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The role of chains in the Russian retail sector

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**Аннотация:**

Over the recent 15 years, Russian retail sector has moved from independent stores to chain structures since such trade organization is more competitive due to a single procurement policy, economies of scale, more developed logistics, own distribution centers, greater brand recognition, etc. However, the increase in the market power of retail chains is often considered as a threat for the free market and competition. This work represents an attempt to determine the degree of concentration on the Russian food retail market within the context of economic downfall, as well as the competitiveness of such forms of business organization as retail chains. The goal of the study is to test the research hypothesis that in the context of the Russian economy's recession some players leave the food retail market, thereby increasing the market concentration, while the market power of retail chains that are more competitive increases. To test the hypothesis of the study, relevant statistical data were analyzed for the period of 2010-2015. The estimation of the monopolization indicators made it possible to make conclusions about the concentration in the industry. The following indicators for the Russian Federation were analyzed: distribution of retail trade turnover by forms of trade; the share of retail trade networks in the formation of retail trade turnover; and the turnovers of major food retailers. The concentration indices were calculated as well. The role of mergers and acquisitions in the retail food market as a factor of increasing the concentration was highlighted herein. The players leaving the market were specified. According to the results of the study, two trends have been identified: The share of retail chains on the retail food market increased and the market concentration in the sector divided by retail chains increased. © 2018 International Strategic Management Association. All Rights Reserved.

**Ключевые слова:**

Competition, Concentration, Food retail, Market power, Retail chains