

Strategic analysis of textile manufacturing industry – case of Croatia

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ABSTRACT

The textile manufacturing industry in Croatia has set its foundations during the existence of Yugoslavia, and was then one of the most successful industries in Croatia. Marked by a large number of employees, the majority of women with secondary school education, it was an industry in which has operated a small number of large companies with many employees. Croatian textile manufacturing industry still has the major role in Croatian economy. Despite many changes and difficulties caused by the reduction of the market, the industry has maintained a very important place in the Croatian economy. The position of the textile manufacturing industry is very complex, given the economic, but also the global situation. Thus, the main goal of this paper is to analyze the textile manufacturing industry on the sample of Croatian manufacturing firms. The aim was to define the importance of the textile industry in Croatia using Porter's model of five competitive forces, and also to determine the key segments needed for success and further development of the textile industry. Furthermore, the analysis will give us a clear insight into the economic aspects of the textile industry and all of the factors and forces that have the influence on the industry development and all the opportunities and threats that work in this industry. The result showed that the textile industry in Croatia is threatening further strengthening power of suppliers and buyers, unless there is a connection and association of enterprises. Great threat whose intensity enhances is the entry of new competitors, both domestic and large competitors from foreign markets.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Looking at the global market, textile and clothing still constitutes one of the main shaft of capital accumulation, employment and economic growth in most economically developed countries (Buturac, 2007), but in Croatia the situation is different. Today, the textile industry is not nearly as productive as it used to, nor its profits, exports, and not by the number of employees. The loss of competitive advantage is the result of slow structural adjustment, and increasing liberalization of the domestic market and ineffective protection of domestic production (Buturac, 2007). Very bad and worrying situation of the textile and clothing industry in Croatia has shown that without the invention of a new model for saving the industry, the industry will have no perspective, no opportunities for further development. Although this industry in Croatia has traditionally been one of the most developed industries, today it lags behind the competition.

The basic characteristics of the textile industry in Croatia to be emphasized are a large dispersion factories, labor intensity, export orientation, production organized in small, medium and large enterprises, the readiness to quickly respond to fashion trends, readiness for cooperation, high level of quality, almost entirely privatized industries, significantly reduced primary production, structural problems, problems of human resources and a lack of resources and funding sources [I].

The main problem that occurs in the textile industry today is the poor structure of the companies, lack of manpower that matches the profiles required for this industry (most educated workers are older than 50 years), most of the employees are women (in 2014, 88% of employees are women [II]), the unpopularity of the industry, the lack of investment, and in the end the most important fact; expensive labor, considering the cost of labor and materials in Eastern Europe and the leading country of the textile China.

Previously conducted studies suggest that a solution to the crisis of Croatian textile and clothing industries is in producing value-added and own brand products, as well as the consolidation of textile and clothing companies, changes in human resources, innovation and market positioning to suit opportunities of industry (Zelenika and Grilec Kavurić, 2011). The textile industry, although currently in a difficult situation has a chance to recover. In order to re-develop their potential it is necessary to restructure the textile and clothing industry in a way that exceeds the mass production to produce fashion clothing of high technological level with modern style and to continue maintaining competitive advantages in a global textile industry.

The chance that the industry should take advantage of, is the Croatian accession to the European Union. Croatia is now facing the European market and has a big connection with it, and should take the opportunity to transfer the most of technology and knowledge from the European Union. Also Croatia should relocate the part of the production in countries with lower labor costs.

Table 1: Predictions for the textile industry unless there is structural change

Textile manufacturing industry	2005	2010	2015
GDP, mil. KN	2.004	1.634	1.332
The share in Croatian GDP (%)	1,1	0,7	0,5
Number of employees	38.000,00	28.900,00	22.400,00
Share in total employment (%)	2,8	1,9	1,3

Source: Anić et al (2007) Strategic guidelines for the development of textile and clothing industry in Croatia for the period from 2006 to 2015, Zagreb, Institute of Economics, p. 5.

If Croatian companies and overall industry fails to implement the changes that are necessary for recovery, it is evident that the number of employees as well as share in GDP will be reduced and so will continue in next few years (Anić et al., 2007). But if the structure changes and if the changes are implemented on time, in 2015 is expected to stabilize the situation and move towards a brighter future. As shown in Table 2, in 2015 GDP and the number of employees will slightly decline than they would without structural changes.

Table 2: Predictions for the textile industry if there is structural change

Textile manufacturing industry	2005	2010	2015
GDP, mil. KN	2.004	1.634	1.530
The share in Croatian GDP (%)	1,1	0,7	0,6
Number of employees	38.000,0	28.900,00	27.000,00
Share in total employment (%)	2,8	1,9	1,6

Source: Anić et al. (2007) Strategic guidelines for the development of textile and clothing industry in Croatia for the period from 2006 to 2015, Zagreb, Institute of Economics, p. 5.

Companies are facing large market opportunities and they need to recognize and seize it. The development of its own products and brands as well as a shift in production and sales towards higher level, enhancement of technology and knowledge transfer, stronger cooperation with scientific, research and educational institutions as well as experience in cooperation with EU partners, access to national and EU funds, co-branding and the normalization of political and economic relations and regional expansion in neighboring countries (Anić et al., 2007), are just some of the opportunities that can lead to increased export and the overall development of the industry in the future.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, limits of textile manufacturing industry were defined as manufacture of wearing apparel, except fur apparel, which includes [III]: Manufacture of leather clothes, work clothes production, manufacture of other outerwear, machine manufacturing of other wearing apparel and clothing accessories (C. 14.1 - National Classification of Activities, 2007).

Table 3: The registered companies in the textile manufacturing industry in Croatia

	Joint stock company	Limited company	Total
Large	1	1	2
Medium	7	5	12
Small	427	12	439
Total	435	18	453

Source: author, according to the Register of business entities of the Croatian Chamber of commerce

For the purpose of strategic analysis of the textile manufacturing industry in Croatia, selected population was 14 companies including medium and large companies that are defined by the criteria of the Register of business entities of the Croatian chamber of commerce, which correspond to the criteria: active firms, regular submission of financial statements and operating in Croatia. Analysis of the textile manufacturing industry in Croatia was made with Porter's model of five competitive forces, and for the analysis all the data were collected using the structured questionnaire that was answered by 14 companies. Also the method of interview was used to collect all the data, which was conducted with top managers. Interviewing managers helped for gathering the data and creating a realistic picture of the situation in Croatian textile manufacturing industry. The goal was to find out how respondents perceive the companies and the environment, and what they expect from it in the future.

3. THE RESULTS OF INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Industrial analysis as an important part of strategic analysis should help in understanding the strategic difference between industrial competitors (Tipurić, 1996). It must answer the question about the attractiveness of the industry for a variety of business ventures. Using the example of the textile manufacturing industry in Croatia and the companies in the sample, all five forces affecting the textile manufacturing industry within the defined limits will be analyzed. The analysis includes the existing competitors, new entrants, customers, suppliers and substitutes (Vaitkevičius, 2006).

3.1. The strength of industrial rivalry

Croatian market is very small and has the same properties that characterize the country. The market operates 460 companies with 13,018 employees [IV], and all of these companies make competition in the clothing production. To determine the competitive structure, one should determine the variables to which this analysis will be done (Butigan, 2008). These are the variables: the number of employees,

realized gains / losses and income from sales. The reason for using these variables is their availability, easy comparability and simple drawing conclusions.

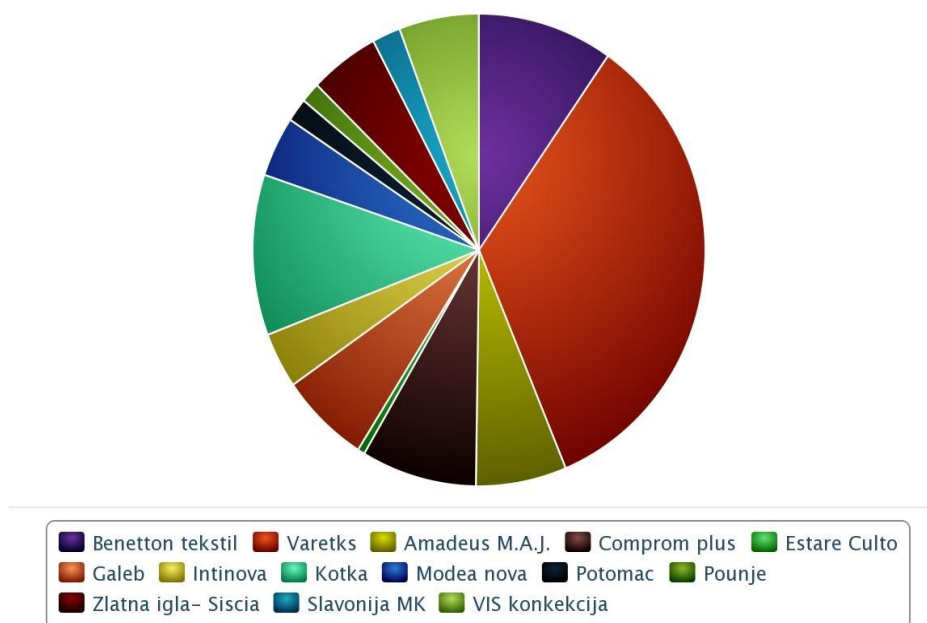


Figure 1: Competitive structure due to the number of employees in 2013

(Varteks - 39.23%, Kotka - 15.20%, Comprom plus - 8.97%, Benetton tekstil - 6.86%, VIS konfekcija - 6.60%, Galeb - 4.01%, Amadeus M.A.J. - 3.93%, Estare Culto - 3.31%, Zlatna igla-Siscia - 2.27%, Modea nova - 2.07%, Intinova - 2.05%, Potomac - 2.02%, Slavonija MK - 1.90%, Pounje - 1.58%)

The total number of employees in these 14 firms is 5,098. Of these, the largest company employs 2,000 people representing a 39.23% stake. Then it follows the company with 775 employees or 15.20% stake. At least the smallest firm in the sample has 81 employees, i.e., 1.58% stake.

By comparing the income and expenses from 2013, obtained from the analysis of the financial statements of 14 companies, enabled the comparison of the profit / loss of the companies. The most successful company in 2013 achieved the highest income of 960,724,927 Kuna, while the lowest income was 7,376,460 Kuna. On the expense side, the largest expense in 2013 was realized in the amount of 887,178,746 Kuna, while the lowest expense amounted to 13,638,422 Kuna.

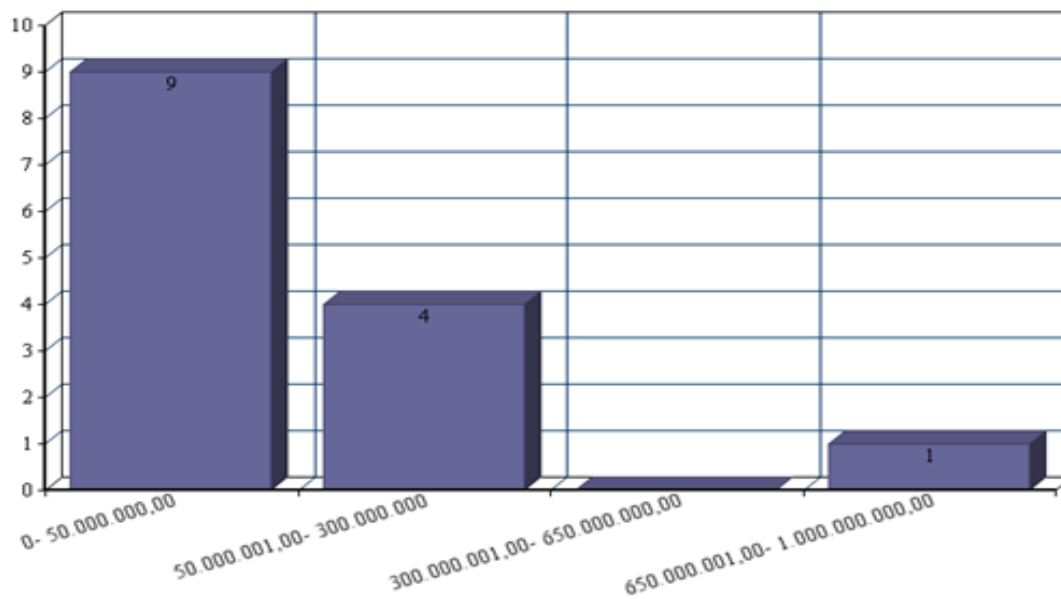


Figure 2: Number of companies by sales revenue in 2013 (KN)

By analyzing and comparing the proceeds from the sale in 2013 among 14 selected companies, one should point out, that only one company achieved sales revenue that is greater than 650,000,001.00 Kuna. Even 9 of 14 enterprises are located in the first grade, up to 50,000,000.00 Kuna of sales revenue, which indicates the similarity of companies.

After analyzing these three variables, we can conclude that among the existing competitors, the competition is dominated by two large companies, who in spite of the bad economic situation are in a good way to exit the crisis. It should be concluded that within the industry there is a large number of small businesses that are employing a small number of workers, engaged in the loan business, and generate slight revenues. Therefore those companies are not in the sample. Also the industry abounds with competitors from foreign countries, which are providing a very high quality, trendy and most importantly - cheap clothes. Although the Croatian textile manufacturing industry is tending toward traditional garment production, mostly for the older population, it is considered that competitors from foreign countries don't represent direct competition. Croatian fashion abounds with classic lines, somewhat outdated cuts, which are preferred by the older generation, while younger ones are more prone to foreign high street brands.

The main problem that occurs among textile firms in Croatia is the simplicity of products and services. Today, the majority of Croatian companies offer a similar range that rarely accompanies market trends and customers needs. It is important to emphasize that the range of products that Croatian firms are offering have an extremely high price for Croatian standards. Most companies within the textile manufacturing industry are manufacturing their products in their plants located on Croatian territory, on which companies do not achieve the savings in the production process. Those savings would be acquired if the firms would produce some of their products in countries that offer more favorable production. Most of our firms are importing materials only from countries with higher standards such as Austria, Germany, Poland, Romania, etc., Instead of importing their materials directly from China, Taiwan or Hong Kong without needing to use intermediaries.

The products that firms are offering represent the range for the same market niche. Most often it is a female confection with some men's collection, which abounds in classic models and simple materials. Services are also very similar and simple, because the services of cutting, sewing, application, pressing or conversions are offered by most of these companies. Companies rarely exploit market opportunities and their capacity to achieve differentiation, in cost, quality, fashion line, or winning new market niches. The big problem for the industry is the lack of investment in research and development, and even marketing. Croatian companies as if they do not know the importance and the power of marketing, which would make the rest of the population aware of their values. If each of these companies focused on one market niche (e.g. underwear, women's garments big sizes, men's garments for the younger ones, sportswear...) they could avoid competing with each other. Then companies might achieve great success in the domestic market and could compete to its competitors located outside the Croatian borders.

3.2. Bargaining power of suppliers

The companies that were studied do not produce very large quantities, in order not to create too expensive supplies. With that companies want their suppliers to be located in the same area, so that their orders can be received in small quantities, and a lot more often.

In this case, power of suppliers is very strong, because within Europe there is a small number of suppliers of raw materials, which will accept small quantity orders from Croatian companies. The problem that arises from this is that the situation in the Croatian textile industry is so bad that firms are importing 90% of raw materials (Zelenika and Grilec Kavurić, 2011). Industry of materials production as it once was, does not exist anymore, due to the expensive cost of labor, For Croatian companies is much more profitable to import materials and raw materials, machinery, etc. from Europe (Germany, Italy, Austria ...).

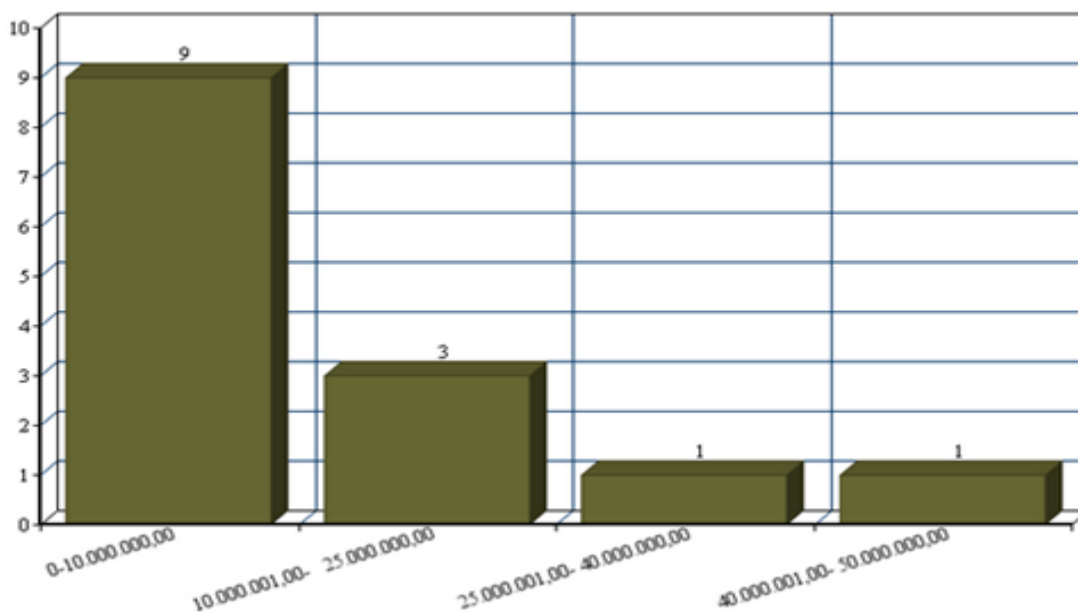


Figure 3: number of companies by raw material costs in 2013 (KN)

Most businesses in the sample are spending a similar amount on the cost on raw materials, which is understandable given that they generate similar results, and purchase materials from the same suppliers. By analyzing these results, it should be noted that some companies are spending money rationally and are trying to reduce the cost of raw materials by changing suppliers, while others spend a lot of money on raw materials, rather than making large gains due to the amount of money that is being invested. These companies need to take extremely careful look at the situation and rationalize their costs, some of them need to adapt their production, and within a period in its activities add a material production and switch to other activities to gain a competitive advantage.

The suggestion to reduce the cost of raw materials and the reduction of suppliers power is to integrate companies in the group. It is necessary to create associations that could jointly pursue orders from suppliers, which would increase the order quantity, reduced the price of orders, as well as transportation costs. If the companies (at least leading ones) formed in associations to jointly order raw materials from suppliers (these are the few European suppliers), they would achieve a higher degree of concentration in their industry, and overpowered a few large suppliers.

3.3. Bargaining power of buyers

The global recession that has lasted in Croatia, although it did made some harm to customers, it also went in favor in terms of strengthening their power as customers. Since the Croatian buyers greatly reduce the amount of their budgets lately, due to the economic crisis but also because of lifestyle

changing in the last few years, so their spending on textiles i.e. clothing is greatly reduced. Just by demand reduction for clothing and lack of money, companies must make an extra effort to attract customers. The problem that Croatian firms are facing is twice as heavy, because not only do they have to put in extra effort to attract customers to spend the money that they have on clothes, but also firms have to attract customers to buy clothes from Croatian producers. Also the buyer has much more information than before, about prices, quality, image and offer, and is not forced to choose between few offers. More informed and sensitive customers are affecting the strengthening power (Tipurić, 1996). If the buyer is not satisfied with the quality of clothing or the accompanying service, nothing will keep him not to immediately pass to the offer of the competition.

The market in personal consumption is heterogeneous, abounds with different demographic characteristics and customer buying motives (Anić et al., 2008).

Table 4: The main factors of buying Croatian products (in %)

Buying motive	Textile manufacturing industry
Price	0.0
Quality	85.7
Firm image	4.3
Brand image	5.7
Fashion trends	0.0
Others	4.3
Total	100.00

Source: Anić et al. (2008) Economic aspects of development of the textile and clothing industry in Croatia. Zagreb: Institute of Economics, p. 141.

It is evident that the 85.7% of buying motive refers to the quality of the product, on which the entire industry can be very proud of, and should make further efforts to take advantage of it as a competitive advantage in the global market. Quality is what customers want, and is perceived as the main factor in the purchase. Information that is alarming is that the price and fashion trends are not that important. It is easy to conclude that customers want one thing and Croatian textile manufacturing industry is extremely slow in responding to the wishes of customers. Customers expect a good price-quality ratio, but Croatian products provide quality but high price products.

Croatian companies are trying to supply a small number of loyal customers and fail to provide products and services to a broader market. Croatian brands are not sufficiently known in foreign markets, but also domestic customers are not perceiving them as a brand that they would like to own. It is just a result of poor promotion as well as the lack of financial resources. If the Croatian companies want to enfeeble the power of buyers, they have to work on the image, because image and quality are

one of the items on which enterprises can make profit. Croatian brand must represent as luxurious, prestigious and desirable to a certain part of customers. To achieve this goal the entire industry must be modernized. Companies could become more popular if they would rename the company to have a trendy and attractive name of their brands.

It can be concluded that customers in Croatia have a very high power by the perception of the management of companies in the sample, and therefore, these companies seek to weaken the power of consumers by improving the quality, price and differentiated products and make it difficult for customers to migrate to another competitor (Thompson et al., 2006).

3.4. Threat of new entrants

Since the Croatian textile manufacturing industry is currently in a very poor condition, and her daily customers are deprived by foreign competitors, it is not difficult to conclude that the threat of entry of new competitors is extremely strong (Porter, 2008). Croatian market operates a large number of brands, whose number increases day by day. Given that these are the brands for which the buyers were willing to go across the border to obtain them, their competitive attractiveness increases.

Whit Croatian accession to the European Union, borders have become opened for export of Croatian products, but also for exporting products from foreign countries to Croatia. With the borders opening, barriers to the entry of new competitors into the market have been reduced, especially if it is a brand that customers preferred. According to the management of companies in the sample, barriers to entry this industry are low, as the textile manufacturing industry is the industry with a very large number of competitors. Entering the industry does not require large financial capital (Porter, 2008). Also huge investments in human resources are not necessary, given that the textile manufacturing industry workforce is largely secondary school educated. Such labor is now easily available at a very low price. The average salary in the textile manufacturing industry in Croatia in 2013 was 2,902 Kuna, which is extremely low wage for that kind of working conditions. Also what makes the enter barrier low is that customers are not loyal to one brand and are ready to quickly change from one to another competitor if they are dissatisfied with the product or service (Porter, 2008). Also distribution channels are easily accessible, which also contributes to the low entry barriers (Buble, 2010).

For Croatian textile manufacturing industry to resist strengthening the threat of new competitors, the country has to take a major role (Porter, 2008). It is necessary to closely control the market and strongly encourage the domestic production of clothing (Bunić, 2004). As China achieved a leading position in the production of textile, today we are witnessing a large number of the Chinese clothing store, usually of poor quality and very cheap. Therefore government must use customs tariffs and trade restrictions (antidumping rules, quotas, etc.) To raise the barriers for entering foreign competitors and

protect domestic ones. For years, some of the goods from China had no duties control, or it were extremely low, which has greatly undermined the competitiveness and profitability of Croatian companies in the last 10 years. Today, after accessing the European Union when the government is obliged to apply the regulations of the European Union situation has changed dramatically. The market is guarded against the entry of new competitors that do not satisfy certain standards and market needs.

3.5. Threat of substitutes

Analyzing the production of apparel and clothing as a product, the world still did not recognize the concrete alternative or product that would satisfy the human need for their covering, warming and expression of their own personality and image. But inside the garment manufacturing process that eventually leads to customers, can be found a number of substitutes.

In the process of garment production one comes to a substitute for natural materials, which are more expensive and less available, given the natural limitations. People had to solve the problem of reduction in raw materials for the production of natural materials, so they have decided to create artificial materials. Companies prefer synthetic materials because they are durable, resistant and are offering a wider range of patterns and colors. Materials such as viscose or silk which are delicate and costly, may be replaced by polyester extremely well. Companies like to use synthetic materials in clothing production because they provide more possibilities and are reducing the cost of raw materials.

After selecting the material, one continues with the production. In the last 20 years there have been great changes and systematization. What were once operated by human hands are now working machines. The machines in Croatian companies are now largely robotic and have replaced manpower. Example for the garment manufacturing process substitutes is a machine called a plotter. Plotter is a substitute for a worker who have had molded all the models by hand that were produced after. Today the plotter is doing it himself, the human hand is only required to enter commands and certain specifications and pressed the start option. These substitutes have really helped the development of the textile manufacturing industry and reduce the efforts to which employees mostly woman have been exposed. But there is a downside, by substituting in this industry, there was a large number of layoffs since the workers were not needed as much.

Croatian companies that produce clothing usually sell them as well. Selling in traditional stores, has a very strong substitute - an online store. Globalization and market liberalization as well as borders opening, made online shopping very popular. One can purchase from their own home, at favorable prices and availability of brands that are not available on Croatian market yet. Customers have greeted

this substitute with joy, as well as manufacturers who knew to use online shopping in the right way, so that their clothes can be offered in others countries.

Most Croatian brands buyers are in the group of older population, and they do not use the Internet, though online store would be an ideal opportunity for Croatian producers to attract younger population. Great Croatian companies should take a look to examples of some Croatian independent designers whose collections are modern and attractive. They have been using active marketing and online stores so their products can be available to all. Also they have been using online shops for expanding to foreign markets. From selected enterprises in the sample, only two of them have their own online store which enable market expansion and attracting new customers.

Substitutes within this industry exist in various forms and aspects, but still there is not anything that could replace clothes, so companies should pay attention to it, and take advantage of the best substitutes to increase competitive advantage. Machines for cost reduction, plastic materials for new models or creations and online shop for greater accessibility to everyone. Croatian industry needs to push the envelope on which it is stuck for the last 20 years and accept new trends in the market and make the best of them.

4. CONCLUSION

Analysis and research of textile manufacturing industry in Croatia, have led to the present-day situation of the textile manufacturing industry, which is pretty bad, but the analysis of data in recent years are showing a positive development. Competitive structure is characterized by a large number of small businesses, with a small number of employees, who are receiving very low salary today. With that in mind, textile-manufacturing industry is perceived as unattractive to foreign and domestic investors, but also for potential future employees in this industry.

Firms are weakened, minced and there are not many resources for investment. The forces that surround the companies are in a dominant position. There are lot of competitors within the industry both domestic and foreign, also by opening the Croatian market, opportunities for entering new competitors are even greater. Suppliers in this industry have a strong power, precisely because Croatian companies do not want to create large and expensive raw materials, and they compel most materials procured from Europe, because of the speed of delivery. Given the number of customers but also a large number of competitors in the market, customers are better off today than ever. Exceptionally large amount of information, availability and variety of offers strengthens the power of customers daily.

Overall, the textile manufacturing industry as we know it, probably would never operate the same way in the same form. Over the years, will reduce the number of enterprises, and potentially reach a merger or consolidation of the industry. In the merger of the companies potentially lies the success of this industry, because it will increase the power of companies and will be able to reduce labor costs, improve its image and attract new customers. The textile manufacturing industry was once the pride of Croatian economy, and that just needs to be a guideline for improving the current situation.

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