is a lingering lack of adequate consensus among stakeholders with regard to awareness, especially between auditors and preparers. Research by Lim et al. (2015) found perceptual gaps in Malaysia, with preparers expressing concerns about the complexity of the standard and the related need for judgment.

The next finding relates to the interaction between IFRS 15 and earnings management practice. The advent of a more prescriptive standard was aimed at stifling discretionary accounting. An increasing number of studies point to a reduction in accrual-based earnings management (de Souza et al., 2022; Lee & Choi, 2024). However, this downward trend should not be taken as evidence that the practice has disappeared altogether. Managers in some cases simply changed the way they went about it. Instead of making adjustments in the accounts, they altered business operations, speeding up a shipment, delaying it, or offering last-minute discounts to customers to make sure the numbers landed where they wanted them (Chen, 2024). Instead of altering figures in the accounts, they adjusted business operations bringing a delivery forward, postponing it, or offering customers an end-of-period discount to make sure revenue targets were reached (Chen, 2024). During periods of heightened pressure, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence indicates that managers relied on the residual flexibility within IFRS 15. In practical application, managers may revise estimates of variable consideration, adjust contract provisions, or take other actions aimed at smoothing large swings in reported results (Yassin et al., 2022). Although IFRS 15 has, overall, improved the quality of financial reporting, it has not entirely removed the possibilities for earnings management. What has changed are the methods managers choose and the point in time they apply them. For both regulators and auditors, this is a detail that should not be overlooked, as maintaining the standard's aim of faithful representation will depend on steady and watchful oversight.

Looking ahead, the integration of extant research shows that while the first chapter of IFRS 15 implementation is complete, its story is ongoing. Interpretational and applicational variation continues, offering opportunities for standard setters to issue clarifying guidance and researchers to pursue long-term implications. Moreover, as business models evolve, e.g., the subscription economy or digital services, IFRS 15 will be continually tested by new revenue arrangements. Stakeholders need to be vigilant and collaborative. Auditors, regulators, and companies need to work together to implement the standard in good faith, and academics will have a central role to play in evaluating outcomes and informing improvements.

Overall, IFRS 15 has contributed to meaningful advances in revenue recognition, with the strongest gains seen in developed markets and in industries characterised by complex revenue models. Its impact, though, is far from universal and depends on the surrounding context. To fully understand its longer-term consequences, more research is needed particularly in sectors and regions that have so far been only sparsely examined.

Tab. 4 Literature Summary Table

Author	Year	Region/Country	Objective/Focus	Industry	Method
Lee W.J., Choi S.U.	2024	South Korea	Impact of IFRS 15 adoption on financial statement comparability	General	Empirical analysis
Yassin M.M., Shaban O.S., Al-Sraheen D.A.-D., Al Daoud K.A.	2022	International	Earnings management under IFRS 15 vs GAAP during COVID-19	General	Empirical analysis

Author	Year	Region/Country	Objective/Focus	Industry	Method
Soodsook D., Sangchan P., Sinlapates P., Meeprom S.	2024	Thailand	Effect of IFRS 15 adoption on earnings quality	General	Empirical analysis
Belesis N., Sorros J., Karagiorgos A., Kousounadis P.	2021	General	Effects of IFRS 15 and 16 on maritime company financials	Maritime	Case study
Aladwan M.	2019	Jordan	Impact of early IFRS 15 adoption on stock price and revenue	Financial/ Stock Market	Empirical analysis
Napier C.J., Stadler C.	2020	International	Effects of IFRS 15 on accounting and real outcomes	General	Empirical analysis
Boujelben S., Kobbi-Fakhfakh S.	2020	European Union	Compliance with IFRS 15 disclosure requirements	Telecommunications & Construction	Content analysis
Tenzer A.	2024	United Kingdom	IFRS 15 impact on NHS Trusts' performance	Healthcare	Empirical analysis
Grosu V. et al.	2022	Emerging economies	Implementation of IFRS 15 in emerging markets	General	Survey
Aladwey L., Diab A.	2023	Egypt	Determinants of early IFRS 15 adoption	General	Empirical analysis
Henry T.F. et al.	2019	General	Revenue recognition under IFRS 15 in telecom	Telecomm-unications	Case study
Kabir H., Su L.	2022	Australia & New Zealand	Effect of IFRS 15 on revenue recognition practices	General	Empirical analysis
Trabelsi N.S.	2018	UAE	Early adoption of IFRS 15 & accounting info	Real Estate	Empirical analysis

Author	Year	Region/Country	Objective/Focus	Industry	Method
Lim Y. et al.	2015	Malaysia	Auditors' perception of IFRS 15	General	Survey
Hameed A.M. et al.	2019	Iraq	IFRS 15 and earnings quality in hospitality	Hospitality	Survey
Barua S.K., Gujarathi M.R.	2022	India	IFRS 15 transition challenges	Construction	Case Study
Coetsee D. et al.	2022	South Africa	Decision usefulness of IFRS 15 disclosures	General	Content analysis
Chen J.	2024	China	IFRS 15 impact on revenue and earnings	General	Empirical analysis
Ogunode O.A., Salawu R.O.	2021	Nigeria	IFRS 15 revenue recognition dilemmas	General	Content analysis
Salameh R. et al.	2022	Jordan	IFRS 15 and financial report quality	Construction	Survey
Quagli A. et al.	2021	Europe	Pre-adoption IFRS 15 preparedness	General	Empirical analysis
Edeigba J., Amenkhienan F.	2017	New Zealand	IFRS adoption transparency & accountability	General	Content analysis
Brink S., Steenkamp G.	2024	International	Credit card rewards and IFRS 15	Financial	Theoretical model
de Souza P.V.S. et al.	2022	Brazil	IFRS 15 on accruals and earnings	General	Empirical analysis
Brink S.M., Steenkamp G.	2023	General	IFRS decision heuristic	Financial	Theoretical model
Brink S. et al.	2024	South Africa	IFRS 15 validation in credit cards	Financial	Qualitative empirical study
Karim M.R., Riya A.I.	2022	Bangladesh	IFRS 15 disclosure compliance	General	Empirical analysis

Author	Year	Region/Country	Objective/Focus	Industry	Method
Haddad M.F., Dammak S.	2023	Iraq	IFRS 15 impact on disclosure and investor decisions	General	Survey
Onie S., Ma L., Spiropoulos H., Wells P.	2023	International	Evaluation of the impacts of IFRS 15 adoption	General	Empirical analysis
Bierstaker J.L., Kopp L.S., Lombardi D.R.	2016	United States	Readiness of financial professionals for IFRS	Professional services	Survey
McNellis C.J., Barone G.J., Herbold J.	2020	United States	Case study on revenue recognition research and identification	Manufacturin g	Case Study
Conrod J.D., Cumby J.	2016	United States	Revenue reporting and audit in online gaming	Online gaming	Case Study

Source: Author.

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