THE ASSORTMENT STRUCTURE AND THE PRICE LEVELS AS A FACTOR OF MARKETING CHANNEL COMPETITIVENESS–EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the authors point out the differences in structure of product assortment of retailers who show their offers on the web, with the aim of proving that the structure of the assortment may be a factor of marketing channel competitiveness, that the consumer recognize and that makes them opt for a certain marketing channel. At the same routes we aim to compare the prices of representative product categories, in order to determine the impact of prices on marketing channel competitiveness, if other factors of channel competitiveness are dispensed. Based on the adopted research, we can make conclusions that having a number of categories of products in assortment presents competitive advantage for the retailer in traditional marketing channel since retailers with electronic sales have more diverse assortment in their retail store than online, while comparing to “pure play” electronic retailers the structure of assortment measured in number of categories of products that are in offer on e-stores is not significantly different between “pure play” and “brick and click” electronic retailers. On the other hand, if we look at the price levels, there is a difference in prices of product categories on websites of “brick and click” retailers since prices in retail stores are higher than prices in the traditional retail store of the same retailer, however, offers on the website of “pure play” electronic retailers are higher compared to “brick and click” retailers. These conclusions present significant findings that could make the decision of developing electronic sales easier and that speak of current state of competition between the marketing channels when structure assortment and prices level are taken into consideration. Depending on consumer targeting and the state on the market, retailers can get the idea of both current state and perspective as well as base their decision on electronic retail on the findings presented here.

Keywords: retailers,”brick and click“, “pure play“, assortment, product category, prices

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