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## **THE PLURAL FORM FROM THE INSIDE: A STUDY OF FRANCHISEE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF COMPANY-OWNED OUTLETS WITHIN THEIR NETWORK**

### **Abstract**

Most franchisors rely on the plural form to develop and manage their network, that is, they have both franchised and company-owned outlets coexisting. The academic literature has provided both theoretical justification and empirical studies about the relevance of such an organizational form for franchisors. However, research about franchisee perceptions of the plural form has been scarce. The present paper therefore used a qualitative approach to investigate the perceptions of a sample of franchisees about the existence of company-owned outlets within their network. The interviews show that franchisees generally perceive the advantages of the plural form in terms of network development and management, but some franchisees highlight problems related to the plural form in terms of network cohesion.

### **Keywords**

Franchising, company ownership, plural form, franchisee perspective