



# TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL SALES OF CONSUMER GOODS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN THE RUSSIA'S TRADE

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## ABSTRACT

*Distribution services have great influence on the living standards of the population, being in direct contact with it and thereby playing an important social role in the economic life of society. Trade is an important component of distribution services, and its development trends are largely determined by the integration processes in the economy.*

*In this regard, the goal of the study is to analyze the main trends in the development of distribution and retail sales in the consumer market. The main factors that influence the level of distribution and sales have been identified to solve this problem by the example of the Russian Federation as the state described by high differentiation of the level of trade development in its regions.*

*As a result of the study, it has been found that the urban population weight and the retail space have the greatest influence on the level of distribution and retail sales development. At the same time, the retail space per capita is primarily interconnected with the development of network forms of trade, while the development of nonintegrated forms is largely determined by the number of trade organizations and population density.*

*A method for estimating the integral indicator of distribution and retail sales development, as well as a comparison with the methods of other authors have been proposed in the study. As a result, the regions have been ranked by this indicator, and a conclusion has been drawn on the relationship between the level of distribution and retail sales with a high population density, described by a high level of economic development.*

*The results of the study are compared with the works of various authors, who also pay great attention to various social indicators of the trade sector development and their relationship with the living standards of the population.*

*As such, the obtained results can be used both in the formation of a regional strategy for the development of trade at the state level and directly at the level of business structures during regional expansion.*

**Keywords:** Trade, retail, wholesale, distribution, integration processes in trade, regional development

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Trade plays a crucial role in the economic development of the state, directly influencing the quality of public services. Some authors, including G.G. Ivanov (2016), also highlight the influence of the trade sector in employment and budgeting. In this regard, the natural development of all forms of trade is an important task.

Retail chains have been constantly increasing their presence in the consumer market in Russia over the past years of fierce competition. This is both due to their natural growth and due to mergers and acquisitions. According to Rosstat (The Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, n.d.), at the end of 2018, the share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover in the Russian Federation amounted to 32.6 %, and a rather strong differentiation of this indicator by federal districts and regions was noticeable (Table 1).

**Table 1** Dynamics of development of the share of chain retailing in the total retail trade turnover in Russia for 2014 – 2018, %

Federal districts of the Russian Federation	Share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover, %					Growth rate of the share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover, %				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015 vs 2014	2016 vs 2015	2017 vs 2016	2018 vs 2017	Average annual growth rates for 2014 – 2018
Russian Federation	22.9	25.0	27.5	30.7	32.6	109.2	110.0	111.6	106.2	109.2
Central Federal District	23.8	26.3	27.3	33.5	36.2	110.5	103.8	122.7	108.1	111.1
Northwestern Federal District	39.1	41.8	47.0	47.7	47.1	106.9	112.4	101.5	98.7	104.8
Southern Federal District	22.1	23.8	25.5	26.1	27.3	107.7	107.1	102.4	104.6	105.4
North Caucasus Federal District	5.8	5.8	6.6	7.2	8.1	100.0	113.8	109.1	112.5	108.7

Federal districts of the Russian Federation	Share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover, %					Growth rate of the share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover, %				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015 vs 2014	2016 vs 2015	2017 vs 2016	2018 vs 2017	Average annual growth rates for 2014 – 2018
Volga Federal District	22.3	23.5	26.3	29.0	31.3	105.4	111.9	110.3	107.9	108.8
Ural Federal District	21.3	24.8	28.5	31.3	33.6	116.4	114.9	109.8	107.3	112.1
Siberian Federal District	23.2	25.7	29.5	31.2	35.7	110.8	114.8	105.8	114.4	111.4
Far Eastern Federal District	10.8	11.9	13.0	13.7	12.7	110.2	109.2	105.4	92.7	104.1

As follows from the analysis of the data in Table 1, the largest share of chain retailing is in the Northwestern Federal District – 47.1 %, and the smallest one is in the North Caucasus – 8.1%. At the same time, the growth rate of the share of retail chains has much lower amplitude in the context of federal districts. For example, the average annual growth rate of this indicator for 2014 – 2018 amounted to 109.2 % in Russia as a whole, with the maximum average annual growth rate of 112.1 % recorded in the Urals Federal District, and the lowest of 104.1 % – recorded in the Far Eastern Federal District. In general, the analysis of the data in Table 1 confirms the general trend of the increasing influence of retail chains on the formation of the retail trade turnover.

The above processes often lead to the acquisitions by federal retail chains of small regional chains and distributors of goods or their shutdown. In this regard, the urgent task is to analyze the trade sector in the context of the development of both retail chains and other forms of networks, largely related to wholesale trade and regional distribution. The processes of concentration and integration of capital describing the current state of the consumer market in Russia determine a significant increase in the influence of federal retail chains on suppliers of consumer goods. The problem of choosing counterparties, taking the prevailing pricing trend in the wholesale industry into account, is reviewed in the study of J. Bielagk (2019).

The problem of the modern retail development was studied by many authors. For example, it is stated in the work of S. Dellavigna (2019) that most retail chains currently set almost the same prices for the goods sold. At the same time, D. Atkin (2018) proves that the development of global retail chains leads to strong changes in the consumption structure. Y.Y. Deputatova (2018) argues in her work that the transition to alternative methods of service and the multichannel approach allows the buyer to be more demanding on the quality and culture of customer service.

M.E. Seifullaeva (2017) identifies such problems of the development of the modern distribution as relatively long payback periods of investments in some projects. In this regard, it is important to correctly choose the direction and structure of investments in the trade sector. The development of the modern trading technologies is directly related to the above problem (Aradhana, 2016). In particular, it has been shown that most retailers already use technology in the operational areas, and this is an important factor in improving the efficiency of the trading sector.

Such technologies that are directly related to both retail chains and the improvement of regional distribution may include the task of assigning inventory units in distribution centers (Holzapfel, Kuhn, Sternbeck, 2018), the information interaction between the retail chain managers (Goergen, Renneboog, Zhao, 2019), and the deeper use of information technologies in general (Rana, 2020).

Intangible resources are an important factor in the development of the modern trade (Picot-Coupey, Viviani, Amadiou, 2018). The vast majority of retailers believe that the responsibility for solving social and environmental problems lies with the business sector (Bilińska-Reformat et al., 2019). In this regard, the study by Z.A. Kevorkova (2018) deserves attention, where the crucial role of retail chains in solving the environmental problems of the modern society is shown.

Consumer preferences play a major role in the development of the trading sector. This problem is widely covered in the modern works of some authors. I.A. Ramazanov (Ramazanov et al., 2018) dedicated his study to consumer preferences in the conditions of both the existing traditions of consumption and their changes against the background of globalization. D.A. Ogurtsov (Ogurtsov, Dorrer, 2019) also reviewed the use of the Apriori algorithm to create a consumer basket for the corresponding outlet. The store location (Katochkov, Kuzmenko, Levina, 2017; Theurillat, Donzé, 2017) and its format also play an important role in the trade development.

As mentioned earlier, the development of various forms of trade is important. The potential development of various ways of organizing trade and distribution in the consumer market is shown in the study (Saber, Weber, 2019), which also emphasizes the relevance of the problem investigated by the authors.

## 2. METHODS

The regions of the Russian Federation were selected as an information base in the study. Russia was chosen as an information base largely due to the sufficient number of regions that differed in almost all factors that could be used in further analysis.

The share of retail chains in the retail turnover, as well as the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover were selected as the resulting indicators of the level of development of distribution and retail sales during the study. As shown earlier, online retail is the most widely developed. Nevertheless, the formation of a comfortable environment for citizens and business entities (both producers and economic agents) through the development of a multiformat trade infrastructure by encouraging the growth of any form of entrepreneurial activity is an important direction in the trade development as well.

As such, it must be noted that it is important to develop any forms of trade, from large retail chains to small businesses. In this regard, the prevention of the sharp competition of various forms of trade, primarily the prevention of the replacement of one form of trade with another, is an important task of state regulation (Kurenkova, 2015).

In this regard, an indicator that describes the level of development of distribution in the region is required when analyzing the trade development. It is known that retail chains widely use their own distribution centers in the organization of commodity supply for their stores, thereby replacing and complementing the functions traditionally performed by wholesalers. For this purpose, the authors propose to use the ratio of the wholesale and retail trade turnover, which is believed to indirectly describe the distribution links in a specific region, ensured by predominantly non-network forms of business development.

It is proposed to use the following influencing factors: wholesale trade turnover per capita, retail trade turnover per capita, number of wholesale and retail trade organizations per capita, number of fairs per capita, urban population weight, share of food products in the total retail

turnover, population density in the region, per capita income of the population in the region, area of retail facilities per capita, and warehouse space of wholesale organizations per capita in the region.

As a result of the study, it is supposed to draw a conclusion about the truth or falsity of selecting a certain factor as an influencing indicator.

A linear regression model was used for the purpose of the study, and, accordingly, the level of statistical significance (P-level) was used as a criterion when choosing a factor. The authors intend to use an integrated indicator of the level of development of distribution and retail sales in the future. This indicator is proposed to be calculated using the following formula:

$$I = \left( \frac{Y_1}{Y_{1\max}} + \frac{Y_2}{Y_{2\max}} \right) / 2 \quad (1),$$

where  $I$  is the integral indicator of the level of distribution and retail sales development in the region;

$Y_1$  is the value of the first resulting indicator (the share of retail trade turnover in the total retail trade turnover) in the region;

$Y_{1\max}$  is the maximum value of the first resulting indicator (the share of retail trade turnover in the total retail trade turnover) among all regions;

$Y_2$  is the value of the second resulting indicator (the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover) in the region; and

$Y_{2\max}$  is the maximum value of the second resulting indicator (the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover) among all regions.

Accordingly,  $Y_1$  allows to take into consideration the influence of retail chains on the trade development in the region and  $Y_2$  allows to take into consideration the level of the distribution development, closely interconnected with non-network forms of the retail sales organization, in the region. This integral indicator takes values in the range from zero to one. In this case, the value of one describes the maximum development of the entire trade sector in the region.

However, the above indicator does not allow to take the uniformity of trade development into account, which also has great impact on the comfort of the trading environment. In this regard, it is advisable to use a nonlinear dependence as follows:

$$I = \left( \sqrt{\frac{Y_1}{Y_{1\max}}} + \sqrt{\frac{Y_2}{Y_{2\max}}} \right) / 2 \quad (2),$$

Besides, the Russian regions were ranked and grouped during the study by the value of the indicator of the distribution and retail sales development.

### 3. RESULTS

The analysis of the dependence of the share of retail chains turnover and the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover in the Russian Federation on some influencing factors is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Results of the influence of some factors on the share of retail chains turnover and the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover

Factors	P-level	
	Share of retail chains turnover in the total retail trade turnover (Y <sub>1</sub> )	Ratio of the wholesale and retail turnover (Y <sub>2</sub> )
Wholesale trade turnover per capita	0.124	0.003
Retail sales per capita	0.133	0.001
Number of wholesale and retail trade organizations, repair of motor vehicles per capita	0.466	0.001
Number of fairs per capita	0.097	0.481
Urban population weight	0.007	0.043
Share of food products	0.474	0.051
Population density	0.153	0.020
Per capita income	0.324	0.007
Retail space per capita	0.004	0.131
Warehouse area of wholesale organizations per capita	0.627	0.385

As can be seen from the analysis of the data in Table 2, both resulting factors are influenced by the urban population weight and retail space per capita. In addition, the dependence of the share of retail chains turnover on the number of fairs per capita can also be noted. It can also be assumed that there is some relationship between this resulting factor and such factors as the volume of wholesale trade turnover per capita, the volume of retail sales per capita, and population density.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the ratio of wholesale and retail trade turnover, which can be considered as an indirect characteristic of the distribution of goods in this region, as mentioned earlier. In addition to the urban population weight, the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover is also significantly influenced by population density, average per capita income, and the number of wholesale and retail organizations (per capita). Moreover, the retail space per capita is interconnected with the development of retail chains. On the one hand, sufficient retail space is required for the initial development of a chain in a particular region. On the other hand, a retail chain also invests in the creation of new retail space when developing in this territory.

An updated regression model of the dependence of the share of retail chains turnover and the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover in the Russian Federation on some influencing factors is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Adjusted results of the influence of some factors on the share of retail chains turnover and the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover

Factors	P-level	
	Share of retail chains turnover	Ratio of the wholesale and retail turnover
Number of wholesale and retail trade organizations, repair of motor vehicles per capita	> 0.1	0.001
Urban population weight	0.097	0.049

Factors	P-level	
	Share of retail chains turnover	Ratio of the wholesale and retail turnover
Population density	> 0.1	0.081
Retail space per capita	0.001	0.088

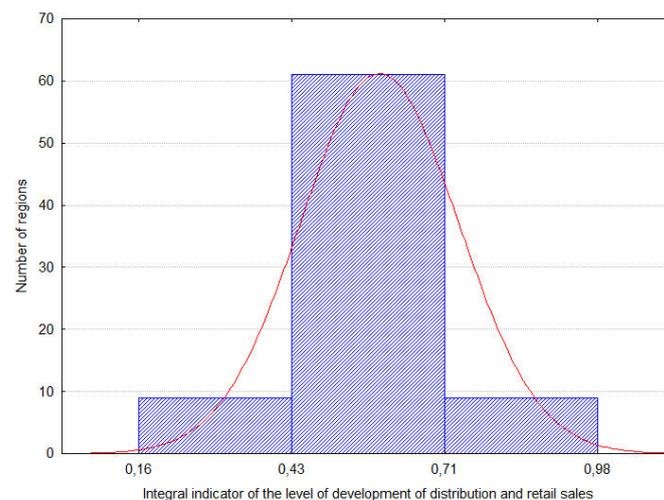
As can be seen from the analysis of the data in Table 3, the share of retail sales is greatly influenced by retail space per capita. Besides, if the admissible probability of error is increased, the influence of the urban population weight on this resulting factor can be assumed with some probability.

The analysis of the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover allows to conclude that the above factors also have some influence. However, the greatest relationship is observed in the total number of wholesale and retail organizations. The urban population weight also plays relatively larger role than in the share of retail chains turnover.

The analysis of nonlinear models in Table 3 allows to note that there is no nonlinear relationship between the factors under study and the share of retail sales. The dependence of the ratio of wholesale and retail turnover on the number of wholesale and retail organizations is nonlinear exponential. The analysis of this dependence allows to conclude that the law of diminishing returns can be applied here, which implies the achievement of the highest possible product distribution in the regions with a high number of wholesale and retail trade organizations per capita. An increase in the share of the urban population causes an outstripping growth in the ratio of wholesale and retail trade turnover rather than the number of trade organizations per capita.

As noted earlier, one of the key trends in the trade sector development is the increase in the share of retail sales in the total retail turnover. The specifics of the space use by retail chains lie with the use of innovative trade technologies, which in turn determines the growth in the share of the modern trade formats. The work of O. Karashchuk is dedicated to the detailed analysis of the standards for providing the modern trade forms with retail space (Karashchuk et al., 2019).

It is proposed to describe the general development of wholesale and retail trade in a particular region in accordance with the above study through an integral indicator of the level of distribution and retail sales (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Distribution of regions of the Russian Federation by the value of the integral indicator of the level of distribution and retail sales

Based on the analysis, the authors propose to distinguish three groups of regions with low, medium, and high indicator of the level of distribution and sales development. The criteria for the inclusion of regions in each group will be as follows, if the criterion for an equal range of coverage for the indicator is used:

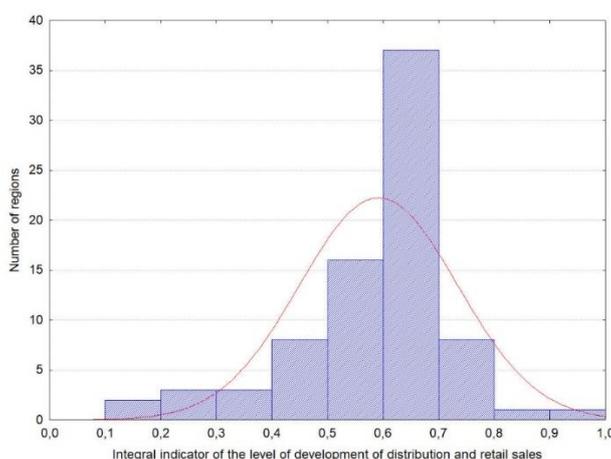
group of regions 1 – indicator value ranges from 0.16 to 0.43;

group 2 – from 0.43 to 0.71; and

group of regions 3 – from 0.71 to 0.98.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the integral indicator of the level of distribution and sales is average for most regions of the Russian Federation. The chart is described by a symmetrical distribution. Only nine regions of the Russian Federation have a correspondingly low or high indicator value. Based on the study, it can be concluded that there is a high potential for increasing the level of distribution and sales in most regions of Russia.

It is proposed to build a histogram using more categories in order to conduct more detailed analysis. Figure 2 shows an option of this chart for ten categories.



**Figure 2** Adjusted distribution of the regions of the Russian Federation by the value of the integral indicator of the level of distribution and retail sales

According to the study, the level of distribution and retail sales in Russia can be currently described as slightly above the average value of this indicator. For example, this indicator ranges from 0.6 to 0.7 in about half of the regions. The indicator is above 0.75 only in some regions (the maximum value is in the Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Moscow regions, as well as Moscow and St. Petersburg). This allows to make a conclusion about a high potential for the development of distribution and sales in most parts of Russia.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

A large number of the contemporary works are dedicated to the problem of increasing the efficiency of trade and the system of regional distribution directly related to it. For example, the authors in (Richards, Hamilton, Yonezawa, 2018) show the potential for increasing the efficiency of trading activities on the basis of better consumer perception of the product range in the presence of complementary goods. The problems of developing an assessment of competitive positioning and the indication of Russian regions in the framework of regional marketing are shown in the study of Bragin (Danko et al., 2016). O. Karashchuk (Karashchuk et al., 2019) also identifies the factors that inhibit the development of trade. Such factors include high competition, insufficient demand, and high taxes, in the first place.

A crucial role in the study conducted by the authors is given to the direct relationship between the characteristics of consumers and the development trends of wholesale trade. The feasibility of this approach is noted in the work of Yu.G. Leonova (Leonova, 2004).

In this regard, it is advisable to note that the increasing level of national distribution allows to more widely use the potential of both local producers and distribution centers of retail chains when they include goods that allow to form better product categories in the product mix. It is shown in the study of M.M. Gorlov (Gorlova, Korablev, 2018) that the largest number of registered and ceased activities of individual entrepreneurs is observed in economically developed districts, along with the general development of the economy. Given that the largest number of the latter are engaged in trade, this confirms the advisability of choosing a generalized indicator describing the level of distribution and retail sales in the region. A similar conclusion was also obtained in the study by E.A. Krasilnikova (Krasilnikova et al., 2017), where the low resistance of most regions to the discouraging factors of economic development was noted.

The grouping of the Russian regions by various indicators is also considered in the works of many authors. A.N. Mayorova (Mayorova et al., 2018) also noted a high level of trade development in the Moscow and Novosibirsk regions and in St. Petersburg in her study. The author's study also confirms the high level of trade development in St. Petersburg, which is associated with a very high share of retail chains in the retail trade turnover.

The authors' conclusions are largely confirmed by the study of A.M. Chernysheva (Chernysheva et al., 2019) dedicated to the relationship between outlets and the development of retail chains, as well as by the study of R. Das Nair (2019), which allows to conclude that it is necessary to develop retail chains in shopping centers in order to create economy of scale, and by the study of L. Dolega (Dolega, Pavlis, Singleton, 2016), which allows to assess the quality of retail space. It must be noted that even large retailers can use different strategies for different formats of their stores or for different markets (Popenkova, 2017).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The goal of the study was to identify the main trends in the development of distribution and retail sales in the consumer market. The market of regional distribution and sales of the Russian Federation has been selected as the object of research due to sufficiently strong regional differences.

A fairly strong growth rate of the share of retail chains in the retail turnover has been established as a result of the analysis. In particular, the average annual growth rate amounted to 109.2 % in Russia as a whole for 2014 – 2018, while the maximum average annual growth rate of 112.1 % was recorded in the Urals Federal District, and the lowest rate of 104.1 % was recorded in the Far Eastern Federal District.

The analysis has revealed that the development of retail chains is directly related to retail space. This is described by the fact that retail chains use the available space, on the one hand, while they have sufficient investment potential for their development, which leads to an increase in the quality of space use against the background of the development of network forms of trade, on the other hand. The urban population weight, which describes the selective concentration of the population, also has great influence on the regional attractiveness for the expansion of retail chains.

The development of wholesale trade, which directly influences the level of regional distribution, is largely due to the presence of retail organizations and their retail space. The urban population weight and its density as a whole in the region also have greater impact on the wholesale trade development than on the development of retail chains.

The integral indicator of the level of development of distribution and sales has been proposed in the study, which allows taking the influence of various forms of trade organization into account. As a result of the study using context analysis, it has been found that forms of trade are most developed in the regions with high population density, described by a high level of economic development. Nevertheless, slightly different results can be obtained depending on the proposed methods, but this trend generally persists.

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