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FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) IN THE NAFTA REGIONS: CASE OF USA AND MÉXICO

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Abstract

Some economists have agreed or disagreed that NAFTA has helped the economic growth of both in U.S. and Mexico (Shahabuddin, S., 2003). These economies are based on a mercantile system that depended on import and export products to achieve economic growth and economic development. During the 1990s, the region went through political and economic neoliberal reform policies that welcome foreign direct investment (FDI) to boost trade, economic growth, and economic development for this region. However, in the 21 Century, some economists have found that the FDI approach is a capital inflow which can be used to boost host economy overall by transferring technology and knowledge to increase domestic investment and productivity (Villarreal, M. A., & Fergusson, I. F., 2014).Nevertheless, U.S. and Mexico had used foreign production capital to create an international economic integration that allows them to sustain import and export growth but also allow them to compete in emerging markets. This research paper will address how Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the NAFTA Regions: Case of U.S. and México in which its trade agreement may have promoted and produced macroeconomic stability to its regions.

Keywords: Foreign Direct Investments, Trade Agreements, and Multinational Companies

INTRODUCTION

Some economists have stated that with the NAFTA partnership between Mexico and United States (U.S.) had been significant trade arrangement for the economic regions. Moreover, these economists concluded that both countries are drastically dependent on each other economic and political powers in order sustain the NAFTA agreement. Therefore, it is imperative that both partners have a good understanding how their bilateral trade agreement will impact the foreign direct investment from multinational corporation perspective. But also, what political stands must policymakers consider modification this provisional agreement to avert adverse effects on both economies (Nica, M., Swaidan, Z., & Grayson, M. M., 2006). Nevertheless, in Burfisher, M. E., Robinson, S., & Thierfelder, K. (2001) study, these scholars found that "NAFTA has had relatively small positive effects on the U.S. economy and relatively large positive effects on Mexico".

However, the economic purpose of NAFTA was to integrate member countries markets to increase the flow of sold goods or services across borders to enhance the standard of living for members (Shahabuddin, S., 2003). With that in mind, other economists have stated that: Foreign direct investment (FDI) has been an integral part of the economic relationship between the United States and Mexico for many years, especially after NAFTA. Two-way investment increased rapidly after the agreement went into effect. The United States is the largest source of FDI in Mexico. The stock of U.S. FDI in Mexico increased from $15.2 billion in 1993 to $101.0 billion in 2012… [Thus, it is successfully credited] it for fueling unprecedented North American trade and creating job growth in the United States (Villarreal, M. A., & Fergusson, I. F., 2014).

Therefore, the research paper will explore the foreign direct investments that have contributed to FDI inflow and outflow resources in developed and developing according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED). Then, the paper will also examine what some Trade Agreement Modification and Economic Concerns that might have an enormous impact on FDI in Latin American are. Next, the paper explores how Multinational Enterprises have used FDI process in the manufacturing sectors within in this geographical market. Then, the paper addresses Latin America's political environment from a liberalization policies perspective, in which the NAFTA provision was constructed to meet General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade arrangements. Also, the paper focuses on Mexico as a Case Study to investigates whether FDI has influenced total manufacturing and wholesaled trade positively or negatively for U.S. MNEs under the NAFTA arrangement. Lastly, the study will discuss what the regression methodology is, and the hypotheses and its results within the summarize of the findings in the conclusive statement.

Foreign Direct Investment Challenges

According to Lee (2005), "the increase of multinational businesses and the reduction of restrictions on foreign investors have contributed to the increase of FDI for emerging economies. Nearly all countries, regardless of whether they are of developed or developing economies status, welcome FDI today since FDI provides employment opportunities for the local population and bring valuable resources to benefit the economy of the host countries, including capital, technology, information, managerial expertise and sales and marketing networking." (p. 703). Thus, in recent past two decades' foreign direct investment has spread like wildfire through this global economy. Developed and developing nations are attempting to use foreign capital inflow to improve their economies. For instance, "in the 1990s, FDI flows to developing countries rose from just under $40 billion on 1990 to over $240 billion in 2000, which is more than six-fold increase (Mody, 2004, p.1196).

According to Trevino et al. (2002), "Latin American countries' liberalization policies market reforms, demographics, political attitudes and macroeconomic conditions are positively influencing inward FDI into these regions. These economies have an established set of resources and capabilities such as population, disposable income, and a skilled workforce that are attracting potential investors to these emerging markets." (p.388).

As a result, the international flow of FDI has found its way to Latin America because Latin America countries are using economic reforms to open their markets to foreign direct investment. That Latin America has over 450 million potential consumers located in twenty diverse countries that have combined GDP, which is a trillion. Therefore, Latin America's economic reform policy affects the foreign investors' decision-making the process by passing laws and regulation which are enforcing property right, reducing bureaucratic and business corruption practices, improving infrastructure, and providing an education labor force. Also, these developing countries are implementing financial or monetary policies that are stabling exchange rates which can increase market uncertainty and contribute to higher country risk (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2002).

However, some economists have knowledge that FDI proceeds are associated with Latin America adopting a democratic system which has contributed to reduction or relaxation restrictions foreign investment in which it helps to attract foreign capital. For instance, in past two decades, "Latin America's democratic and partially democratic countries rose from about 31 percent in 1975 to about 73 percent in 1995" (Li & Resnick, 2003, p.175). As a result, Latin America's democratic institutions were instrumental in reducing risks for foreign investors by passing legislation that encourages property rights protection to multinational enterprises (MNE). These pro-foreign business transactions are benefiting MNEs because most host governments are not trying to control foreign subsidiaries equity. Therefore, Latin America's political and economic reform strategies are luring foreign capital by lifting foreign investment barriers which were preventing them from becoming an industrial competitor in this global market.

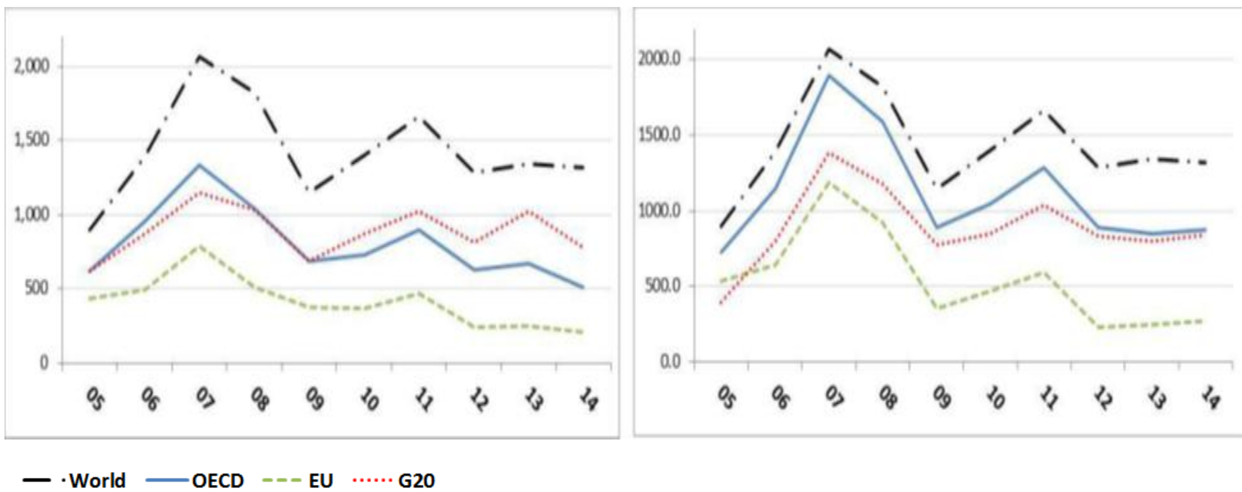
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

OECD FDI Inflow and Global Outflow Markets

What are some Global Investment Uncertainties?

The below figures are providing econometric information on how inflow FDI has been distributed through developing countries during past decades. By using the growth rate of GDP per capita, and population, these graphics are shows the inward capital flow disperses between developing countries and global economy.

Figure 1: Show FDI inflow and outflow in billion from 2005 to 2014



Source: OECD International Direct Investment Statistics database and IMF, 2015

The figure is also showing that FDI has a positive effect on any economy because inward FDI has been a major engine for the rapid economic growth and development for emerging markets during past decades. This is due to Latin America's development strategies that eliminated or relaxed restrictions foreign investors while operating in their business environment. As a result, Latin America governments must be introducing economic policies that are focusing on an open-trade policy, which is linked to overall growth and development of their regions. Therefore, "policymaker in developing countries must understand that FDI as an important contributor to economic growth and development. Because FDI is a long-term investment that provides non-tangible assets such as knowledge, and advanced technologies, which have had positive spillover effects on domestic economies." (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2002, p.50) As a result, developing economies are affected by FDI and their economic reform policy, trade agreements and political stability which are variables that provide friendly conditions for foreign direct investment.

Trade Agreement Concerns

What are some bilateral or multilateral agreement obstacles?

According to Mody (200), "cross-country policy measures to channel FDI include bilateral tax and investment treaties, regional agreements and multilateral rules; the multilateral rules now operate principally under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO). These agreement and rules are seeking to create a level playing field for foreign investors." (p. 1211). For example, bilateral investment treaties (BITs), TRIPs; Trade-related Investment and Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) are multilateral and bilateral investment agreements were created to attract foreign investors by relaxing host country's autonomy policy; it can also reduce foreign investors' transaction and opportunity costs while operating abroad. However, "both the BIT and TRIMs Agreement has been criticized for discouraging investment and distorting international trade by prohibiting a wider range of government measures on foreign direct investment. Thus, these agreements can be either effective or counter-effective to the development interest of a developing country, depending on the economic conditions and the development stage that the individual developing country is in." (Lee, 2005, p.712). The below Table 1 shows that these trade agreements can have positively or negatively effect on how foreign direct investments when they are used to facilitate economic development in developing the country.

Table 1. International FDI Policies: From Old to New Concerns

Concerns	*Deterrents to FDI*	*FDI Incentives*
Old	• Performance Requirements (TRIMs) • Threat of Expropriation (Bilateral Treaties)	
New	• Lack of Market Access (GATS) • Insufficient Transparency of Rules	Regulatory and tax concessions: • Race to the bottom; • Transferring rents to foreigners.

Trade agreement also can have incentives that promote trade among emerging markets by using regulatory and tax concession, which could increase foreign investment and industrial productivity for any developing economy. In the 1990s, South Cone Common market (Mercosur) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were designed by (Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) to eliminate trade and tariff barriers and increase foreign investment for Latin America region. For example, "foreign direct investment in Argentina increased on an average of $3 billion a year during 1992-1995." (Schnizter, 2000, p.299) These trade agreements eliminated the old mercantilism (import substitution) policy which was used to promote economic growth and development those regions. By implementing liberalized trade and other economic reform policy, they created an integrated international economy that can compete in this global market. As a result, these liberalization agreements favor domestics' economy because foreign investors must accept treaties obligations before committing foreign investments to these regions. Therefore, NAFTA and Mercosur became free to trade agreements that strengthen with neighbors' economy by lessening import substitution and increase export one or more products to ensure an efficient economic integration process system is maintained.

Economic Concerns

How is FDI affected by Latin America's economic integration process?

Latin American economies have long mercantile histories of using import substitution regimes for economic growth and development of their region. Fortunately, in the 1990s, most of the Latin America's nations decided to implement an economic reform policy that would make them more open and the liberal economic environment. By reversing from an inward-looking system that controlled capital production inflow and lower degree of exportation of goods or products to emerging marketing. These liberalization policies open Latin America's economies to foreign investors, so they could freely investment these regions without host government controlling their subsidiaries equities. Once Latin America began to eliminate bureaucratic inefficiencies in the private and government state industries, it was an important economic factor that stimulated their economic growth and development and attracted foreign investments to their markets. In order word, if Latin America nations want to attract FDI, they must create a favorable economic environment for foreign direct investment that provides incentives such as an adequate infrastructure, more transparent regulatory system, and educated labor forces, liberal or free trading policy, and decentralized privatization and market system (Lee, 2005). "This implies that lowering the inflation rate, tax burden, and government consumption would promote economic growth. The lower tax burden would make the investments, foreign and domestic, more profitable. Decreasing the government consumption would leave more money for investments." (Makki & Somwaru, 2004, p.799)

Therefore; during the last three decades, most Latin America countries implemented economic reform policies that focused on consolidating their liberal democratic regimes that will address their regions' macroeconomic and socioeconomic problems, by adopting an economic integration model that placed their markets at center stage and increase foreign confidence for their economies. "Chile was the initiator of this economic and political reform policy in the 1970s, which was followed by major liberalization in Mexico, and Argentina, by the early 1990s Latin

America had become a much more open and liberal economic environment." (Weiss & Jalilian, 2004, p.284)

These liberalization policies contribute the formation of NAFTA and MERCOSUR in which they used to promote economic integration to attract Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) as resource foreign capital. "MNEs and FDI may well lead to an increase in productivity and exports, but they do not necessarily result in increased competitiveness of the domestic sector or increased industrial capacity, which ultimately determines economic growth eventually. However, FDI per se does not provide growth opportunity unless a domestic industrial sector exists which has the necessary technical capacity to profit from the externalities from MNE activity" (Lall & Narula, 2004, p.449).

Multinational Enterprises and FDI

How are foreign enterprises used as FDI in developing or developing economies?

In more recent years, Latin and Central America have shifted into a more manufactured industry because their trade liberalization, privatization practices, and open markets system are attracting multinational enterprises and multinational or transnational corporations (MNE, MNC or TNC) to this emerging market that need export strategies which will target their industrial sectors (Weiss & Jalilian, 2004). According to Czinkota et al. (1996), "many manufacturing MNCs have established plants overseas to gain cost advantages regarding labor and raw materials. For example, many of the border plants in Mexico provide their U.S. parents with low-cost inputs and components through the maquiladora program." (p.440).

However, "MNEs and FDI may well lead to an increase in productivity and exports, but they do not necessarily result in increased competitiveness of the domestic sector or increased industrial capacity, which ultimately determines economic growth overall. FDI per se does not provide growth opportunity unless a domestic industrial sector exists which has the necessary technical capacity to profit from the externalities from the MNE activity" (Lall & Narula, 2004, p.461).

As a result, most Latin America nations have abandoned their inefficient import substitution to a more export-oriented system that focuses on their manufacturing sectors. In Table 2 shows why multinational corporations success are often correlated to emerging markets' resources and development (R&D) in the host country and its impact on exports and inward FDI.

Table 2. Indicators of Manufacturing by Region (US$ / per capita), late 1990s

Region	Manufacturing *VA*	Exports	R&D by enterprises	FDI inflows	Royalty payments
East Asia	387	409	8.7	39.7	7.1
East Asia excluding China	668	1178	31.0	63.3	26.6
Latin America and Caribbean	771	404	6.3	70.4	5.3
Latin America and Caribbean excluding Mexico	750	229	7.5	69.3	5.2

Source: UNIDO (2002)

According to Chantasasawat et al. (2004), MNEs increasing production abroad will account for more than half of developing nations' manufactured exports and outputs. For instance, "economists found that foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have grown faster than world income since the 1960s, and multinational enterprises (MNE) has accounted for about 70 percent of world trade, and the sales of their foreign affiliates have exceeded total global exports. Therefore, developing nations are using MNEs to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) as a mean of acquiring technologies and skills needed to produced quality products and goods for this international market" (Lall & Narula, 2004, p.451). However, foreign investors must consider the political environment of any market before entry. Over the past two decades, Latin America went through a political reform process that abandons the old military rule regimes which had governed these regions for two centuries. Instead, they are welcoming a democratic system that addresses their economic needs. As a result, "foreign investors have poured money into Latin American markets over the last several years because of the region's newfound economic stability. But the political uncertainty of the elections makes this year's outlook less certain" (AP, 2006)

Political Concerns

How does Latin America's political environment affect FDI inflow?

Political instability is sociocultural factors that affect the risk doing business in any economy. According to Schnizter (2000), country internal or external issues such as tribal or religious conflicts will have a profound impact on foreign investment for that hostile business environment. As a result, political stability is an important sociocultural factor that provides structural data of current events that affect foreign confidence in that market. Also, the negative political atmosphere might impede foreign investors from doing business in a traditionally hostile environment. Therefore, political instability should be probably the first thing a marketer must know about that new market prior doing business or trade in. As a result, foreign investors are also a concern with host nations' political environments, as well as their economic development process; because the political environment can adversely affect foreign direct investment. "For example, political corruption, as well as lack of the rule of laws that support market-oriented system, can discourage FDI inflows despite favorable economic conditions" (Chantasasawat et al., 2004, p.12).

"This vulnerability to corruption can diminish the reliability of FDI as an engine for development (Lee, 2005). Political and economic uncertainties led to corruption in all aspect of the business and bureaucratic systems that caused the Latin America's financial crisis during the 1990s; which also endured economic development in these emerging markets. Corruption has a negative impact on any national economy because it influences government and commercial sectors by encouraging them to use unethical and immoral behaviors when doing business in a global market. Also, it provides a business environment that promotes bribery system which can prevent or distort international opportunity for local investors. By discouraging core ethical values which can influence a country's long-term economic and social development objectives (Lee, 2005).

However, recent reaffirmation to democracy and market-oriented system, Latin America nation's policymakers are playing a key role in working with domestics' entities to find a way to improve their international business environment and boosted foreign confidence for their economy. As a result, the political outlook for Latin America depends on how policymakers are resolving macroeconomic issues to strengthen democratic accountability and to increase long-term investment and economic growth for their international markets (Lee, 2005).

As a result, policymakers in emerging markets must understand that open and liberal economic environment; and solid democratic institutions what makes them attractive to foreign investors. That government's policy might affect how foreign direct investment is distributed to developed and developing nations for their economic growth and development (Lee, 2005).

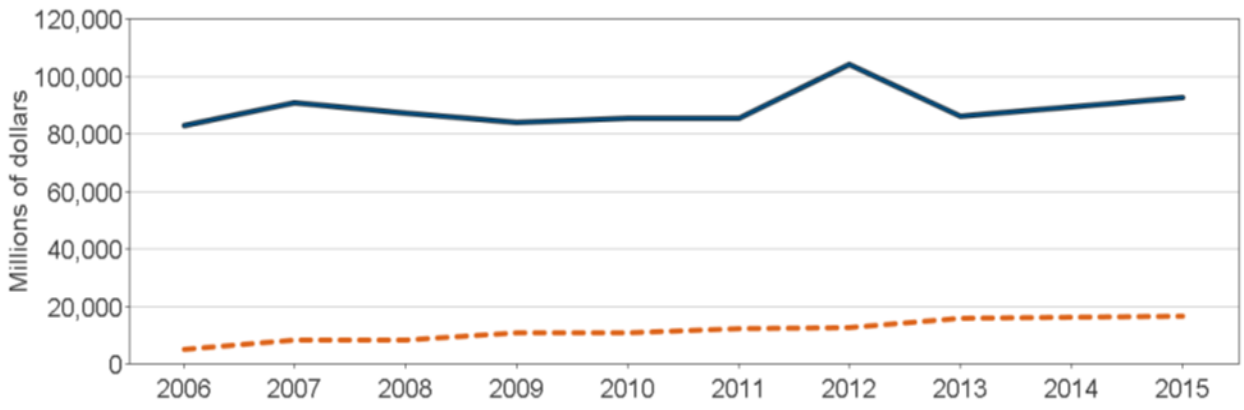
NAFTA- Multinational Corporations Involvement

How will FDI be affected by MNC arrangements?

According to Goldstein (2010) study, "U.S. Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have traditionally considered Mexico as one of their premier markets for international expansion. In the case of Mexico and U.S., in which both are trading partners that have a strong direct and indirect trade linkages, to the United States within the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that affected the flow of foreign investments (Cesa-Bianchi, et al., 2012).

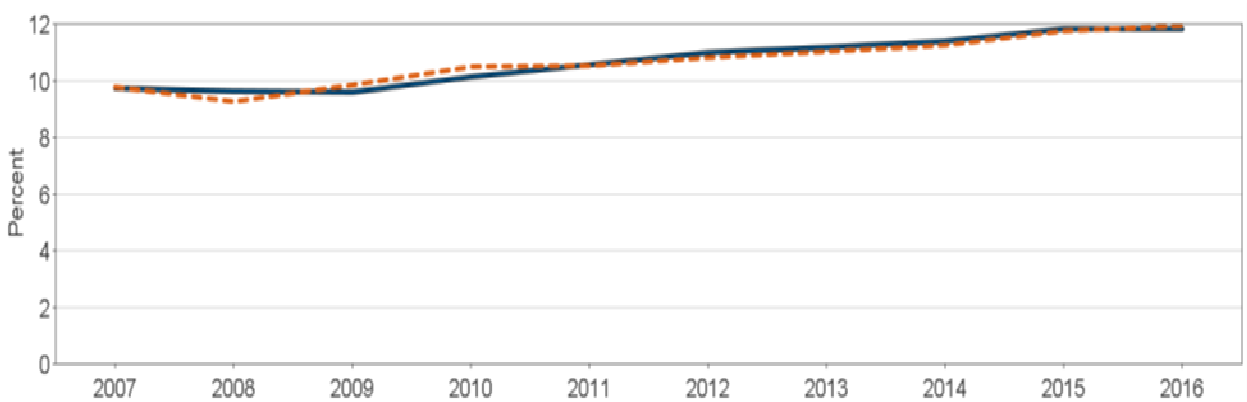
For example, the Bureau of Economic Analysis Report of 2015, stated that the U.S. had a positive increase up to 4% of direct investment into Mexico which totals around up to $93 billion (inward) from the previous year (2014). During this period, Mexico also had a positive flow (outward) FDI into U.S. that total up to $17 billion, which was an increase of at least 2% from the year before which both countries contributed (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016). Figure 2: Shows the results from the FDI from an Inward (---) and Outward (-) investments from 2006 to 2015.

Figure 2: Source (U.S. Department of Commerce - FDI Inward & Outward Results, 2016)



However, the Bureau of Economic Analysis also found that U.S. exports to Mexico made up 12% of its exporting transactions whereas, imports from summed up at least 12% of U.S. imports in 2016. The government agency analysis also concludes that majority of exports transactions were made up of 31% capital goods from U.S. to Mexico, in which automotive was excluded from the data. However, the report found that imports from Mexico were mostly automotive vehicles, and its components parts for engines, which came up to at least 33% of imports transactions from both countries (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016). Figure 3: Displays the import (---) and export (-) outcomes from 2007 to 2016.

Figure 3: Source (U.S. Department of Commerce - Import & Export Results, 2016)



The Bureau of Economic Analysis showed that in 2015, U.S. and Mexico had experienced FDI growth during this period, which both countries had provided factual evidence that import and export transactions have a correlation to multinational corporations (MNCs) or multinational enterprises (MNE) arrangements in a marketplace to enhance macroeconomic conditions for either region. As a result, the report imports and export transactions statistical data used the as a measuring tool to determine the efficiency of both economies' FDI processes.

Therefore, those economies that have cautiously developed a trade alliance with each other may also see an increase foreign investors (Steensma, Tihanyi, Lyles & Dhanara, 2005). When the FDI is appropriately used; then it can help to shape macroeconomic and structural policies, which leads free-trade agreements, such as NAFTA that contributed to keeping both economies integrated strategy as one to the be seen as trade partners of internationalization.

SUMMARY

Consequently, this study agrees with some economists that: "foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade are often seen as an important catalyst for economic growth in the emerging markets. FDI is an important vehicle for technology transfer from developed countries to developing countries. FDI also stimulates domestic investment and facilitates improvements in human capital and institutions in the host country" (Makki & Somwaru, 2004). As a result, FDI can benefit host country economy by improving or modernizing its urban or rural infrastructures which might lead to long-term growth (Goldstein, 2010).

In a conclusive perspective, according to Schnizter (2000), countries must implement economic reform policy that will address, deficits or debts caused by foreign investors holding of Treasury Notesin which it may also have negative trade revenues from direct or indirect entry (import and export) that affects both countries' economic growth. Overall, the economic data results have indicated that NAFTA agreement of free trade may have impacted on how MNCs and MNEs are used in evaluating of imports and exports goods to contribute to economic growths. In that being stated, this study provided valid theoretical and statistical information that FDI has made NAFTAa successful story among neighboring countries economic goals and objectives.

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research should be done on how do General Agreement on Tariffs affect FDI inflow when it comes to reinvestments of earnings from MNCs' manufacturing and wholesale trades into NAFTA. Also, the study needs to examine the relationship between trade and capital flows when it comes to trade imbalance from MNEs perspective. Lastly, the future study should examine, if trade tariff penalization measures on imports or exports would influence foreign capital investments positively or negatively for MNCs and MNEs in the NAFTA region.

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