**Executive summary**

This comprehensive data analysis examines the economic trajectories of five major emerging economies—Brazil, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and South Africa—over a critical 15-year period from 2010 to 2024. Using World Bank data on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), this study reveals stark contrasts in economic performance, with India emerging as the clear growth leader while Brazil and South Africa face structural economic challenges. The analysis demonstrates advanced data transformation, statistical analysis, and economic interpretation skills essential for international business decision-making.

1. **Data Methodology and Transformation**

The analysis utilized official World Bank data comprising GDP (current US$) and FDI net flows (current US$) for the five countries across 15 annual observations each. The original dataset was structured in wide format with separate columns for each year, requiring sophisticated data transformation using Power Query techniques to create a standardized analytical framework with four core variables:

Country Name: Five emerging economies across three continents

Year: Annual observations from 2010-2024

GDP: Gross Domestic Product in current US dollars

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment net flows in current US dollars

This transformation enabled comprehensive time-series analysis and cross-country comparisons essential for identifying economic trends and policy implications.

1. **Economic Performance Analysis**

**Growth Champions: India Leads the Pack**

**India** demonstrated exceptional economic performance with a **133.5% total GDP growth**, expanding from $1.68 trillion in 2010 to $3.91 trillion in 2024—a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of **6.2%**. This remarkable trajectory positioned India as the largest economy among the five countries by 2024, nearly doubling Brazil's GDP despite starting from a lower base.

**Pakistan**, despite its smaller economic scale, achieved the second-highest growth rate with a **4.7% CAGR**, expanding from $197 billion to $373 billion. This represents 89.7**% total growth**, demonstrating significant economic momentum despite ongoing structural challenges.

**Mexico** maintained steady growth with a **3.8% CAGR**, reaching its peak GDP of $1.85 trillion in 2024. The country showed resilience through various economic cycles, achieving a 67.6% total growth over the analysis period.

**Economic Challenges: Brazil and South Africa Stagnate**

Brazil experienced economic stagnation with a -0.1% CAGR, representing virtually flat growth over 14 years. The economy peaked at $2.62 trillion in 2011 but declined to $2.18 trillion by 2024, indicating structural challenges and policy inefficiencies that constrained long-term growth potential.

South Africa faced the most significant economic challenges with a -0.3% CAGR, contracting from $417 billion in 2010 to $400 billion in 2024. The economy peaked at $458 billion in 2011 but subsequently declined, reflecting persistent structural bottlenecks including infrastructure constraints and political uncertainty.

**GDP growth trajectories for Brazil, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and South Africa from 2010-2024**

This GDP trend analysis reveals India as the standout performer among the five emerging economies, with GDP nearly doubling from $1.68 trillion to $3.91 trillion between 2010 and 2024. Brazil experienced significant volatility, peaking in 2011 before declining below its 2010 baseline by 2024. Mexico demonstrated steady growth reaching $1.85 trillion, while Pakistan showed consistent expansion despite its smaller scale. South Africa faced persistent economic challenges, with GDP declining from its 2011 peak. The 2020 COVID-19 impact is clearly visible across all economies, with varying recovery trajectories highlighting different levels of economic resilience.

**3. Foreign Direct Investment Patterns**

The FDI analysis reveals a concerning trend across all five economies: persistent net capital outflows throughout the entire 15-year period. This unusual pattern in the World Bank data suggests either methodological issues in FDI accounting or reflects complex capital flow dynamics in these emerging markets.

India showed the most promising FDI trajectory, with net outflows decreasing from -$53.2 billion in 2020 to just -$3.8 billion in 2024, indicating improving investor confidence and potential for FDI inflows in the near future.

Brazil faced the largest average FDI outflows at -$56.5 billion annually, with outflows reaching -$90.5 billion in 2012. This pattern suggests capital flight concerns and challenges in maintaining investor confidence.

Mexico averaged -$24.1 billion in annual FDI outflows, though it achieved a rare positive inflow of $0.5 billion in 2012, demonstrating episodic investor interest.

**4. COVID-19 Pandemic Impact Assessment**

The pandemic's economic impact varied significantly across countries, providing insights into economic resilience and policy effectiveness:

| **Country** | **2019-2020 GDP Impact** | **Recovery Pattern** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brazil | -21.2% | Severe contraction, slow recovery |
| Mexico | -14.0% | Moderate impact, steady recovery |
| South Africa | -13.2% | Persistent challenges, limited recovery |
| Pakistan | -6.4% | Resilient performance, continued growth |
| India | -5.7% | Quick V-shaped recovery, accelerated growth |

**India** and **Pakistan** demonstrated remarkable resilience, with relatively limited GDP contractions and strong recovery patterns. **Brazil** suffered the most severe impact, contributing to its overall poor performance during the analysis period.

**5. Comparative Economic Rankings and Strategic Insights**

**2024 Economic Standings:**

**India: $3.91T GDP (Dominant growth leader)**

**Brazil: $2.18T GDP (Stagnant former leader)**

**Mexico: $1.85T GDP (Steady performer)**

**South Africa: $0.40T GDP (Structural challenges)**

**Pakistan: $0.37T GDP (High growth, small scale)**

**GDP growth trajectories for Brazil, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and South Africa from 2010-2024**

The FDI trend analysis (Figure 2) shows all five countries experiencing net capital outflows from 2010 to 2024. Brazil faced the largest outflows, peaking at –$90.5 billion in 2012. India’s outflows fell sharply to –$3.8 billion by 2024, suggesting rising investor confidence. Mexico saw occasional inflows but averaged –$24.1 billion annually. Pakistan’s smaller market maintained modest outflows around –$1.8 billion, with its lowest at –$0.3 billion in 2022. South Africa’s FDI was the most erratic, swinging from +$5.4 billion inflows to –$40.6 billion outflows. Overall, these trends signal ongoing challenges in securing stable foreign investment.

**6. Policy and Investment Implications**

This analysis reveals critical insights into international business strategy and investment decisions:

**Growth Markets**: India and Pakistan represent the most dynamic growth opportunities, with India offering scale and Pakistan offering growth rates despite smaller market size.

**Mature Markets**: Mexico provides stability and steady growth, making it attractive for risk-averse investments and established market penetration strategies.

**Challenged Markets**: Brazil and South Africa require careful risk assessment, though their economic scale still offers opportunities for strategic investors willing to navigate structural challenges.

**Capital Flow Concerns**: The persistent FDI outflows across all countries warrant further investigation and may indicate regional capital market inefficiencies or methodological data issues requiring additional analysis.

**7. Technical Skills Demonstrated**

This project showcases advanced analytical capabilities essential for MSc International Business with Data Analytics:

* **Data Transformation**: Power Query utilization for complex dataset restructuring
* **Statistical Analysis**: Compound annual growth rate calculations, trend analysis, and comparative metrics
* **Economic Interpretation**: Translation of quantitative findings into strategic business insights
* **Visualization**: Professional chart creation for stakeholder communication
* **Research Methodology**: Integration of multiple data sources with proper attribution and quality assessment

**Conclusion**

This comprehensive analysis demonstrates the power of data-driven economic research in understanding complex international market dynamics. The findings reveal India's emergence as a dominant economic force among emerging markets, while highlighting structural challenges in traditional regional powers like Brazil and South Africa. These insights provide valuable foundations for international business strategy, investment decisions, and policy analysis in emerging market economies.

The technical approach combines rigorous quantitative analysis with strategic interpretation, exemplifying the analytical sophistication required for advanced international business roles and academic pursuits.

**Data Source**: World Bank Open Data - World Development Indicators ([https://data.worldbank.org](https://data.worldbank.org/))  
**Data Attribution**: World Bank, GDP (current US$) and Foreign Direct Investment, net (Bop, current US$)

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*This analysis was conducted as part of academic preparation for MSc International Business with Data Analytics, demonstrating advanced data analysis, economic interpretation, and business intelligence capabilities.*