

are now equivalent to U.S. suppliers. For joint venture/sharing behaviors, U.S. customers saw Canadian suppliers as more involved in these activities than they saw U.S. suppliers.

One caveat about the cost factor may be in order, Milner & Screenivasan (1995) have reported that the lower Canadian dollar has been a driving force in rising Canadian exports to the U.S. The lower Canadian dollar may be masking some cost differential between Canadian and U.S. suppliers. As is well known, the Canadian government is making efforts to limit public spending and debt, which may result in a rising Canadian dollar (Milner & Screenivasan, 1995). Canadian suppliers will do well to continue to focus on productivity improvements and cost controls given the massive export market U.S. customers represents (Fedchun, 1995).

Future research in this area should be directed toward assessing the perceptions of Canadian customers of U.S. suppliers. As note, above this combination was not well represented in the present sample. On a positive note, data collection is continuing for this study, with a sample of U.S. firms which do have Canadian customers.

A second future issue for research in this area should be related to the effects of feelings of nationalism on supplier selection. As mentioned above, a number of written comments from customers indicated that the suppliers were selected because of the nation or province in which they were located.

Finally, future survey research should follow the lead of this study by surveying customers of firms directly. Much of the survey research in this area has been directed toward assessing the opinions of senior executives or experts. We believe that a sample of customers represents the best group to assess the performance of supplying firms in the areas of quality, costs, and relationships.