Acrylic and Modacrylic Fibers

31 May 2016
ihs.com

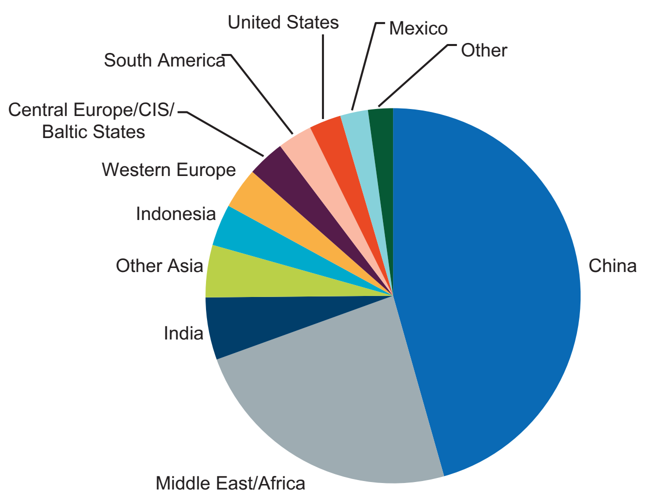
Abstract

In this report, both acrylic and modacrylic fibers are generally referred to as *acrylic fibers*, unless the context requires further classification. Where appropriate, distinctions in properties or end uses between acrylics and modacrylics are indicated.

Acrylic fibers are more suited than modacrylic for processing into high-bulk yarns. Fabrics produced from acrylic yarns are lightweight and resilient and generally have warmth and softness similar to wool. Acrylic fibers possess an aesthetic appeal enhanced by their ability to accept dyes of both clear, bright colors and subdued, muted tones. They have excellent resistance to ultraviolet degradation, microbiological attack, weak alkalis, and laundry bleach.

The following pie chart shows world consumption of acrylic fibers:

World consumption of acrylic and modacrylic fibers—2015



Source: IHS

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Since 2011, the global acrylic fiber market has declined, mainly because acrylic fiber faces competition from other fibers, particularly from polyester. Polyester fiber has a price advantage over acrylic fibers because of larger-scale production, better raw material availability, and recyclability. The price of acrylic fiber depends mainly on acrylonitrile cost, which came down slightly during the first quarter of 2016. However, the price difference compared with polyester fiber remains. Only in the manufacture of outdoor textile fabrics are acrylic fibers still preferred over polyester fibers, thanks to their good weatherability.

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Because of declining demand, the global acrylic fiber industry has undergone major restructuring and capacity rationalizations. Currently, about 60% of global capacity is concentrated in Asia, particularly in China, although the world's largest producer, AKSA, is based in Turkey. In the United States, acrylic fiber production stopped in 2006, and in Europe, the few producers left focus mainly on niche technical applications. In spite of its large production capacity, China is not yet self-sufficient in acrylic fiber supply, and it relies on imports to meet about 17% of demand.

Regionally, domestic consumption has increased, mainly in Other Asian countries, with the exception of Taiwan and South Korea, which are less cost-competitive compared with China.

Limited growth in global acrylic fiber consumption is expected for the coming years. The textile market is mature in many regions, and the competition among fibers is increasing. Growth in acrylic fiber consumption is expected mainly in India and other Asian countries such as Vietnam, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, which make up the manufacturing base for apparels and where fiber consumption per head is still low.

Contents

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