

capital investments and joint programs directed toward improving the relationships between firms. The point made by the resource dependence perspective (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) is that dependence can lead to activities directed toward the development of closer relations between buying and selling firms.

### Quality

A few studies have attempted to assess the quality issue for Canadian firms. One study, Johnson, Kamauff, Schein & Wood (1995) surveyed senior operations executives from 36 Canadian firms. These executives rated quality as the fourth most important competitive consideration for their firms in the post-NAFTA environment, the same ranking they gave quality in a similar pre-NAFTA survey. Byrne (1993) reported that about the same percentage of Canadian and U.S. firms had integrated quality processes with their customers, 37% cf. 41%. Kohse (1994) reported that a survey conducted by Industry Canada and Statistics Canada found a west-to-east pattern in adoption of quality management programs. Western provinces have been much more likely to have adopted such programs than have Eastern provinces.

At a more basic level, perceptions of Canadian products including their quality and integrity may be relatively low in a number of countries. Specifically, Papadopoulos et al. (1994) have reported that consumers in eight countries, including Canada and the United States, rated the integrity and quality of Canadian either last or next to last when they were asked for their impressions of products from a variety of countries. Papadopoulos et al. (1994) have expressed the belief that a widespread consumer impression is that Canada succeeds primarily as a producer of raw materials rather than manufactured goods.

### Costs

Costs have been the objects of study in theoretical frameworks of buyer-supplier