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**The Role of Brands in Manufacturer-Reseller Relationships**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing,  
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## **Abstract**

The focus of this research is on the role of manufacturer brands for resellers within retail channels. This topic is important because of the strategic value of manufacturer brands and the increasing influence of resellers within channels of distribution. Much of the branding research has emphasised a customer brand knowledge perspective, however emerging perspectives suggest that brands are also relevant to other stakeholders including resellers. In contrast channels research has recognised the manufacturer sources of market power, but has not considered the impact of manufacturer 'push and pull' strategies within channels.

A comprehensive theoretical framework therefore did not exist that addressed the reseller perspective of the brand. As a result, a multi-method research design was adopted and consisted of two phases. The first phase involved in-depth interviews, from which a conceptual framework was developed. In the second phase this framework was tested by means of a survey of supermarket buyers on major and minor brands in several product categories.

Structural equation modelling was used to analyse the survey responses. The structural model showed very good fit to the data and good construct validity, reliability and stability. Brands have several sources of value to resellers including manufacturer support, brand preference and customer demand which influence the reseller satisfaction with the brand. Reseller satisfaction in turn influences other channel outcomes such as trust, commitment and performance. Minor brands are better able to influence trust and commitment than major brands.

A key contribution of this research is the development of a validated conceptual framework on the value of the brand in inter-organisational relationships from the point of view of a reseller. This research shows that it is the resources associated with the brand, not just the brand itself that creates value for resellers in channel relationships.

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