

ISSN 1840-4855

e-ISSN 2233-0046

Original scientific article

<http://dx.doi.org/10.70102/afts.2026.1836.1038>

ASSESSING IFRS 15 IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTS ON REVENUE PRACTICES AND ACCOUNTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN UAE TELECOM COMPANIES E& AND DU

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Received: June 18, 2026; Revised: July 28, 2026; Accepted: September 03, 2026; Published: September 29, 2026

SUMMARY

By comparing e& with du, the study examines how introducing the International Accounting Standard 15 (IFRS 15) affected revenue recognition, revenue measurement, and information systems across UAE telecommunications businesses. The comparison provides evidence from both companies. Because data lacked a normal distribution, the analysis employed non-parametric tests: Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis, Wilcoxon, Friedman, and Spearman Correlation. Considering all subordinate variables together, the findings revealed no statistically significant differences across both companies. However, a comparison of the pre-standard and post-standard periods identified differences in the information systems variable ($p = 0.002$) and revenue measurement ($p = 0.049$). Spearman's correlations further established a pronounced association linking contract assets with information systems ($r = 0.846$, $p = 0.001$). Regression findings showed implementation length explained 71.1% of the information systems variable ($R^2 = 0.711$, $p = 0.001$), demonstrating the influence attributable to the application period. Framing the finding as a system-enabled accounting transformation, the study distinguishes IFRS 15 implementation in UAE telecom companies from a merely procedural adjustment to accounting policies. Within this account, information systems emerge as the mechanism supporting adherence to the standard's requirements, while tracking contract balances supplies a supplementary factor for interpreting its overall impact across the companies studied. The paper advises additional research with a bigger sample of telecom businesses in the GCC, including interviews with the CFOs and information systems administrators to better understand them.

Key words: *IFRS 15, revenue recognition, revenue measurement, accounting information systems, telecommunications, UAE.*

INTRODUCTION

Revenue is an essential key performance indicator (KPI) in the accounting practices of firms. Revenue recognition in the telecommunication industry is complicated, however, due to the use of bundled contracts with communication services, mobile devices, loyalty offerings, prepaid offerings, and ICT services. IFRS 15, adopted in 2014, superseded the piecemeal guidance provided by IAS 18 and IAS 11 and provided a five-step, contract-based framework that requires sophisticated information systems [3]. The telecommunication industry was one of the industries impacted the most by IFRS 15 [6]. Firms like KPMG, EY, Deloitte, and PwC pointed out issues regarding contract modifications, disclosures, and information systems upgrade. Likewise, Napier & Stadler (2020) found major IFRS 15 related revisions in telecommunication firms where changes in retained earnings was between 3%-6% of equity of the shareholders whereas for the general sample it was only 0.05% [4][5]. With regard to the UAE environment, it is important to note that the e& and du enterprises offer an excellent ground for studying IFRS 15 implementation because of their significance in the provision of telecommunication and digitalization services using 5G, ICT, cloud services, and cybersecurity technologies [15]. Nonetheless, most studies have tended to be more interested in the consequences of IFRS 15 implementation from the point of view of financial reporting, but there has not been much concern about the system transformation needed for implementing IFRS 15 [7]. Consequently, the research aims to fill the identified gap through an analysis of the influence of IFRS 15 on revenue practices and accounting information systems through a comparison of UAE telecommunications firms [9] [14].

In order to solve the mentioned research problem, this study performs a comparative analysis of e& and du, which are the two main players in the UAE telecommunications sector, using the annual reports and disclosures during the period when IFRS 15 was implemented. The research examines the effect that IFRS 15 has on the recognition and measurement of revenues and the accounting information system, as well as the identification of any possible difference between the two firms in terms of implementation. The study is intended to address the following issues: (1) How do e& and du recognize and use IFRS 15 in their annual financial statements? (2) What are the complexities involved with revenue measurement for companies that have complicated telecommunications agreements and IFRS 15? (3) What are some of the aspects of performance obligation, transaction price allocation, stand-alone selling price, variable consideration, loyalty programs, prepaid transactions, and contract modifications as shown in the disclosures made by the company? (4) How does the information system of the firm reflect its importance through audit observations? and (5) What are some of the similarities and differences between e& and du in transforming their information system due to IFRS 15?

The study offers a number of original contributions to current research in the field. Firstly, it adds value to the literature on IFRS 15 implementation because of empirical evidence from the telecommunications industry of the United Arab Emirates, which has been insufficiently researched in comparison with developed financial markets. Secondly, in contrast to earlier researches that concentrated mainly on the accounting consequences of IFRS 15 implementation, the current research explores not only issues of revenue recognition and revenue measurement but also considers accounting information systems, thus presenting IFRS 15 as a system-enabled accounting innovation. Thirdly, this paper will contribute to the body of literature on accounting information systems and auditing in that it emphasizes how the use of digital infrastructure within accounting, such as billing systems, contract management systems, ERP integration, data management systems, and control systems facilitates compliance with revenue recognition standards. Lastly, the comparison between e& and du will provide valuable lessons to telecom managers, auditors, and regulatory authorities about what is needed to successfully implement IFRS 15.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, the literature related to IFRS 15 adoption, revenue recognition practices, and accounting information systems will be reviewed. In Section 3, the conceptual framework and the theoretical underpinning will be presented. In Sections 4 and 5, the research context and methodology will be described. The empirical results will be presented in Section 6, discussed in Section 7, and concluded in Section 8.

REVIEW THE LITERATURE

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of IFRS 15

After a 12-year joint project by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) of the United States, International Accounting Standard 15, titled “Revenue from Contracts with Clients” (IFRS 15), was issued in May 2014 [8]. The collaboration sought to improve revenue comparability across financial entities, industries, and markets. IAS 18 and IAS 11 did not provide enough direction for numerous emerging business models. Consequently, economically similar transactions could receive different accounting treatment across companies operating within one sector. The new standard superseded that fragmented body of accounting guidance.

The fundamental tenet of IFRS 15 is that an organization acknowledges revenue according to the compensation it anticipates receiving for delivering promised goods or services to clients [10] [13]. This principle signifies a pivotal transition from the notion of transferring risk and reward (as per earlier standards) to the control of products or services, and from an invoice-centric approach to one grounded on the examination of contract substance and specifics.

IFRS 15 is based on a standardized five-step model that aims to provide an integrated framework for determining the timing and amount of revenue recognition:

Step One: Determine the Contract with the Client – This involves considering whether the contracts should be merged or amended, and determining whether the contract is accountable.

Step Two: Identify the performance obligations in the contract—that is, promises within the agreement for transporting premium goods or services (Distinct). Two conditions determine whether a good or service is distinct. First, it must benefit the customer directly and independently or in combination with resources readily available to that customer without practical difficulty. Second, the good or service must remain separately identifiable from every other promise included within the contract.

Step Three: Ascertain the Transaction Price—estimate the compensation expected by the entity, including variable considerations such as discounts, incentives, and bonuses. Inclusion of those variable amounts is permitted solely where a substantial reversal of recognized cumulative revenue is highly unlikely after the related uncertainty surrounding variable consideration has been resolved.

Step Four: Allocation of the Transaction Price to Performance Obligations—base allocation on the relative fair value assigned to each performance obligation. Fair value refers to the separate selling price charged by the entity for that good or service; if no observed price exists, it must be represented through a reliable estimate.

Implementation of IFRS 15 in the Telecommunications Sector: Challenges and Characteristics

KPMG, EY, Deloitte, and PwC the four major accounting firms placed the telecommunications sector among those expected to be heavily affected by IFRS 15, alongside technology, construction and real estate [19]. KPMG noted in its guidance on the telecommunications sector that companies in the telecommunications sector face significant challenges around contract amendments, revenue presentations, and required disclosures, due to the complexity of customer contracts that combine multiple services and diverse packages. This classification is due to the unique characteristics of telecommunications contracts, which typically include multiple packages of goods and services, multiple element arrangements, loyalty programs, discounts, and frequent contractual amendments, as well as the complexity of the associated billing and pricing systems.

Empirical data strongly suggests that the telecommunication sector was significantly affected by the adoption of IFRS 15. Napier & Stadler (2020) found that first-time adoption by the three telecom providers participating in the research caused retained earnings to rise significantly [5]. The adjustments represented 3% - 6% of shareholders’ equity for those providers, whereas only 0.05% was recorded as

the average across the broader company sample. The three telecom companies also believed that adoption would impair the capacity of financial statement users to reach informed judgments about transactions undertaken by those companies [16]. As the authors observed, this position ran directly contrary to IASB's original purpose and intended outcome when releasing the standard for practical application. Among the three telecom companies participating in the research, one company acknowledged the revised guidance created a chance for manipulating its sales structure so that it could report higher profits. This acknowledgment was a particularly important observation.

The importance of auditors in directly shaping the standard's meaning for the telecommunications sector emerges clearly from Kohler's, Bouchet's, and Le Mans's research study entitled "Auditors as boundary spanners in the development of IFRS 15: Evidence from the ITU-T–IASB process", subsequently published by Accounting, Organizations and Society. Serving in an intermediary role, auditors facilitated communication between ITU-T and IASB concerning changes to revenue recognition practices, as reported by the study (Kohler et al., 2021). The study's findings indicated that auditors, specifically the members of the Professional Practice Functions who understand the council's ITU-T processes deeply, performed key coordinating functions needed to convince the telecom industry about the need for unified communication.

Recognition and Measurement of Revenue in Telecommunications Contracts

The telecommunications contracts are highly complicated in terms of the implementation of the IFRS 15 because there arise various accounting problems in relation to them. These include:

First: Definition of Performance Obligations: Telecommunication contracts usually comprise a combination of mobile, fixed-line, and internet services, smartphones and modems, SIM cards, activation and installation, loyalty programs, and ICT for businesses. In the standard, each element is considered a distinct performance requirement. Identify the Performance Oblige: a good or service constitutes a stand-alone performance obligation when it provides value directly to the customer independently or alongside other goods or services already readily accessible to that customer as resources. The assessment covers the supplier's commitment to provide the stated commodity or service. Grant Thornton advice explains that telecommunication contracts typically combine devices and services that require separation into distinct performances carrying different revenue streams. In advance of the revised guidance, this requirement forced many telecommunication companies to redesign contracts, along with the supporting systems used to administer them.

Second: Determining and Distribute the Transaction Price: allocation of the transaction price among the identified performance obligations is required, using relative independent selling prices for the respective obligations as the basis. In consolidated telecommunications contracts, standalone selling prices may not be directly observed, necessitating their estimation using methods such as expected cost-plus profit margin, or a market-adjusted valuation approach. Frequently, telecommunications agreements contain discounts, exemptions, incentives, and other fluctuating components that require careful technical assessment. Their incorporation into the transaction price is allowed only when resolving uncertainty about the relevant variable consideration is highly unlikely to cause a substantial reversal of recognized accrued revenue.

Accounting Information Systems and Revenue Governance under IFRS 15

This pillar is a key pillar for understanding the practical challenges of implementing IFRS 15, as the standard requires information systems capable of handling its complex requirements [11] [12]. Empirical evidence has shown that more than half of the financial statement preparers surveyed by EFRAG have had to change or update their IT systems to cope with the new IFRS 15 requirements. The main impacts on information systems and management control systems were related to the provision of disclosures and recognition of revenue over time [20]. The results of the same survey indicate that changes in information systems and management control systems have had more than moderate effects on product decisions, resource allocation between products, centralization of information, and the involvement of the financial function in contract design, especially in the most affected sectors such as the

telecommunications sector. Participants also noted that these changes had a positive impact on economic and financial variables, particularly on annual profits and return on assets. The EFRAG report confirms that the implementation of IFRS 15 has impacted both management control systems and information systems, with significant differences between sectors. Most of the authors expressed that the changes introduced by IFRS 15 were costly in some sectors, complex in implementation, and affected internal procedures and information systems [17] [18]. A prominent procedural impact cited in the report was the involvement of financial management in commercial proposals and contract design, which was previously rare or nonexistent. The standard also required intensive training not only for accounting staff but also for business personnel to enhance understanding of the accounting implications of concluded contracts.

Modern Studies and Contemporary Problems

Systematic literature reviews indicate that evidence about the accounting impact of IFRS 15 remains limited. Two methodological factors help explain the weakness: most available studies use small sample sizes, and many small firms depend on the modified residual method. That method prevents researchers from establishing the standard's exact effect on reported revenue. Available evidence nevertheless reveals a clear tendency toward the modified retrospective method. Most companies selected it because its implementation is comparatively straightforward, easier to manage, and less complex in practice. The findings indicate that IFRS 15 changes in revenue measurement and recognition principles have had little or no impact on revenues and profits, with the exception of firms engaged predominantly in ordinary retailing activity. In the meantime, the revenue disclosures made by telecoms firms and construction companies saw a rise. The research also revealed an increase in disclosures in relation to revenues from 2017 to 2018, though many firms fail to make the required disclosures in their reports altogether.

Prior research has made a considerable contribution in explaining the accounting implications of adopting IFRS 15, from the standpoint of changes in accounting recognition, disclosure, and financial reporting quality. Nevertheless, prior literature has mostly concentrated on either financial or implementation issues. There is not much discussion about the influence of IFRS 15 on accounting information system transformation, contract management, and internal control. Moreover, there is a lack of research on the impact of IFRS 15 on the accounting information system transformation in emerging economies like UAE. The present study will fill this research gap by conducting a comparative study of e& and du for the relationship among IFRS 15, revenue recognition, and accounting information system transformation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual Logic of the Proposed Framework

This research presents a conceptual framework that connects three basic layers: the requirements of IAS 15, the tasks of revenue measurement in the telecommunications sector, and the enablers of information systems and internal controls. The framework proceeds from the basic premise that the application of IFRS 15 in telecommunications companies cannot be reduced to a technical adjustment of accounting policies, but rather is a systemic transformation that requires close integration between accounting standards and information systems and internal controls. This logic is based on the conclusion of the recent literature that more than Half of the financial statement preparers had to change or modernize their IT systems to deal with the requirements of IFRS 15, with significant impacts on disclosures and revenue recognition over time (EFRAG, 2023). The finding also accords with Kohler, Bouchet et al.'s (2021) study [2]. Its account presents IFRS 15 formulation as an iterative internal process inside organizations governed by the standard. Company operations were consequently affected across several areas, including the operational structure, IT systems, and internal controls.

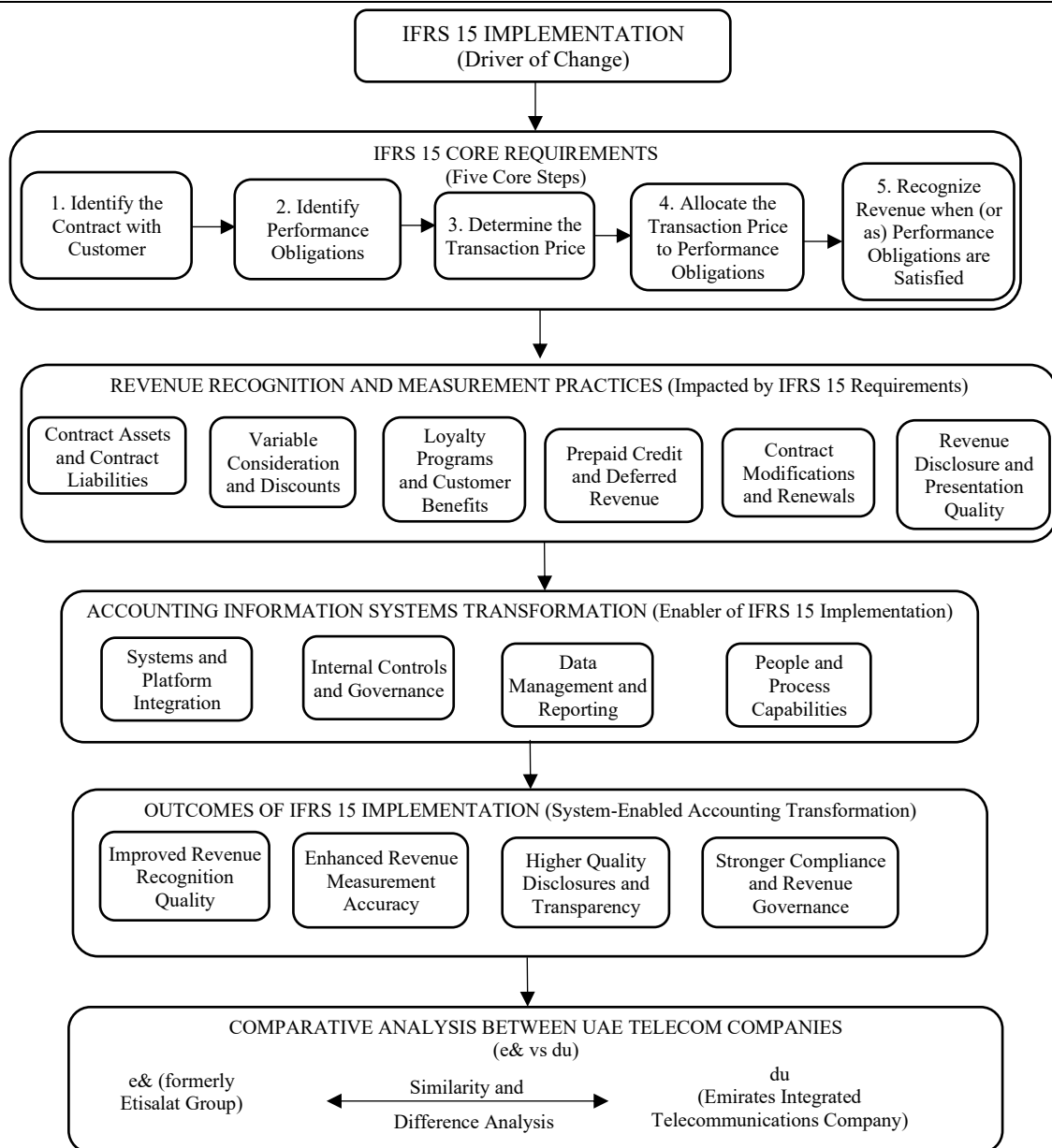


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of IFRS 15 implementation effects on revenue practices and accounting information systems in UAE telecom companies

Figure 1 demonstrates the effect of the implementation of IFRS 15 on revenue recognition and measurement through the transformation of accounting information systems. The model presents the connection between IFRS 15 guidelines, the revenue process, the capabilities of the information system, and the improvement of the quality of revenue governance.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the requirements under IFRS 15 and the revenue recognition process in the telecommunications industry, together with the required information systems.

Table 1. Conceptual framework for linking IFRS 15 to revenue measurement and information systems in the telecommunications sector

IFRS 15 Requirement	The mission of revenue measurement in the telecommunications sector	Maybe the information and control system
Define the contract with the client	Capture binding contractual arrangements with clients, including bundled plans, renovations, amendments, and activation dates	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and contractual databases integrated with billing and financing systems
Defining performance obligations	Disconnect services (mobile, fixed, internet, data), devices, SIM cards, activation and installation services, loyalty points, ICT services and managed services	Product Catalog, Rules Engine, Package Dismantling Logic, Managed Services Pricing Systems
Determine the Deal Price	Estimation of fixed charges, variable discounts and exemptions, roaming and interconnection adjustments, prepaid credit, and incentives	Billing Engine, Discount Engine, Usage Data Capture System, and Variable Consideration Controls
Deal Price Distribution	Distribution based on independent selling prices (observed or estimated) for each performance obligation	Independent selling price table, customization engine, approval controls, and audit record
Revenue Recognition	Recognition of services over time, devices when transfer of control, SIM cards when activation, prepaid credit when use/expiration, and loyalty points upon recovery/breakage	Usage systems, delivery confirmation, loyalty platform, revenue assurance, and ERP migration system
Disclosure of revenue information	Reporting on accounting policies, judgments and estimates, contract balances (assets and liabilities), and income classified by time and type	Financial Reporting, Reconciliations, Disclosure Controls, and Business Intelligence Systems Unit

Frame Theoretical Lens

The proposed conceptual framework is based on three interrelated explanatory theories, each offering a different angle to understand the relationship between the application of IFRS 15 and information systems in the telecommunications sector, consistent with the requirements of the research plan in Section 2.3.

First: Accounting Standards Implementation Theory: This is the theory, which explains how IFRS 15 works in terms of its implementation, organizational practice, auditing process and system capacity. This theory can be justified by the findings presented in the study by Kohler (2021), that discusses how the role played by auditors in the telecommunication industry is that of an interpreter of the standard, who performs a very significant role in bringing about change due to the interpretation of the standard [2]. This supports the claim made by EFRAG's study that auditors were more involved in interpreting the requirements of the standard, and the big four audited organizations were more inclined to implement the standard, which had a great impact on their systems and controls.

Second: Accounting Information Systems Theory: According to this theory, accounting information quality depends on reliable systems and data, appropriate information access and application control systems, and the proper flow of reports. The impact of the new standard on information systems was identified as significant: according to the study by EFRAG, changes in information systems and management systems have had more than a moderate impact on product-related decisions, the distribution of resources between products, information centralization, and the role of the finance function in contract design. The theory proved that information technology is a prerequisite for the standard's reliable and verifiable implementation since the standard requires IT systems to be able to support the complexity of the five-step model.

Basic Assumptions and Research Hypotheses

Four assumptions support the proposed conceptual framework. Each is compatible with evidence about implementing IFRS 15 throughout the telecommunications industry and contributes to the model's analytical foundation. More specifically, the framework connects directly with four research hypotheses in the research plan (section 3.3). The first hypothesis (P1) states that the adoption of IFRS 15 in the

telecom sector leads to the increased importance of accounting information systems due to the need to analyze revenues at the level of contracts and disaggregate bundled contract prices. The supporting evidence for this hypothesis is related to the fact that more than half of the respondents have made changes to their IT systems to meet the requirements of IFRS 15. This is consistent with the information from SAP Application Manuals that applying IFRS 15 requires integrated systems that allow defining contracts, specifying and grouping performance obligations, allocating transaction prices to performance groups, and recognizing revenue upon satisfaction of performance obligations. Thus, the use of IFRS 15 standard implies the integration of CRM, billing, and accounting systems.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND DATA

E & formerly Etisalat is the telecommunication company that has been existing in the UAE for almost 50 years, developing into a global technology and investment group. The company transformed its name from Etisalat to E& in 2021, indicating its intention to position itself as a multinational technology company with a wide range of technologies beyond telecommunication. Through its corporate rebranding, E& signaled an intended evolution into an international technology and investment group spanning several distinct business areas: telecommunications, e& Life, Enterprise e&, and e& Capital (Emirates Telecommunications Group Company PJSC, 2021; e& Group, 2022, 2023).

The company's financial performance accurately reflects its strategy and diversified business model. Together, these elements allow the company to maintain the sustainable and profitable growth observed in its operations today.

e& reported its highest-ever consolidated revenue, which totaled nearly \$19.9 billion in 2025, a year-on-year increase of 23.1%, while net profit increased by 33.6% to approximately \$3.9 billion AED. In terms of subscribers, the Group exceeded 244.7 million mobile customers worldwide as of end-2025, representing a YoY increase of 31.3%, with e& UAE recording 16.3 million subscriptions. For the first half of 2026, the company saw another increase of 11.6%, with consolidated revenues hitting 38.1 billion AED, while the total number of subscribers surpassed 251.5 million.

du (Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company) is the second telecom operator in the UAE and began its commercial operations in 2007, breaking E&'s monopoly on the sector. Through a broad portfolio, the company meets the needs of businesses and individuals by providing mobile and fixed telecommunications, broadband services, internet, IPTV services, and ICT solutions. du is making efforts to transform into a 'Leading Digital Telco' by focusing on delighting its customers, leveraging IT factories and networks to create an advanced engine, developing digital channels, and improving the digital customer experience. As part of the company's strategy to become a leading digital telecommunications company, in 2022, it announced the IT transformation program as one of its key initiatives. The project's purpose is to transition the company from its current commercial and regulatory support platforms to a more sophisticated and integrated system, while also enhancing the overall customer experience and adopting a "digital-first" mindset. It is important to note that this transformation is closely linked to the company's commitment to international accounting standards and regulations, as the transition to IFRS 15 requires advanced IT systems that can track contracts, obligations, and balances.

Formal governance of the UAE telecommunications sector is established by the Federal Decree Law No. 3 of 2003 on the regulation of telecommunications sector. Licensing and monitoring fall under the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), which also protects consumer interests and arbitrates disputes between telecommunications operators. To provide telecommunication service within the UAE, an entity needs to obtain the following license: an individual license that covers scarce resources such as spectrum and numbers, and a category license that is valid for 10 years.

The two operators are also subject to the Federal Royalty system as directed by the Ministry of Finance, where a 38% federal royalty is due on net profits from both regulated and unregulated operations in the UAE, plus a 9% corporate tax on profits. Payments of federal royalties by e& and du totaled AED 3.54

billion across the first half of 2024, according to the report. For the corresponding period in 2023, the amount was AED 3.73 billion. By promoting sector transparency, these regulations help ensure that the information supplied by the organizations and used in the subsequent analysis remains accurate.

Documents used in this research come from the annual reports and integrated reports of e& and du covering 2018 to 2023. The interval begins with the first year of mandatory adoption of IFRS 15 (2018), extends through subsequent application maturity (after 2018), and includes current trends evident early in the decade that followed and during its initial years. Thus, the study explores the changes in disclosure and measurement practices across 11 reports (6 for e& and 5 for du, as the latter provides information only up until 2022). The analyzed information consists of figures and data provided in the audited financial statements, accounting policies, IFRS 15 disclosures, auditor reports, and Strategic Audit and Digital Transformation, which makes the two companies' reports a valuable source of information for the study. The above information gives an analysis of the firms' financial statements and shows that the firms work on different levels. For instance, e&'s revenue is AED 53.8 billion for 2023, while du's revenue amounts to only AED 13.636 billion. Another difference is that the former operates in over 16 countries, while the latter is based in the UAE market only. Thus, it is essential to assess how the regulatory environment and volume of operations influence the accounting standards chosen and the specific statutory requirements under IFRS 15 for each entity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research is based on Comparative Analytical Descriptive Design as the main methodological framework, with E& and du taking an independent case study and being analyzed over a period of time from 2018 to 2023. This design is particularly suitable for research objectives for several reasons, as described in the research plan (Section 5.1).

First, the design allows for a deeper understanding of how each firm has applied IFRS 15 requirements in its unique regulatory context, without the need to assume homogeneity between firms or subject them to statistical models that assume linear causal relationships. A September 2024 post-implementation review by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) found that IFRS 15 works as intended. Application continues to require judgments and estimates whose scope depends on company contracts and sector characteristics; this conclusion clearly reinforces the rationale for an in-depth comparative study (IASB, 2024).

Second, the longitudinal design allows for tracking the evolution of disclosure, measurement and systems practices over time, from the year of mandatory application of the standard in 2018 to the post-implementation and maturity period in 2023. This allows monitoring how companies are adapting to the requirements of the standard and developing their systems and controls in response to these requirements, which reflects what the post-implementation review indicated: that IFRS 15 is delivering benefits to users at costs that are not greater than the board's anticipation (IASB, 2024).

In this study, the selection process followed is that of purposive case sampling by choosing e& and du as the two key telecommunications firms in the UAE. The selected organizations reflect the entire domestic telecommunications industry and serve as comparable cases functioning in the same regulatory setting but vary in size and digitization strategy.

Data sources

This research relies on the following sources as primary sources of data, as described in the research plan:

Primary sources: These include the annual reports and integrated reports issued by both e& and du for the period 2018-2023. These reports have several characteristics that make them reliable data sources suitable for the purposes of this research. These are officially audited documents that fall under the

jurisdiction of the securities commissions and are audited by independent accounting firms, hence increasing their credibility. Additionally, these documents feature the mandatory disclosure of accounting policies, assumptions, material estimates, and contract balances, as well as information about digital transformation initiatives and information systems. Auditors that identify key audit topics.

The research involves the use of audited annual reports and integrated reports from 2018 to 2023 since such reports have mandatory IFRS 15 disclosures, accounting policies, contract balances, auditor's observations, and disclosures related to digital transformation that are necessary in evaluating revenues and information systems change. The selected 2018-2023 period begins with mandatory IFRS 15 implementation. Its length permits observation of evolving disclosure practices, gradual adaptation to the standard's requirements, and later changes following adoption over several years. The same interval also encompasses accelerated digital transformation experienced internally within both companies.

Secondary sources: KPMG, EY, Deloitte, and PwC—the four major accounting firms—issued guidance on IFRS 15 application in the telecommunications sector. This material underpins forecasts of the expected sectoral impact and enables comparison between those forecasts and evidence drawn from annual reports. It also includes academic studies published in scientific journals categorized on IFRS 15, accounting information systems, audit manuals, and the telecommunications sector, as well as post-implementation audits conducted by the IASB in 2024, which provides a framework for assessing the effectiveness of the standard and its application issues.

Systematic Coding Plan

Table 2. Systematic coding plan for the analysis of IFRS 15 application in E& du

Category	Symbols	Objective
A. IFRS 15 Policy	Five-Step Model: Contracts, Performance Obligations, Deal Price, Allocation, Timing of Recognition	Measuring the Existence and Depth of IFRS 15 Disclosure
B. telecommunications Revenue Categories	Mobile, Landline, Hardware, SIM Card, Prepaid, Postpaid, Roaming, Interconnection, Wholesale, ICT, Managed Services	Determine the complexity of the products and services offered by the company
C. Provisions of Analogy	Independent Selling Price Estimates, Variable Considerations, Critical Financing Component, Contract Amendments, Principal/Agent, Breaking Loyalty	Identify areas that rely on the most judgments and estimates
d. Contract Balances	Contract Assets, Contract Obligations, Subscriber Acquisition Costs, Impairment, Deferred Income	Assessment of Balance Sheet Implications and Systemic Tracking Requirements
e. Auditor Audit Topics	Revenue Recognition, IT Systems, Interfaces, Revenue Assurance, Application Controls, Data Analytics	Triangulate the risk of revenue and system recognition through the lens of audit
F. Information Systems	IT Transformation, Billing, E-Store, E-Invoicing, App, Analytics, AI, Digital Channels, BSS/OSS, ERP, Data Centers	Linking IFRS 15 needs to declared system capabilities
g. Quality of Disclosure	Privacy, comparability, continuity across years, off-the-shelf template risks, cross-references to notes and audit topics	Assessing the quality of disclosure and its contribution to the academic literature

Systematic Thematic Coding is used as the main tool for extracting and analyzing information from annual reports. Coding themes were created based on the stipulations contained in IFRS 15 and prior revenue reporting researches. The categories included revenue recognition, revenue measurement, contract balances, audit data, and accounting information systems. Each annual report was coded using

established indicators. Coding is a well-established methodology in qualitative content analysis, especially when dealing with complex documents such as financial reports and accounting disclosures. The coding plan follows the research plan requirements in Section 5.3. The tables below present the coding categories developed for this research; each category captures a distinct dimension of IFRS 15 application among telecommunications companies and supports consistent classification of the collected evidence.

Data extraction procedure was done through systematic analysis of each annual report, where IFRS 15-related disclosures were identified using coding indicators. Information relevant to the study was extracted from accounting policies, revenue notes, contract balances disclosures, auditor's report, and digital transformation. Each disclosure was coded according to the coding structure and scored according to the set evaluation criteria.

The coding framework adopted systematically for analyzing the implementation of IFRS 15 is illustrated in table 2 through the classification of revenue, contracts, auditing, information system, and disclosure quality aspects.

Evaluation and Measurement Method

The Scoring Scale (0-4) is used to assess the depth and quality of disclosure for each coding item, as described in the research plan. This scale has been adopted based on well-established practices in the accounting quality measurement literature, specifically those that deal with complex disclosure requirements such as IFRS 15 [1].

Evaluation Levels:

- A. 0 (Not disclosed): The information about the item is absent in the report.
- B. 1 (Generic/disclosure without specifics): The information about the item is generally disclosed but without specific details on the company's matters.
- C. 2 (Disclosure with some specifics but without measurement): The information about the item is disclosed with several specifics but without measurement or quantitative analysis.
- D. 3 (Disclosure with specific quantitative or qualitative information on the company's conditions and contracts): The information about the item is disclosed with quantitative or qualitative specifics on the company's conditions and contracts.
- E. 4 (Disclosure with explanation of measurement basis or other quantitative details and link to information systems and controls): The information about the item is disclosed with an explanation of the measurement basis or other quantitative specifics and link to information systems and controls.

Disclosure score is calculated for the items in the three categories of reports separately to avoid misinterpretation of the evidence from different categories and to provide more accurate assessment of the items across reporting periods. Thus, average scores are calculated for every category and for each year to assess trends and comparisons. Disclosure scoring criteria were validated through matching each coding criterion directly to IFRS 15 guidelines and methods for measuring the quality of disclosures. Consistency of disclosure scoring criteria was achieved through uniform scoring criteria across all reports.

Analysis and Statistics Tools

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods is applied to examine the information presented in the reports based on the research plan (Section 5.5). Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26 will support data analysis. Selection of non-parametric tests reflected two conditions: the small sample size ($n=11$) and failure of the normal distribution assumption (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, significance level $p=.000$ for every variable). Differences between e & du, as well as the intervals preceding and following IFRS 15 adoption, were evaluated with the Mann-Whitney U test. Comparisons among the four interaction groups were analyzed through the Mann-Whitney U test. The Kruskal-Wallis

test evaluated the four interaction groups. Comparisons conducted between associated dependent variables relied on the Wilcoxon test, whereas the Friedman test assessed three separate sets of dependent variables across the full statistical analysis. Additionally, Spearman's correlations and the Stepwise simple linear regression model will be used to assess the interdependencies between disclosure scores and related indicators of digital transformation or system risk, with caution in extrapolation due to the limited size of the sample. Microsoft Excel spreadsheets will be used to create summary financial tables, graphs illustrating the development of revenues, contract balances, and KPIs to complement the visual analysis of textual and digital data.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics: IFRS 15 Disclosure Quality

Using the coding scale (0-4), this section presents statistical results derived from analysis of e& and du annual reports covering 2018 to 2023. The assessment measures quality of disclosure across subordinate variables against the requirements established by IFRS 15. The analysis aims to compare the performance of the two companies in three main areas: revenue recognition, revenue measurement, and information systems, as well as a performance comparison between the pre- and post-implementation periods of the standard. Table 3 presents corresponding descriptive statistics for subordinate variables by company.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of subsidiary variables by company

Variable	Company	Medium	Issue	Standard Deviation	Bottom Line
Revenue Recognition	e&	3.75	6	0.418	3.0
	du	4.00	5	0.000	4.0
	Total	3.86	11	0.323	3.0
Revenue Measurement	e&	3.67	6	0.516	3.0
	du	4.00	5	0.000	4.0
	Total	3.82	11	0.405	3.0
Information Systems	e&	3.67	6	0.516	3.0
	du	3.60	5	0.548	3.0
	Total	3.64	11	0.505	3.0

Source: Researchers' analysis using SPSS based on the two companies' annual reports (2018-2023)

The results show that both companies implemented IFRS 15 with high-quality scores, with averages ranging from 3.60 to 4.00 on a scale of 0 to 4, reflecting a significant commitment to disclosing the requirements of the standard. The results show a slight advantage for du in revenue recognition (4.00 vs. 3.75) and revenue measurement (4.00 vs. 3.67), while e& was slightly higher in information systems (3.67 vs. 3.60).

Table 4 reports the descriptive statistics for dependent variables across the different application periods.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of dependent variables by application period

Variable	Period Application	Medium	Issue	Standard deviation	Bottom Line	Maximum
Revenue Recognition	Before 2020	3.625	4	0.479	3	4
	2020 and beyond	4	7	0	4	4
	Total	3.864	11	0.323	3	4
Revenue measurement	Before 2020	3.5	4	0.577	3	4
	2020 and beyond	4	7	0	4	4
	Total	3.818	11	0.405	3	4
Information Systems	Before 2020	3	4	0	3	3
	2020 and beyond	4	7	0	4	4
	Total	3.636	11	0.505	3	4

Source: Researchers' analysis using SPSS based on the two companies' annual reports (2018-2023)

The results show a marked improvement in all dependent variables after 2020, with all variables reaching a full score of 4.00 in the post-implementation period. The biggest improvement was in information systems, with the average rising from 3.00 in the pre-2020 period to 4.00 in the post-2020 period. Substantial investments by each company in upgrading information and control systems for IFRS 15 compliance explain the observed improvement. The finding aligns with the International Accounting Standards Board's post-implementation review (IASB, 2024), which described high implementation costs connected to technological change, system development, and internal controls, together with the broader expense of adapting existing company processes.

Normal Distribution Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

Before inferential testing, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov natural distribution test evaluated overall data conformity with a normal distribution. Its outcome then determined which statistical procedures were appropriate for the analysis.

Table 5: Kolmogorov-smirnov test of normal distribution

Variable	Test Statistics	Significance (Sig.)
Revenue Recognition	0.482	0
Revenue measurement	0.492	0
Information Systems	0.401	0

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Table 5 shows the results indicate that all dependent variables do not follow the normal distribution ($p = 0.000$), which justifies the use of non-parametric tests in inferential analysis. This is related to the short size of the sample (11 observations) and the nature of discrete data which take restricted values (3.0, 3.5, 4.0). Non parametric tests used in the statistical analysis were as follows: Mann-Whitney U-test; Kruskal-Wallis test for more than 2 groups; Wilcoxon test for paired variables; Friedman test for 3 variables; and Spearman's correlations between variables.

Mann-Whitney U Test: Comparison of the Two Companies (e& vs du)

This test examines whether e& and du display statistically significant differences in the observed quality of IFRS 15 disclosure across all three dependent variables in the analysis.

Table 6: Mann-whitney comparison test

Dependent Variable	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Significance (Sig.)
Revenue Recognition	10	31	-1.354	0.176
Revenue measurement	10	31	-1.361	0.174
Information Systems	14	29	-0.218	0.827

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Table 6 shows every reported significance value (Sig.) exceeded 0.05 for each case; accordingly, no statistically significant differences emerged between E& and du across any of the dependent variables examined. This reflects the similarity in the level of application between the two firms despite differences in size, geographic scope, and organizational structure. This result supports the third hypothesis (P3) that E& and du will exhibit similar accounting logic in the application IFRS 15, which reflects the commitment of both companies to the International Accounting Standards and their keenness to fully comply with disclosure requirements. However, the observation of differences in mean ranks indicates that du excelled in revenue recognition (7.00 vs. 5.17) and revenue measurement (7.00 vs. 5.17), while e&& was higher in information systems (6.17 vs. 5.80), which may indicate differences in disclosure strategies and investment in systems that are not statistically significant.

Mann-Whitney U Test: Comparison of the Two Application Periods (Pre-2020 vs post-2020)

The test compares quality of disclosure during the post-IFRS 15 period with the preceding period, thereby identifying any statistically significant differences in meeting requirements established by the standard.

Table 7. Mann-whitney test for comparison of the two application periods

Dependent Variable	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Significance (Sig.)
Revenue Recognition	7	17	-1.962	0.05
Revenue measurement	7	17	-1.972	0.049
Information Systems	0	10	-3.162	0.002

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Table 7 Comparing the post-IFRS 15 period with the earlier period revealed statistically significant differences in revenue measurement ($p = 0.049$) and information systems ($p = 0.002$). The result for revenue recognition, by contrast, remained exactly at the stated significance boundary ($p = 0.050$). This reflects the marked improvement in the quality of disclosure after the implementation of the standard, especially around information systems, which saw the greatest improvement ($Z = -3.162$). This finding supports hypothesis 1 (P1) that IFRS 15 increases reliance on accounting information systems, and hypothesis 4 (P4) that the projections of the four major offices are supported by evidence of measurement and systems complexity rather than numerical changes in revenue.

Kruskal-Wallis's Test: Comparison of Reaction Groups

This statistical test specifically examines whether statistically significant differences characterize IFRS 15 disclosure quality across all the four interaction groups (pre-2020 – coltan, e& after 2020, du after 2020).

Table 8. Kruskal-wallis test for reaction groups

Dependent variable	Chi-Square	df	Significance (Sig.)
Revenue Recognition	3.85	2	0.146
Revenue measurement	3.889	2	0.143
Information Systems	10	2	0.007

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Table 8 shows the results identified a statistically significant difference among the interaction groups only for the information systems variable ($p = 0.007$). No comparable difference was found for either revenue recognition or revenue measurement across those groups. Put differently, applying the revised guidance appears to have influenced both firms' information systems more favorably than their respective accounting policies governing revenue recognition and measurement. Both E& and du scored on average 8.00 in information systems and 2.50 in revenue recognition and measurement for the post-2020 period. Thus, IFRS 15 seems to have the most profound effect on the information systems of these firms, which supports the research hypothesis that the changes to accounting policies in telecom companies follow a systems-enabled paradigm.

Spearman Correlation

Using Spearman's correlation coefficient, this analysis estimates both the direction and strength of associations linking dependent variables to additional financial indicators.

Table 9 shows a very strong correlation between revenue recognition and revenue measurement ($r = 0.995$, $p = 0.000$). The result shows a close association between these two dependent variables within the specific context of IFRS 15 application. Results revealed a moderate correlation between information

systems and revenue recognition ($r = 0.620$, $p = 0.042$), plus a moderate correlation between information systems and revenue measurement ($r = 0.624$, $p = 0.040$).

Table 9. Spearman's correlations between dependent and financial variables

The Two Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significance (Sig.)
↔ Revenue Recognition Revenue Measurement	0.995**	0
Revenue ↔ Recognition Information Systems	0.620*	0.042
Revenue ↔ Measurement Information Systems	0.624*	0.04
Assets of Contracts ↔ Information Systems	0.846**	0.001
Contracts ↔ Obligations Information Systems	0.846**	0.001
Revenue million ↔ EBITDA million	0.764**	0.006

Source: Researchers' analysis using SPSS

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Accordingly, enhancements to overall information systems quality will produce corresponding improvements in both revenue recognition and revenue measurement. Perhaps more importantly, there is a strong correlation between contract assets and information systems ($r = 0.846$, $p = 0.001$) and contract and information systems obligations ($r = 0.846$, $p = 0.001$), which suggests that tracking of contract assets is closely related to the level of information systems sophistication. This finding has significant implications for the second hypothesis (P2), as it implies that the audit subjects will identify the recognition of revenue as an IT audit risk since the tracking of contract balances is dependent on the level of information systems sophistication.

Wilcoxon Test for Comparison of Dependent Variables

Pairwise comparisons are used in this test to assess whether the associated dependent variables recognition, measurement, and systems show statistically significant differences when compared with one another, as shown in table 10.

Table 10. Wilcoxon test for comparison of dependent variables

Comparison	Z	Significance (Sig.)
Revenue Measurement - Revenue Recognition	-1	0.317
Information Systems - Revenue Recognition	-1.633	0.102
Information Systems - Revenue Measurement	-1.414	0.157

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Every pairwise comparison returned a significance level (sig) above 0.05; the test therefore indicated broad similarity across all associated dependent variables considered. This similarity indicates the disclosure level of IFRS 15 requirements for the two companies. The average ranks of the Friedman test suggest that revenue recognition had the highest priority (2.18), followed by Revenue measurement (2.05), with the lowest one being the information systems (1.77). Such a result implies that both firms prioritize the disclosure of basic accounting policies, rather than developing systems and controls.

Friedman Test for Comparison of the Three Variables

This test assesses whether statistically significant differences arise across all three dependent variables when those variables are considered collectively.

Table 11 shows that a collective assessment of all three dependent variables produced no statistically significant differences in this present study when considered together ($p = 0.097 > 0.05$). The observed similarity may reflect comparable disclosure quality under IFRS 15 requirements. It indicates that both

companies achieve corresponding standards and similar quality across revenue recognition, revenue measurement, and information systems. However, it should be noted that the rank trend suggests that revenue recognition (2.18) is slightly higher than revenue measurement (2.05), which, in turn, is higher than information systems (1.77), which is also confirmed by the Wilcoxon test results.

Table 11: Friedman's test for comparison of the three variables

Variable	Average Ranks
Revenue Recognition	2.18
Revenue measurement	2.05
Information Systems	1.77
Indicator	Value
Chi-Square	4.667
df	2
Significance (Sig.)	0.097

Source: Analyze researchers using SPSS

Summary of Results and Hypothesis Testing

Table 12: Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Conclusion	Statistical Guide
H1: IFRS 15 application increases reliance on information systems	Supported	Period of application affects information systems: $Z = -3.162$, $p = 0.002$; $R^2 = 0.711$, $p = 0.001$
H2: Audit Subjects Reveal Revenue Recognition as an IT-Dependent Risk	Partially Supported	Strong correlation between contract assets and information systems: $r = 0.846$, $p = 0.001$
H3: e& and du show similar accounting logic	Supported	No significant differences between the two companies ($P > 0.05$)
H4: The forecast of the Big Four offices is supported by evidence of measurement complexity and systems	Supported	Greatest impact on information systems ($R^2 = 0.711$) and revenue measurement ($p = 0.049$)

Source: Researchers' analysis

Table 12 shows the findings therefore characterize IFRS 15 adoption by UAE telecom companies as a systems-enabled accounting change. Its overall effects linked to information systems clearly outweighed those connected to company procedures for revenue recognition and revenue measurement. The findings concur with the hypothesis that investment in information systems and controls was a key factor in implementing the standard. This is supported by the results of the four accounting firms, which identified the telecommunications sector as among the most impacted by the new standard, and the post-adoption review by Standards Council International accounting, which highlighted that the costs of adoption were significant and included the development of information technologies and controls (IASB, 2024).

DISCUSSION

From the results, it is clear that implementation of IFRS 15 in UAE telecom firms is not only about the shift in revenue recognition but is a complete system-based accounting transformation. High levels of disclosure were achieved by both e& and du, scoring an average from 3.60 to 4.00 on a scale from 0 to 4. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the most significant increase occurred in the information systems dimension, where the average score changed from 3.00 before 2020 to 4.00 after 2020. It shows that there were needed improvements in billing systems, contract management, internal controls, and data integration. In agreement with IASB (2024), the results support that the main effect of implementing IFRS 15 is about system, control, and people adjustment and not the revenue outcome itself.

The findings are consistent with Napier and Stadler (2020), who stressed that IFRS 15 does have impacts on organizations other than accounting [5]. The current study goes one step further to show that telecom companies need to re-design their process flows for contract recognition, obligations fulfillment, pricing, and contract balances management. At the same time, the findings are consistent with Kohler et al. (2021) in showing that IFRS 15 adoption impacts the organization's information systems and control systems [2]. However, in contrast to studies focused on earnings manipulation, for example Morawska (2021), the current study stresses the relevance of regulation and technology readiness in IFRS 15 outcomes.

The findings of the comparative analysis do not suggest any considerable difference between e& and du with regard to all tested variables, which indicates that both entities have adopted IT systems similarly since they operate under the same regulatory regime in the UAE and follow international accounting standards. However, this similarity does not imply identical processes of implementation of the technology systems.

Implications from these findings can be drawn. First, for CFOs and telecom executives, implementation of IFRS 15 will require collaboration between the finance department and information technology department. This collaboration includes investing in integrated billing software, ERP, contracts management tools, as well as internal controls in order to ensure appropriate revenue recognition and revenue measurement. Second, for external auditors, it is implied that revenue recognition will be one of the IT audit risk areas.

Another contribution of the study to the literature on IFRS is its consideration of three different dimensions that are studied in isolation from each other, namely, revenue recognition approaches, auditing processes, and changes to accounting information systems. The study extends previous literature through its illustration that information systems are an important capability for the compliance with IFRS 15.

However, despite all these positive outcomes, there are some limitations to the study. First, the study is based on the analysis of annual reports and integrated reports that are publicly accessible; however, it does not necessarily mean that all system configurations were captured in their entirety. In the future research, it will be necessary to conduct interviews with CFOs, auditors, and IT managers. Moreover, by increasing the sample to include other telecommunication firms from Gulf Cooperation Council countries and studying the time after the adoption of IFRS 15 for an extended period, one can ensure greater generalizability.

CONCLUSION

The research investigated the influence of IFRS 15 on revenue recognition, revenue measurement, and accounting information systems in UAE telecommunication firms using a comparative analysis of e& and du annual reports between 2018 and 2023. The results indicate that the IFRS 15 application is an accounting transformation facilitated by a system, and not just an accounting policy decision. The two firms exhibited high adherence to IFRS 15 requirements, recording an average score of between 3.60 and 4.00 on the disclosure measure used. The quality of the information system was greatly enhanced after implementation, rising from 3.00 prior to 2020 to 4.00 after 2020, and the regression analysis showed that the period of implementation accounted for 71.1% variance in the quality of information systems ($R^2 = 0.711$, $p = 0.001$). In the comparison analysis, there were no significant differences found between e& and du in revenue recognition, revenue measurement, and information systems, which implies equal implementation approach in UAE regulations. Nevertheless, the results from the pre- and post-implementation comparison revealed significant changes in the areas of revenue measurement ($p = 0.049$) and information systems ($p = 0.002$). Moreover, there was a positive correlation between the contract assets and information systems ($r = 0.846$, $p = 0.001$), which proved that the impact of IFRS 15 on system performance was more prominent than other factors. This research offers contributions to the literature on accounting and information systems by illustrating the relationship between the implementation of IFRS 15, digital transformation, and revenue management within the emerging market setting. Further research should focus on the extension of the study by looking at a wider set of

telecommunications firms operating in the GCC countries, as well as by conducting interviews with the CFOs, auditors, and information systems managers within the period after the implementation of IFRS 15.

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