A Multi-National Investigation of Dual Distribution Structures in Germany, Australia and South Korea

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Abstract

Dual distribution, or “the plural form” of organization (the coexistence of franchised and company-owned outlets in franchise chains) is an essential strategic response to cope with the franchising “imperatives” of managing system growth, concept control, local responsiveness, and systemwide adaption. Accordingly, the topic has received considerable scholarly attention. However, much of the literature is based on theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence derived from the North American experience and previous studies have, almost exclusively, been single-country investigations. In consequence, past research underscores the need for understanding plural structures through the lens of data-driven multi-national investigations. Consequently, we explore country-specific idiosyncrasies of the plural form phenomenon across three continents based on recent data from 3,078 German, Australian, and South Korean franchise chains. We strive to integrate the empirical findings on observed similarities and differences across countries with central theories and paradigms in franchising research. Thereby, the paper provides an exploratory contribution to empirically-grounded investigations into the plural form of organization.

**Keywords:** Plural form, cross-cultural analysis, resource constraints, agency theory, history of franchising