

# Comparative analysis of timely loss recognition during local and international accounting standards regimes: Case of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigates the pattern of timely loss recognition among listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria before and after implementation of International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS). This effort was made by the crave of the accounting standards' setters to continue ascertaining the quality of accounting standards issued under IFRS and its implication on accounting information issued during the reporting regime. The study relied on ex-post facto research, and secondary data covering a 7-year period before and 7-year after IFRS implementation were drawn from the annual reports of 17 purposively selected manufacturing listed firms on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX), using certain selection criteria. Results based on panel regression test reveal higher timely recognition of losses during IFRS reporting period than the period before IFRS implementation. The result of the interactive terms and timey losses also reveal the existence of earnings smoothing in pre-IFRS period, which seems to have been informed by less timely loss recognition. Thus, the study concludes that more losses are recognized by conservative corporate managers during IFRS reporting period based on this context. The findings have implications for the potential investors, lenders of excess liquidity, and standard setters among others.

**Keywords:** Accounting Quality, Earnings, IFRS, Manufacturing Firms, Timely Loss Recognition.

## 1. Introduction

The advent and consequent implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) globally have made its significant impact on the financial reporting clime. Part of its essence is to enhance the quality of accounting information disclosed by corporate entities. Prior to IFRS emergence, financial reports were prepared in accordance with local or regional accounting standards together with other regulatory frameworks. In Nigeria to be specific, the erstwhile Statement of Accounting Standards' (SAS) with over 30 standards issued by the defunct National Accounting Standard Board (NASB), provided reporting basis for preparation and presentation of accounting information published by corporate entities in the country.

Apparently, the quality of accounting information issued by listed corporate entities is of utmost importance to diverse users of financial statements. Usually, accounting quality is determined through accounting information presented in the financial reports as a means of communicating accounting information to various users to make economic decisions, obtaining credit facilities, and other financing decisions (Christensen et al., 2015; Denich, 2021). But different accounting standards possess distinct measures, basis, and guidelines for preparing financial statements. This is a pointer that accounting information prepared under different accounting standards could convey different qualities to users in line with the submission of Christensen et al. (2015), and Khalilov (2024).

Furthermore, although accounting quality is a unique and popular concept in accounting field to which many research papers refer, it has no common meaning. According to Barth (2008), accounting quality refers to the ability of accounting parameters to convey the economic position and performance of a firm. According to Taylor (2016), accounting quality draws attention primarily to the relevance of the financial information disclosed. Gavin (2017) emphasizes that other definitions of accounting quality focus more

on the reliability of financial information. Meanwhile, accounting constructs that are employed to measure accounting quality include timely loss recognition, accrual quality, value relevance, earnings smoothing, persistence, earnings management, etcetera (Abubakar & Suleiman-Ahmed, 2024; Ayagi & Salisu, 2023; Essien & Akpan, 2024; Isiaka et al., 2025; Pășcan, 2015; Rocha & Bezerra, 2021). Timely loss recognition concept seeks to explain discretionary recognition of good and bad news around earnings by managers with the use of alternatives provided in accounting standards to meet the target (Mensah, 2021). Also, extant studies do not have a consistent submission regarding timeliness of loss recognition upon IFRS implementation. For instance, Chan et al. (2015), and Dobre et al. (2015) found increased timely loss recognition across Europe and Romanian respectively, while Néfissa and Jilani (2021) and Oto and Ola (2024) noted decrease in timely loss recognition.

Often times, accounting quality reflects inherent strength or weakness of a particular accounting standards. That is, the quality of accounting standards is determined through the quality of accounting information prepared under it (Alade, 2018). Whereas International Accounting Standard Board (IASB) is established with the primary purpose of issuing guidelines of financial reporting globally with the aim of reducing information asymmetry by disclosing relevant and timely information. However, mixed submissions exist regarding their improved quality over local or regional accounting standards.

Since there is considerable variation in accounting quality based on different accounting standards leading to economic inefficiency across countries (Suadiye, 2017), international accounting systems offer basis to examine the economic consequences of financial reporting (Agana et al., 2023; Awinbugri & Boahen, 2021). The growing acceptance of IFRS is an indication of a major change in the accounting profession. The numbers of nations that allow the use of IFRS for the issuance of financial statements by publicly listed establishments have increased remarkably (Uwuigbe et al., 2016). While IFRS as a financial reporting system supported by strong governance as well as sound regulatory basis is of essence to the economic development of most countries in the world (da Paixão Duarte et al., 2015), confounding submissions exist regarding timely loss recognition of accounting information prepared and issued under IFRS based disclosure demands.

Replacing the Nigerian local SAS with IFRS presents a unique basis to investigate the extent at which implementation of IFRS impacts timely loss recognition (as a measure of accounting quality) of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Also, yearly decline in the number of listed firms in Nigerian Stock Exchange poses a concern of which untidy financial reporting sharp practices cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, IFRS is perceived to stimulate financial reporting quality due to its increased strictness in its usage and application (El Idrissi & Ouardia, 2024; Jilani & Néfissa, 2020). However, there is no generalized research submission that IFRS possesses inherent attributes that makes losses to be recognized timely, especially in a developing economy of Nigeria. Thus, this study is an attempt to examine the effects of IFRS implementation on timely loss recognition as a surrogate of accounting quality among listed manufacturing firms in Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE).

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### ***Empirical Review***

In order to unveil the implication of accounting standards on financial reporting quality, a lot of empirical studies have been conducted. Specifically, a myriad of extant studies on timely loss recognition exist among which are reviewed as follows.

Chan et al. (2015) made attempt to examine whether timely loss recognition has been increased by listed firms across Europe upon mandatory IFRS adoption in 2005. The study recorded increased timely loss recognition among IFRS mandatory adopters. According to Christensen et al. (2015), although reporting benefits dominate accounting standard in determining the quality accounting figures, the study posited that it is baseless to infer through changes in accounting quality that IFRS adoption enhances accounting quality. Despite the position of Christensen et al. (2015), Ebaid (2016) also examined the influence of IFRS implementation on accounting quality of quoted firms in Egypt for a period before (i.e. 2000 – 2006), and after the adoption (i.e. 2007 – 2009) using earnings management. The study discovered that IFRS adoption has reduced earnings management significantly. This suggests that even in code-law countries, IFRS has improved financial reporting quality. Furthermore, Dobre et al. (2015) explored changes in value relevance and timely loss recognition as measures of accounting quality among listed firms in Romanian after IFRS adoption in 2012. It was discovered that both value relevance, and recognition of loss timely increased after adoption of the global accounting standards.

Capkun and Collins (2018) also examined the effect of IFRS adoption on earnings smoothing observed and concluded that increase in recognition of timely gain, decrease in recognition of timely loss recognition, and net decrease in asymmetric timely loss recognition are responsible for the change in observed smoothness of earnings upon IFRS adoption. After migration from local to international accounting standards in South Korea in 2011, Key and Kim (2020) examined accounting quality using timely loss recognition, and earnings management proxies. The study confirms more timely loss recognition and less earnings management after IFRS adoption consistent with other studies like Chan et al. (2015) and Jilani and Néfissa (2020).

Jilani and Néfissa (2020) also investigated the effect of mandatory adoption of IFRS on accounting conservatism using the French context for a period from 2003 to 2012. Based on Basu' (1997) model, the study recorded an increase in loss recognition during IFRS reporting period. This suggests that management of the listed firms demonstrate more accounting conservatism upon IFRS implementation. This finding is in tandem with the findings by Awinbugri and Boahen (2021) from a developing sub-Saharan nation, Ghana. However, Néfissa and Jilani (2021) obtained negative association between IFRS adoption and timely loss recognition, suggesting that accounting quality reduced after IFRS implementation among French listed firms.

Awinbugri and Boahen (2021) explore the relationship between adoption of IFRS and earnings quality of sixteen non-financial listed firms in Ghana before and after IFRS adoption. The study used logistic regression as basis for its findings that the firms manipulate earnings towards positive targets more frequently before IFRS adoption unlike the post-IFRS period. The study equally recorded that more losses are recognized during the IFRS reporting regime than during the pre-IFRS period. Thus, the study confirmed that IFRS reporting period presents higher financial reporting quality than pre-IFRS period consistent with Agana et al. (2023). Agana et al. (2023) studied the effect of different approaches used in IFRS adoption on accounting quality among listed firms in six African stock markets (countries) for 18-year period. The findings of the study reveal that it is institutional factors that have association with accounting quality instead of IFRS adoption. However, the study found that IFRS adoption makes the accounting information more value relevant, enhances timely loss recognition and leads to less smoothing of income which imply that IFRS adoption presents higher accounting quality to adopters than adapter.

Alharasis et al. (2024) compare the financial statements of 24 Iraqi banks before and after IFRS 7 was implemented and disclosed. The OLS regression results revealed that accounting quality of the IFRS based financial statement improved using timeliness, relevance, faithful representation, and comparability. From a developing economy in Africa, Oto and Ola (2024) examined the influence of IFRS adoption on timely loss recognition among 12 listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study observed that timely loss recognition has reduced significantly after IFRS adoption which suggests reduction in accounting quality.

The concise position of the extant studies reviewed suggest that implementation of IFRS depicts confounding submissions regarding its ability to enhance or reduce accounting quality using its proxies such as timely loss recognition, value relevance income smoothing among others. Findings of existing studies that focused on comparative analysis also revealed that IFRS adoption or implementation is capable of increasing or reducing financial reporting quality at different reporting climates. But it is clearly established that IFRS possesses certain features capable of affecting financial reporting quality. Thus, the study proposed in a null form that.

*H1: Timely loss recognition is more pronounced under IFRS reporting regime than under local accounting standard in Nigeria.*

### **Theoretical Basis**

The signaling theory was put forward by Michael Spence in 1973. The theory posited that companies would regulate themselves to remain competitive concerning capacity to attract potential investors by signaling to the market through disclosure of information that promotes transparency, as the firm remains unlimited or unrestricted to the disclosure of relevant and reliable accounting information that can enhance transparency (Alemi, 2016; Ayagi & Salisu, 2024). This theory suggested that a reporting entity can increase its quality of accounting value through financial reporting by maintaining a high quality of timely loss recognition.

Nigerian manufacturing companies whose stocks are traded on the NGX face a competitive capital market populated by sophisticated investors across the international boundaries. But for stabilization, comparability, understandability, and transparency of accounting information to be maintained in order to enjoy the influx of more investors, there is need to embrace and ensure the sustainability of sound accounting quality ensuing from the use of improved global accounting standards to enhance investor confidence (Mensah, 2021). This suggests a medium through which enhanced accounting quality can be signaled to members of the public, users of accounting information or participants on the stock market.

For Nigerian manufacturing firms to maximize values, the entities are expected to leverage on incentives from disclosure of all available information such as enhanced investors' confidence and stakeholders' trust. This postulation gives corporate entities the motivation to showcase reporting quality through their financial statements that they are better than other entities by producing valuable economic signals directed at accounting treatments that can improve accounting quality. According to Agana et al. (2023), Jilani and Néfissa (2020), and Mensah (2021), moving to IFRS has had a major impact on the reporting requirements of listed corporate entities.

Therefore, implementation of IFRS as more improved accounting standards is believed to signal a better market economic information (Ayagi & Salisu, 2024), through a prompt timely loss recognition in the interest of the corporate stakeholders against the selfish interest of the management team. Otherwise,



manufacturing firms with poor accounting quality due to the use of weak accounting standards will suffer capital mobility across the international boundaries and as such the market economy may be ignored by reputable investors since the entity's accounting information is less informative.

### 3. Methodology

The study relied on ex-post facto research paradigm. This method was found applicable because the study used data of past events as related to each corporate entity studied. Data used were obtained from the secondary sources. The data were drawn from the audited annual reports of the listed manufacturing firms for the 14-year period under investigation. That is seven years before and after IFRS implementation in Nigeria reporting environment. Share price at third month after the financial year-end were obtained from the NGX on request through application to ensure the originality of the data. Panel data used for the study was considered very suitable because it is more informative, depicts more variability, presents less collinearity among the parameters, reveal more degrees of freedom, and more efficient.

The population of the study consist of the sixty-five (65) manufacturing companies, quoted on the Nigeria Stock Exchange website as of December 2019. The sample size comprised seventeen (17) manufacturing firms selected using purposive sampling technique and based on certain selection criteria. The selection criteria as employed in related studies include manufacturing firms whose shares are actively in trade on the floor of the NGX for all the years under investigation, firms that started to adopt IFRS beginning from 2012 and not earlier or later, firms whose financial year-end is 31<sup>st</sup> December. The essence of using the selection criteria is to obtain balanced panel data due to efficiency of its coefficients. In line with the main goal of the study, accounting quality was assessed by using timely loss recognition measure. According to Oto and Ola (2024), Lin et al. (2021), and Zaher et al. (2020), it is very crucial to recognize losses (large or small) as it occurs, rather than spreading its effects over multiple periods with earnings management. Basu (1997) considers reverse regressions of earnings on an indicator parameter for bad news (that is negative investment returns), and the interaction of returns with the indicator variable as specified in equation 1. Thus, more timely loss recognition leads to larger coefficient estimate on bad news of earnings in a regression analysis of earnings on returns.

$$EPS_{i,t} = \lambda + \lambda_1 Returns_{i,t} + \lambda_2 BAD_{i,t} + \lambda_3 Returns_{i,t} * BAD_{i,t} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \text{----- (equation 1)}$$

Where:

$BAD_{i,t}$  which denotes 1 for firm  $i$  that declares negative returns in year  $t$ , and 0 if otherwise; EPS is the net income per share as deflated by the price at the last day of the reporting period; and Returns which is the natural logarithm of the ratio of the stock price at the third month after financial year-end to the stock price third month before the financial year-end, adjusted for dividends and stock splits as employed by Agana et al. (2020) and Alharasis et al. (2024).

### 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the data analysis and ensuing discussion. The descriptive statistics for the entire 14-year period as reported in the Table 1 reveals a mean of 0.852 for BAD news (negative earnings) with a minimum index of 0 and a maximum of 1. This implies that the variable is skewed to the point of 1 and less disperse with the standard deviation value of 0.355. The share price (SP) of the firms had the highest level of dispersion with value of 4,156.38, with Kurtosis of 18.271 and Skewness of 3.861. The average EPS for the period is 116.87 with a maximum and minimum value of 1,216 and -428 respectively. The

distribution of the variables (BAD, EPS, RETURN, and SP) exhibits leptokurtic distribution because their kurtosis is greater than 3. In term of skewness, EPS and SP are positively skewed which show that the 'tail' of their distribution points tends toward the right except the variable of BAD and RETURNS that are negative.

Comparison of the descriptive analysis between pre- and post-IFRS period shows that BAD (0.838) is slightly lower during IFRS period compared to pre-IFRS period with a value of 0.865. This suggests that negative earnings reported by the listed manufacturing firms during IFRS reporting period reduced slightly. Similar mean results were recorded for EPS and SP with slightly reduced maximum values. The descriptive results demonstrate possible influence of IFRS effect on the accounting and market-based data. However, value of RETURNS increased slightly from 3.995 to 4.146 during the IFRS reporting period.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Entire Period)**

	Mean	Max.	Min.	Std.Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>BAD</b>	0.852	1	0	0.355	-1.986	4.944
<b>EPS</b>	116.872	1216	-428	212.404	1.989	8.613
<b>RETURNS</b>	0.358	51.704	-222.1	18.173	-8.916	111.497
<b>SP</b>	1338.356	25107	-401.4	4156.388	3.861	18.271
<b>Pre-IFRS Period</b>						
<b>BAD</b>	0.865	1.00	0	0.342	-2.143	5.592
<b>EPS</b>	122.101	1216	-428	231.280	2.039	8.937
<b>RETURNS</b>	3.995	10.106	1.576	2.216	1.428	4.110
<b>SP</b>	1361.093	24500	4.84	4009.028	3.471	15.726
<b>Post-IFRS Period</b>						
<b>BAD</b>	0.838	1	0	0.369	-1.844	4.402
<b>EPS</b>	111.643	964	-251	192.537	1.803	6.925
<b>RETURN</b>	4.146	10.130	0.048	2.455	0.657	2.784
<b>SP</b>	1316.269	25107	-401.38	4313.841	4.153	19.977

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

### *Correlation Matrix*

The correlation results presented in Table 2 shows very weak relationship among the variables. It can be inferred from the correlation results that there is low level of correlation among the predictive variables. This suggests less likelihood of having multicollinearity problem which may impair the estimation by understate or overstate the standard errors, thereby leading to wrong inference about the behaviour of the variables.

**Table 2: Correlation matrix**

Variable	BAD	EPS	RETURN
BAD	1		
EPS	0.014	1	
RETURN	-0.009	0.244	1

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

### *Timely loss recognition: Pre- and Post-IFRS reporting regimes*

The outcome of analyses on timely loss recognition during a period before and after IFRS implementation in Nigeria are presented and discussed in this sub-section. Table 3 presents regression analyses for both pre- and post-IFRS reporting periods. The coefficient of BAD (negative earning) variable expresses the degree of timely loss recognition. More timely loss recognition presents a larger coefficient estimate on bad news earnings in a regression of earnings on returns (Khalifa & Trabelsi, 2023). The Hausman test results support the random effect model. Both models present statistically significant at 0.05 level, but pre-IFRS period has higher explanatory power (adjusted  $R^2$ ) of about 19 percent over that of the post-IFRS period. The model of post-IFRS period shows that the coefficient of bad news is statistically significant and positive (219.64;  $t = 4.4305$ ) which is higher than the bad news in the pre-IFRS period (173.4055;  $t = 2.5357$ ). This suggests that implementation of IFRS has led to more timely recognition of losses based on evidence from listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

The interaction of return and bad news had significant positive effect on the earnings after IFRS implementation (co-efficient = 66.6804;  $t = 3.8001$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). In the pre-IFRS period, the interaction of return and bad news also had positive effect on the earnings (co-efficient = 42.1449;  $t = 3.3737$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) but with lesser coefficient compared to the post-IFRS reporting period. Given the fact that the interaction between returns and bad news is higher during post-IFRS period, it indicates the fact that earnings are timely source of information on losses in the period compares to the pre-IFRS reporting period.

The result of the interactive terms and the bad news revealed the existence of earnings smoothing in pre-IFRS period, which seems to have been informed by timely loss recognition. It shows that large negative earnings were smoothened away by the management of the sampled firms and small positive earnings were not captured, which result in less timely loss recognition by the firms in pre-IFRS reporting era than the post-IFRS period.

The findings are tandem with the submission of Key and Kim (2020), Awinbugri and Boahen (2021), and Agana et al. (2023) but at variance with Suadiye (2017) who noted more earnings smoothening upon IFRS adoption. It is also contrary to the submission of Oto and Ola (2024) using the financial sectors within the same reporting environment, Nigeria and Néfissa and Jilani (2021) from a developed economy. Thus, the hypothesis statement that timely loss recognition is more pronounced under IFRS reporting regime than local accounting standard reporting period in Nigeria cannot hold. As such, this study submits that IFRS implementation has enhanced accounting quality based on the context of this study.

**Table 3: Regression results of timely loss recognition pre- and post-IFRS periods**

	Post-IFRS					
	Fixed Effect Model			Random Effect Model		
	Coefficient	T-value	P-value	Coefficient	T-value	P-value
RETURN	-33.3243	-2.3855	0.0194	-10.6375	-2.3058	0.0233
BAD	451.0521	2.2087	0.0300	219.6490	4.4305	0.0000
RETURN*BAD	149.7488	2.0953	0.0393	66.6804	3.8001	0.0003
C	96.8750	1.1775	0.2424	106.6463	2.4544	0.0159
R-squared	0.6779			0.1416		
Adj. R-squared	0.6103			0.1145		
F-statistic	10.0301			5.2246		
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			0.0022		
Hausman Test	4.4795(p>0.05)					
	Pre-IFRS					
	Fixed Effect Model			Random Effect Model		
	Coefficient	T-value	P-value	Coefficient	T-value	P-value
RETURN	-6.2214	-0.4845	0.6291	17.0522	1.0510	0.2955
BAD	83.9137	1.6152	0.1095	173.4055	2.5357	0.0126
RETURN*BAD	26.9622	3.4655	0.0008	42.1449	3.3737	0.0010
C	127.3144	4.0414	0.0001	71.0135	1.7356	0.0853
R-squared	0.833556			0.2146		
Adj. R-squared	0.801286			0.1939		
F-statistic	25.83089			10.38428		
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			0.000004		
Hausman Test	16.9399(p>0.05)					

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study seeks to unveil how losses are recognized during and before IFRS reporting period in Nigeria. Attention was directed at scarcely examined real sector of manufacturing industry. Since the results present higher co-efficient in bad news (loses) during the IFRS period over bad or negative news before the IFRS reporting period, the study concludes that more losses were recognized promptly during the IFRS period. This is an indication that IFRS reporting regime records higher timely loss recognition capable of supporting future stability of the firms but reduce current benefits accruing to the investors. The findings have investment decision implications for potential investors regarding the choice of industry to invest in.

Regarding the regulatory bodies and accounting standard setters, the findings present a position that could guide in future move to improve on the quality of the international accounting standards. Apparently, the finding reflects signal to both internal and external users (such as excess liquidity providers, management, analysts to mention a few) of the financial information issued under IFRS regarding the economic decision they make through the accounting information. Succinctly, this study documents that listed firms in the manufacturing sector have higher accounting quality after implementation of IFRS than pre-implementation period. However, this submission has inherent limitation as it was grounded on purposively selected manufacturing listed firms in an emerging economy, Nigeria. Thus, future study is encouraged to cover more sectors, focus on more economies, compare between financial and non-financial listed firms, and consider more years.



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