

Machine Learning Strategies to Improve Cross-Subject and Cross-Session Generalization in EEG-Based Emotion Recognition: A Systematic Review

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Machine Learning Strategies to Improve Cross-Subject and Cross-Session Generalization in EEG-Based Emotion Recognition: A Systematic Review / Arpaia, Pasquale; Apicella, Andrea; D'Errico, Giovanni; Marocco, Davide; Mastrati, Giovanna; Moccaldi, Nicola; Prevete, Roberto.. - (2023). [10.2139/ssrn.4474510]

*Availability:*

This version is available at: 11583/2981926 since: 2024-10-17T13:14:38Z

*Publisher:*

Elsevier

*Published*

DOI:10.2139/ssrn.4474510

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## Graphical Abstract

**Machine Learning Strategies to Improve  
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in EEG-based Emotion Recognition:  
a Systematic Review**<sup>1</sup>

Andrea Apicella, Pasquale Arpaia, Giovanni D'Errico, Davide Marocco, Giovanna Mastrati, Nicola Moccaldi, Roberto Prevete

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Preprint not peer reviewed

## Highlights

### **Machine Learning Strategies to Improve Cross-Subject and Cross-Session Generalization in EEG-based Emotion Recognition: a Systematic Review**<sup>2</sup>

Andrea Apicella, Pasquale Arpaia, Giovanni D'Errico, Davide Marocco, Giovanna Mastrati, Nicola Moccaldi, Roberto Prevete

- The non-stationarity of EEG signals can lead to the Dataset Shift problem.
- Transfer learning methods improve generalizability in EEG-based emotion classification.
- Adaptive feature extraction also in combination with transfer learning are promising for generalization.

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# Machine Learning Strategies to Improve Cross-Subject and Cross-Session Generalization in EEG-based Emotion Recognition: a Systematic Review <sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

A systematic review on machine-learning strategies for improving **generalization in** electroencephalography-based emotion classification was realized. **In particular, cross-subject and cross-session generalization was focused.** In this context, the non-stationarity of electroencephalographic (EEG) signals is a critical issue and can lead to the *Dataset Shift* problem. Several architectures and methods have been proposed to address this issue, mainly based on transfer learning methods. **In this review**, 418 papers were retrieved from the *Scopus*, *IEEE Xplore*, and *PubMed* databases through a search query focusing on modern machine learning techniques for generalization in EEG-based emotion assessment. Among these papers, 75 were found eligible based on their relevance to the problem. Studies lacking a specific cross-subject or cross-session validation strategy, or making use of other biosignals as support were excluded. On the basis of the selected papers' analysis, a taxonomy of the studies employing Machine Learning (ML) methods was proposed, to-

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gether with a brief discussion of the different ML approaches involved. The studies with the best results in terms of average classification accuracy were identified, supporting that transfer learning methods seem to perform better than other approaches. A discussion is proposed on the impact of (i) the emotion theoretical models and (ii) psychological screening of the experimental sample on the classifier performances.

*Keywords:* BCI, EEG, Emotion Recognition, Machine Learning, Transfer Learning, Domain Adaptation, Systematic Review, Generalization

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## 1. Introduction

Emotions are our internal compass and play a primary role in learning, reasoning, decision-making processes, and communication between individuals. In recent years, the interest towards emotions of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector has grown tremendously, giving birth to the new field of *affective computing* aimed at monitoring and predicting emotions in order to improve human-computer interaction [1]. For instance, the introduction of *affective loops* makes it possible to implement increasingly adaptive human-machine interfaces and virtual assistants tailored to users [2]. Furthermore, the outputs of emotion monitoring systems, in the healthcare context, can be useful in the treatment of psychological disorders based on emotional deficits, in autism [3], in the improvement of wellbeing [4], and in stress containment [5].

In particular, in this context, there is a growing interest in the literature for Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) systems based on EEG signals [6]. In fact, the number of annual scientific publications indexed on *Scopus* database on the topic of EEG-based emotion recognition shows an exponential growth trend (see Fig. 1).

Over the years, EEG-based assessment of emotion has been widely employed both in non-clinical and clinical applications. Car driving [7, 8], working environment [9], neuromarketing [10, 11, 12], and entertainment [13] are the main non-clinical application fields. Regarding clinical applications, the main studies about EEG-based emotion assessment concern the measurement of sleep parameters [14], the detection of epileptic seizures [15], and the screening, intervention, and monitoring of autism spectrum disorders [16, 17].

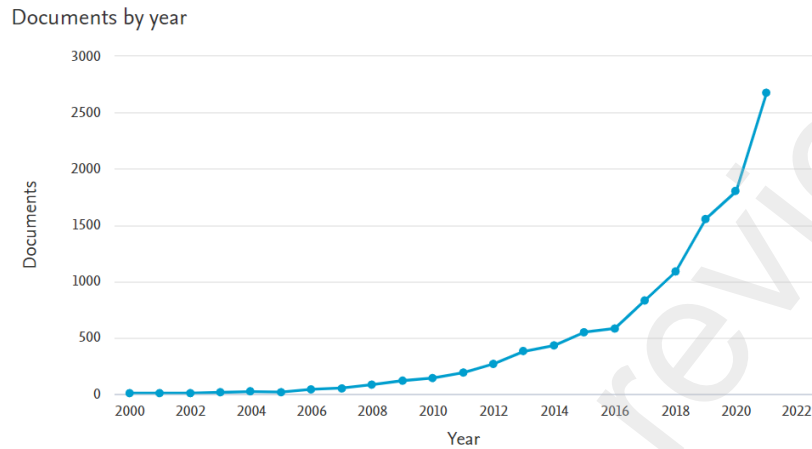


Figure 1: Scopus trend for EEG-based Emotion Recognition studies.

A critical issue underlying the processing and classification of EEG signals is their inherent variability among different subjects or different acquisition times (i.e. sessions) of the same subject, since the EEG signal is usually stochastic and stationary only for short intervals (generally ranging from a few seconds to minutes) [18, 19, 20]. More in detail, the EEG signal is not a Wide Sense Stationary signal [21]. This characteristic of non-stationarity implies a variation in the temporal and spectral characteristics of the EEG signal over time. This is an open issue in the literature leading to a loss of generalizability for classification systems across subjects (*inter-subject* task) and, for the same subject, across different sessions (*intra-subject* task) [22].

Data-driven approaches using Machine Learning (ML) are often employed at multiple levels in the EEG signal processing pipeline to pursue the classification of emotional states and their generalization across subjects and sessions.

Currently, the literature shows increasing use of modern machine learning strategies, adopting deep neural networks and transfer learning-based approaches, such as domain adaptation, domain generalization and/or hybrid methods [23]. This paper proposed a systematic review on the use of machine learning to improve generalizability capabilities in EEG-based emotion recognition systems across different subjects and sessions.

As will be discussed in detail in the next section, several surveys have been proposed in recent years, gathering and discussing the main directions of the

literature on this research topic. However, to the best of our knowledge, a focus on the application of ML methods to improve the inter/intra-subjective generalization performance of EEG-based emotion recognition is missing in the literature.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews related works, with reference to recent surveys carried out on this specific topic. Section 3 presents a theoretical background on EEG, with a first part focused on BCIs for emotion recognition and a second part on ML for emotion recognition. Section 4 presents the used search queries and the paper selection process according to the PRISMA method [24]. Section 5 presents the results of the review, proposing a taxonomy of the ML methods currently proposed in the selected papers, discussing the ML methods with respect the proposed taxonomy. A statistical analyses of the results was reported. Section 6 aims to discuss the results obtained, reporting the most promising lines of research and approaches that have emerged and highlighting possible future directions in this area. Finally, Section 7 draws conclusions.

## 2. Related Works

In recent years, several reviews have been conducted on **generalization in EEG-based Emotion Recognition**. Alarcao and Fonseca [25] focus on the generic topic of **EEG-based Emotion Recognition**, presenting a review of papers published in the period from 2009 to 2016. The survey appears interesting **in that it focuses** on the different stages of the emotion recognition process from EEG signals. **Moreover, the survey proposed** a criterion for assessing the quality of the papers by applying a set of well-known guidelines (Brouwer's recommendations [26]). However, there is no in-depth analysis on the issue of inter/intra-subject generalization, nor **is** the EEG-nonstationarity problem addressed. Other reviews [27, 28] analyse **studies on** the EEG-based classification methods, but without focusing on the emotion domain. Wu et al. [28], offer a non-systematic review focusing on affective BCIs (aBCIs), but without an in-depth analysis **of** the emotion recognition problem. The study proposed in [29] **defers further investigation of the problem of EEG-inter/intra-subject variability to future works**. Recently, Li and colleagues [30] published a review focusing on the topic of EEG-based emotion recognition and discussing the importance of transfer learning. While offering some interesting results, **it is not** a systematic review (only 18 studies were reported without PRISMA methodology to collect them).

This paper proposed a systematic literature review focused on the inter/intra-subject generalization on EEG-based emotion recognition systems and the use of modern ML-based methods as a possible solution.

### 3. Theoretical Background

#### 3.1. Emotional theories

Over the years, different theories on emotions have been proposed but none of these has been universally accepted. Currently, many theories coexist in multiple application fields. Anyway, the *discrete theory* and *dimensional theory* are the most recurrent in literature. The discrete theory identifies universal and innate emotions [31]. Drawing on the Darwinian tradition, Ekman's theory identifies six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise [32]. Plutchik, identifies eight basic emotions (anger, anticipation, joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, and disgust) and arranges them on a wheel model [29]. In contrast, the dimensional theory represents emotions in a continuous two-dimensional (valence-arousal) or three-dimensional (valence-arousal-dominance) space. *Valence* measures levels of pleasantness (happy vs. sad) of an emotion. *Arousal* identifies degrees of excitement or motivational activation. In the three-dimensional model, the *dominance* dimension is added to valence and arousal to evaluate emotions on a scale between submission and empowerment [6].

Two brain networks underlying the valence and arousal dimensions are identified by the dimensional approach [33]. Conversely, the assumption of discrete approach is that few fundamental emotions are mediated by dedicated neural circuits. Therefore, the two theoretical approaches focus different neurophysiological phenomena with specific spatial signal features. In the framework of the emotion assessment, the specific task (i.e., discrete emotions or emotional dimensions classification) relies on the choice of the reference theory.

#### 3.2. BCI for Emotion Recognition

Emotional states can be recognized through several biosignals. In particular, brain signals have received increasing attention from the scientific community. Indeed, the EEG signal is particularly effective for emotion recognition due to its high temporal resolution and non-invasiveness. The EEG signal has a frequency range between  $[0.01, 100.00]$  Hz and an amplitude varying typically within the range  $[-100, 100]$   $\mu V$ . Five background rhythms are present in the EEG and can be classified into different frequency



bands: delta [0.5, 4.0] *Hz*, theta [4, 7] *Hz*, alpha [8, 13] *Hz*, beta [14, 30] *Hz*, and gamma [30, 100] *Hz*.

The **International 10-20** Positioning System is an internationally recognized method to place the electrodes on the scalp [34] **for recording the EEG signal**. The method allows to maintain a standardized EEG electrodes placement proportional to the scalp size and shape in order to preserve the relationship between each location and the underlying brain area. **A basic requirement for obtaining a high-quality EEG and for ensuring good contact between the electrode and the skin is to** use high-performance electrodes [35]. The electrode-skin contact can either be ensured by adding a conductive gel between the electrode and the skin or by increasing the contact surface that ensures electrical contact. Recently, besides wet electrodes, dry electrodes are employed for the EEG signal recording. A good signal quality and comparable performances with respect to wet electrodes are achieved using dry electrodes [36].

Besides the quality of the EEG signal, the emotion induction methods and the eliciting stimuli have a great impact on the EEG-based emotion assessment. Specifically, the emotion induction methods and the eliciting stimuli represent a crucial point for the effectiveness of the emotional elicitation. Facial and body movements, recall of past events, odors, images, film clips, and music are techniques currently used in laboratories for inducing emotions. Current literature reports that film clips, images, and music are particularly effective to elicit emotions [37, 38]. The use of images over other kind of stimuli represents a great advantage, as images are standardized stimuli. **Image datasets** were experimentally validated (e.g., International Affective Picture System - IAPS [38], Open Affective Standardized Image Set - OASIS [39], and Geneva Affective Picture Database - GAPED [40]). There are several publicly-available databases of EEG signals **that can be used for** emotion recognition (e.g., DEAP [41], SEED [42], and DREAMER [43]). Each dataset contains different physiological signals and is characterized by a well-established experimental setup (in terms of stimulus sources, emotional theory adopted, number of subjects, and psychometric metrological references). For a comprehensive description of the various available datasets, see [30].

In case of self-produced datasets, the EEG data must be carefully pre-processed **in order to be used** in the emotion assessment. Some steps are often helpful to achieve a successful EEG signal preprocessing: (i) line noise removal, (ii) referencing, (iii) bad channels removal, and (iv) artifacts removal

(see [19] for insights).

Once the EEG signal has been pre-processed, it is usually divided into epochs, and a feature extraction process is then applied. EEG features can be categorized into three domains, namely time, frequency, and time-frequency.

- Time domain: the main features are the statistics of the signal, such as mean, variance, skewness, kurtosis, etc [44, 45, 46]. Other time-domain features are the Hjorth parameters, namely Activity, Mobility, and Complexity [47]. Good results in the recognition of emotional states can be achieved by using entropy-based features, i.e., approximate, sample, differential, and wavelet entropy [48]. Higher-order crossing (HOC), the fractal dimension, and the Non-Stationary Index (NSI) [49, 50, 51] are further time domain feature often used for the EEG analysis.
- Frequency domain: the most used feature is the power spectral density (PSD). PSD is the signal power in the unit frequency band [52]. Other representative features of different emotional states involving the PSD are: (i) logarithm, (ii) maximum, (iii) minimum and, (iv) standard deviation of the power spectrum.
- Time-frequency domain: the time-frequency analysis (TFA) allows to observe spectrum changes with time[53]. The short-time Fourier transform (STFT), the continuous wavelet transform (CWT), the discrete wavelet transform (DWT) [54], matching pursuit, and empirical mode decomposition are the most used methods to extract time-frequency features.

The number of EEG features is often very high, therefore a feature selection strategy is required [55]. Another critical point is the large number of EEG channels often used for signal acquisitions. A high number of channels can lead to high computational complexity. Therefore, the selection of the most informative EEG channels can be crucial [56].

### 3.3. Machine Learning for Emotion Recognition

After the EEG signal has been properly pre-processed and a suitable set of features has been extracted, the data are ready to be fed to a supervised

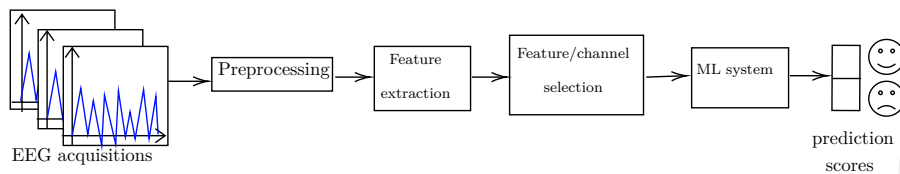


Figure 2: A pipeline of a classical ML process involving EEG signals.

ML system. The typical pipeline of a ML framework applied to an EEG emotion recognition task is reported in Fig. 2.

A large part of the current literature on Emotion Recognition proposed methods framed into Transfer Learning approach. This is because in the classical supervised ML framework a set of already labeled data has to be available. This implies that, in EEG emotion recognition tasks, a set of EEG signals recorded from one or more subjects has to be labeled with the emotion felt during the acquisition. Labeled data can then be used to train the ML system, generating a ML model able to classify the input data. Once the ML model is obtained, new unlabeled data can be fed to the ML model to estimate the corresponding emotion/class. Reserving a portion of the labeled data outside the training stage to evaluate the trained model is a good practice. These data can then be used to evaluate the final model predictions using suitable performance metrics (e.g., accuracy). However, a standard hypothesis of traditional ML methods is that all available data come from the same probability distribution, no matter if involved in the training process or not. Due to the characteristics of the EEG data, this assumption results not always verified in the EEG signal. Indeed, the EEG recordings of different subjects can be strongly different from each other, even under the same conditions [19]. Strong differences can arise also for EEG recordings acquired from the same subject but in different times/sessions, leading to low generalization performance in cross-subject/session problems. In the current literature, this problem was initially addressed by exploiting additional unlabeled data belonging to the target subject/session during the training stage (Transductive Learning approaches). However, these methods do not make any consideration about the data distributions. Indeed, the training EEG data can belong to probability distribution(s) sensibly different from the ones of the data used outside of the training stage. In ML literature, this can be considered an instance of the Dataset Shift problem [57]. Dataset Shift occurs in an experimental environment where the standard ML assumption is

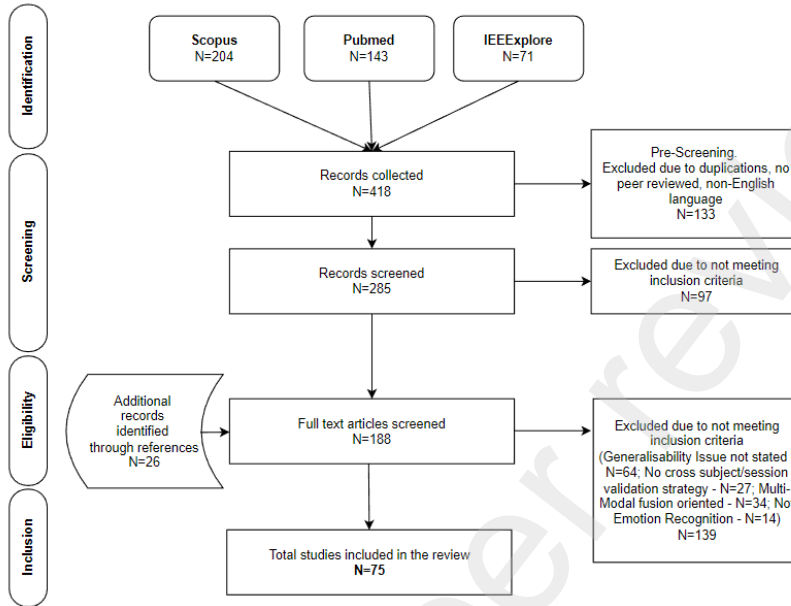


Figure 3: PRISMA flow diagram of the systematic review process.

not verified, *i.e.* the distributions of the training data and the data used outside the training stage may be different. The idea that data used inside and outside of training stage can belong to different probability distributions is the main hypothesis of the transfer learning approaches.

In the last years, several ML architectures and methods have been proposed to address the dataset shift problem following the base assumptions of transfer learning, and different categorizations of these methods have been reported [58, 59]. One of the first and most important review on Transfer Learning methods was proposed in [58]. However, several new strategies were proposed in the following years (e.g., Domain Generalization-based works).

#### 4. Papers selection method

The present literature review took into account the guidelines for systematic literature reviews presented by Kitchenham ([60]). In addition, PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) recommendations were adopted in order to transparently report the document extraction process ([24]). The survey was conducted covering the period

between January 2010 to March 2022, using the following databases: *Scopus*, *IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)*, *Xplore*, and *PubMed*.

In accordance with the PRISMA recommendations, the review pipeline comprised four successive steps: 'Identification', 'Screening', 'Eligibility', and, finally, 'Inclusion', which considerably reduced the amount of surveyed work. For the initial identification of the articles, the following query was used in all selected data sources, taking into account titles and abstracts: EEG AND (Emotion OR Preference) AND ("Domain Adaptation" OR "Domain Generalization" OR "Transfer Learning" OR "Adversarial" OR "Transfer" OR "Cross Session" OR "Cross Subject" OR "Cross Gender" OR "Non-stationary EEG").

From the first phase, 418 articles were collected. Therefore, duplicated papers, not peer-reviewed, or not written in English were excluded from review as an initial prescreening process. For each paper that passed the screening stage, a careful examination of the full text was carried out. In a final screening, further papers were excluded according to the following exclusion criteria: (a) generalizability issue not explicitly stated, (b) absence of a cross-subject/cross-session validation strategy, (c) adoption of a 'multimodal' approach (i.e. aimed at supporting EEG-based classification with other biosignals and/or information), (d) lack of focus on emotion recognition. As a result, 75 papers remained and were included in the review analysis. The complete flow diagram of the systematic review process according to PRISMA is presented in Fig. 3.

## 5. Results

The analyzed works can be divided into two main big families, based on the assumption about the origin of the handled data (e.g. from a single population/domain described by the same probability distribution or from different populations/domains):

- *Classical ML approaches*: all data are assumed to belong to the same population and are described by the same probability distribution;
- *Transfer Learning (TL) approaches*: these methods rely on the hypothesis that data can belong to different populations (domains). Data with heterogeneous probability distributions can lead to the dataset shift problem, resulting in a loss of the model's generalization. In general,

the main goal of a TL method is to exploit the knowledge extracted from a *Source* domain to solve a problem in a *Target* domain. TL methods try to reduce the discrepancy between the probability distributions of the different domains.

### 5.1. *Classical ML approaches*

A model trained on a set of EEG data acquired from a given subject at a specific time (or during a specific session) could not work as expected in classifying EEG signal acquired from a different subject or from the same subject at different times. In other words, the model can result in poor generalization performance. To deal with this problem, several solutions based on ML approaches have been proposed over the years. One attempt to mitigate the problem was the adoption of Transductive methods. Transductive methods [61] start from the hypothesis that the unlabeled data target of the classification problem are available in the training stage. However differently from the DA methods, no assumption about the distribution of the data is made. The idea is that in several problems there is only a specific set of data (usually corresponding to the test set) to classify, and it is available at training time. Note that standard ML approaches the goal is to generalize on new unseen data and the test set is used only to validate the learned model on new, unseen data adopting the inductive learning principle [61], while in Transductive learning the goal is to correctly classify the test set only, therefore the classification problem is defined only on the test data. Transductive SVM (TSVM, [62]) is an example of a transductive method. Differently from classical SVMs that leverage only on labeled data, TSVMs exploit both labeled and unlabeled test data to find the best decision boundary between the classes. In other words, the target data is an additional set of information about the data in the training stage. One of the main drawback of TSVM is that an estimation of the number of elements of each class in the test set is needed. Progressive TSVM (PTSVM, [63]) tries to progressively solve this problem labeling the unlabeled data during the training stage. However, the only study collected in this review that explicitly uses transductive methods is [64], where a PTSVM is used in a cross-session Emotion Recognition problem on EEG data acquired from different subjects. Instead, the greatest part of the reviewed proposals consisted in proper feature transformations and/or feature selection processes. The former wants to transform the data features to hold only the most useful information, assuming that it

is shared between all the subjects/sessions, while the latter are methods to select only **the most useful features** from the input signals without changing **them**. Usually, the feature extraction/selection is one of the first step of a machine learning pipeline, where the data are transformed before being fed to the machine learning model. These methods adopt the classical Machine Learning framework, that is no knowledge of the effective data on which the model will be effectively used **after the training is available in the training stage**. This can be viewed as a consequence of the the starting hypothesis of the traditional ML methods stating that all the available data, no matter if used in the training process or not, come from the same probability distribution, **therefore the training data are enough for the generalization purpose**. In other words, the training data are enough to generalize over all the possible data.

In the **EEG Emotion Recognition case**, this means that a proper EEG data transformation is enough to allow a ML model to generalize well on **never seen** EEG data, independently from the fact the **these new** data belongs to a subject/session used during the training **stage** or not. Going deeper, in a ML problem on EEG data the feature extraction and selection process can be made considering two different aspects: i) the **acquired EEG features** or ii) the electrodes. In the first case, a proper transformation or selection strategy for the EEG **features** is made.

### *EEG features extraction/selection strategies*

The reviewed literature proposed different works **discussing** if several known feature extraction methods are suitable to generalize across several **Emotion Recognition** datasets [65, 66]. In particular, in [65] the authors investigated the robustness of Emotion Recognition **features in** different experimental conditions, subjects, and datasets.

In [67, 68] Sequential Backward Selection (SBS) was applied to find a good set of features **able to** generalize across different subjects. To find the best subset of features, SBS decreases the number of features in an iterative way measuring, at each step, the **performance** on a given classifier (SVM in [67], Decision Trees in [68]). SBS method is adopted to exploit the significant differences between the classes. A Leave-One-Subject-Out (LOSO) verification strategy was employed on DEAP and SEED datasets in [67], while [68] validates its results on DEAP and self-produced data.

In [69, 70] a family of Transferable Recursive Feature Elimination (TRFE) methods are used to remove the EEG features resulting not generic for all



the involved subjects. The proposed feature selector is validated using SVM classifiers on DEAP dataset, analyzing both the within-subject and the cross-subject behaviours. In [71] Cross-subject Recursive Feature Elimination (C-RFE) is exploited to rank the features in order of importance removing the ones giving a low contribution to the classification. The method is validated on SVM classifiers.

In [72], an improved version of the well-known Differential Entropy features is proposed. Differently from the classical DE which consider only the frequency domain of the data, The Dynamic Differential Entropy (DDE) features take into account both the time-domain and the frequency domain. The goal is to learn a set of common characteristics across different subjects maximizing the difference between classes and minimizing, at the same time, the difference within classes.

In [73] a latent representation of the EEG data from SEED and DEAP is learned through a Variational Auto Encoder (VAE, [74]) and then classified using a LSTM. VAEs start from the hypothesis that all the data are generated by a random process involving latent variables. A VAE is usually trained to encode the input data into a latent representation, and then mapping it to a reconstructed version of the data. [73] assumes that i) there exists learnable intrinsic features shared across several EEG signals belonging to different subjects and taking part in emotional processes, and ii) these intrinsic features can be learned and encoded in the VAE latent representations. The power of VAE to represent latent EEG factors is also investigated in [75], together with classical Auto-Encoders (AEs) and Restricted Boltzmann Machines (RBMs). Final emotion classifications are made with an LSTM, while the generalization performances are evaluated in LOSO on DEAP and SEED dataset.

In [76] the cross-subject problem is tackled using Variational Mode Decomposition (VMD) as feature extraction technique. The proposed framework is validated in an Hold-Out (HO) way, taking care that no intersection exists between subjects' data in the training and the test set. Performance are measured using a DNN as emotions classifier. Despite the encouraging results reported, no reason about why the proposed system works well in a cross-subject approach seems to be provided. In [77, 78, 79] is shown that some normalization functions usually used to preprocess the EEG data can affect the cross-subject performances.

In particular, in [77] several normalization functions were applied and evaluated following two different schemes: i) *All-subjects*, where the whole



dataset was normalized, ii) *Single-subject*, where the normalization is applied individually to each subject. The All-subject schema is the most common method to normalize the entire dataset. Single-subject, instead, consider each subject individually, applying normalization on each subject. The authors empirically shown, on SEED dataset, that Single-subject Z-score performs better in a EEG emotion recognition problem respect to other normalization schemes, such as min-max normalization. On the same data, in [78] the authors apply single-subject  $Z - score$  normalization after each layer of a neural network (Stratified Normalisation).

Differently, in [79] a simple transformation of the original data is proposed. It consists in transforming the original features into binary vectors, having 0 or 1 as components values if the feature is lower or higher than the median feature value, respectively. The author assumption is that this leads to a more effective reduction of the subject-dependent part of the EEG signal.

#### *Channel selection strategies*

In [80, 81] a general channels set for Emotion Recognition valid for several subject is searched exploring different channels selection strategies. To achieve EEG-based cross-session emotion recognition, the authors of [82] separate discriminative features from the noisy and redundant ones learning the importance of the EEG channels in an Emotion recognition task. The proposed strategy is evaluated on pairs of sessions chosen a-priori.

In [83] a neural network to classify emotion by EEG signals is proposed. The proposed network introduces a channel-attention layer to select the most important channels for a set of emotions. Notably, the different subjects' personalities are taken into account, grouping together subjects with similar personalities and training a different network for each group. Validation is made on the ASCERTAIN dataset. This dataset results particularly suited for this task, since it links together personality and emotional state and physiological reactions. The structure of the electrodes is taken into account and modeled as a graph.

To model structured data, graph representation methodologies resulted effective achieving significant performance in many applications, included EEG emotion signal processing [84]. Indeed, GNNs are useful to retain the spatial structure of the electrodes disposition. Usually, the graph structure is fixed and given a priori following the spatial disposition of the electrodes on the scalp. Differently, Dynamical Graph Convolutional Neural Networks

(DGCNN, [84]) and Self-Organized Graph Neural Network (SOGNN, [85]) changes the graph structure leveraging on the input brain signals, instead of relying on a predefined graph structure. The resulting graph can be processed by graph convolutional layers to extract the more suitable features and channels for emotion recognition. The features obtained are also tested in cross-subject scenarios [86].

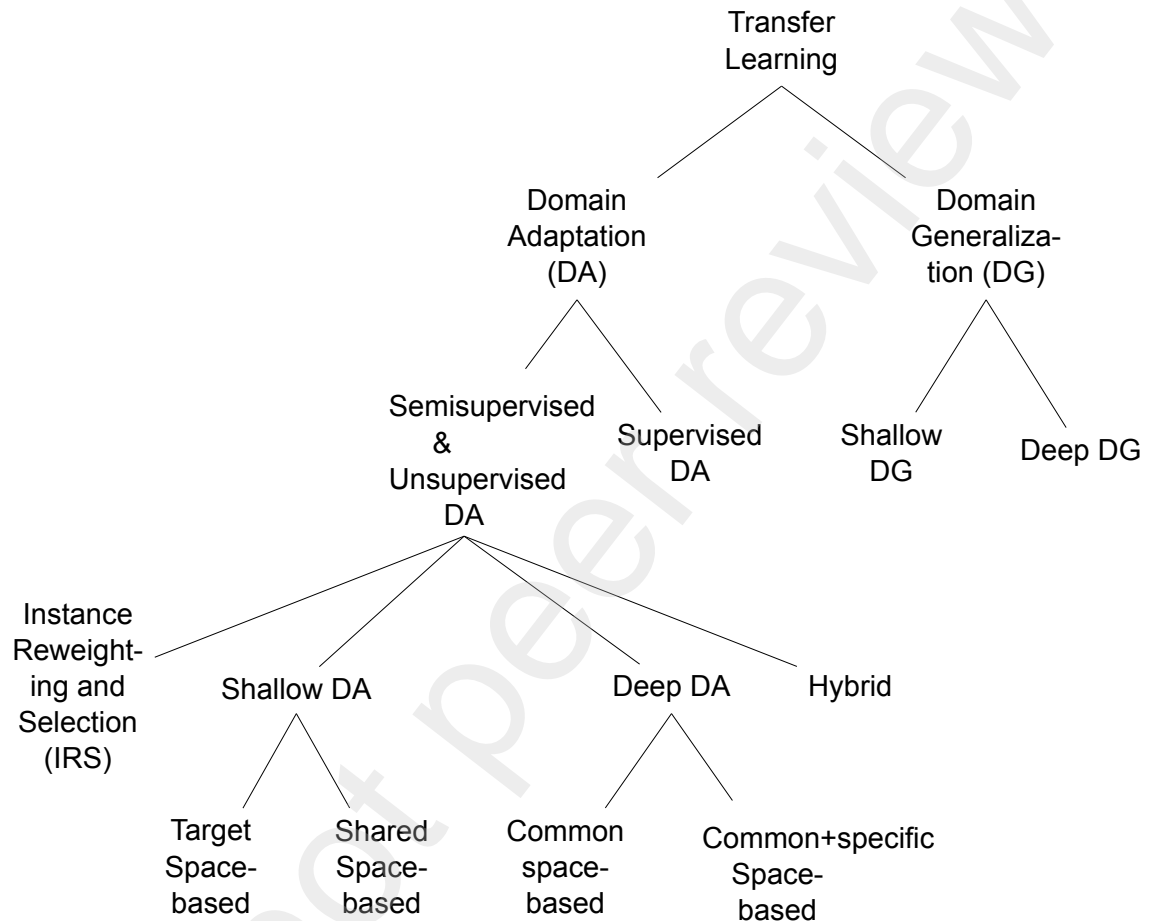


Figure 4: The proposed taxonomy of the Transfer Learning methods in EEG-based emotion recognition. Starting from the root node, the criterion "target data used in the training phase" leads to the creation of two child nodes: Domain Adaptation (if yes) and Domain Generalization (if no). Domain Generalization in turn generates two nodes depending on the type of data transformation: learned (Deep DG) or unlearned (Shallow DG). From Domain Adaptation, the Supervised DA node is generated if all target data labels are used in the training phase; otherwise, the Semisupervised/Unsupervised DA node is generated. From the latter node, four branches distinguish the data handling strategy: (i) data is transformed using an a priori defined function (Shallow DA), (ii) the data transformation function is learned as part of the method (Deep DA), (iii) data is selected or reweighted using some strategy (Instance Reweighting and Selection), and (iv) a combination of the previous approaches is applied (Hybrid). The Shallow DA methods are divided into two leaf nodes according to the projection space of the transformation: (i) all data is projected into the same space as the Target domain (Target Space-based), (ii) a new shared space is used between the Source and Target (Shared Space-based). Similarly, for Deep DA methods, two branches lead to two leaf nodes: (i) Common Space-based if the Source and Target are projected into a new shared space, (ii) Common+Specific Space-based if Source and Destination are first projected into a single shared space, then, for each available domain, a projection is used in an ad hoc space.

In the following of this section, the reviewed papers are discussed considering the belonging family (classical ML and TL approaches). In particular, TL-based works are discussed according to the proposed taxonomy.

### 5.2. TL methods

With respect to Classical ML, TL approaches are gaining popularity thanks to their reported better performances. In literature, current TL methods are divided in two main categories according to the use of target data in the training phase:

- *Domain Adaptation (DA) methods*: the DA general assumption is that data of the Target are available during the training of the model, together with data belonging to the Source domain(s). For instance, in the EEG Emotion Recognition, data acquired from both source and target subjects/sessions are available during the model construction.
- *Domain Generalization (DG) methods*: in these methods, data belonging to several domains are available and can be used during the training, but no data from the target domain are available during the training stage. The knowledge extracted from multiple source domains is exploited to improve the model generalization. For instance, in the EEG Emotion Recognition, labeled data acquired from different subject/session can be considered as belonging to different domains, and can be used to build a model able to generalize to a new unseen subject/session, where no data are available during the construction of model. Domain Generalization methods can be splitted in two subcategories depending on the type of data transformation: learned (Deep DG) or unlearned (Shallow DG).

Regarding the DA methods, a further division can be made, depending on the use made of the target data labels in the training phase:

- *Supervised DA methods* (also known as *PreTrained* methods, PT): these methods benefit from the availability of labeled data from the target subject/session during the training stage; Supervised DA methods adapt a model already trained on a known Source domain to work in a new Target domain, where a labeled dataset can be sampled. Since supervised DA methods usually relied on a model already trained, they are also known as PreTrained methods.

- *Unsupervised and Semisupervised DA (UDA)* methods: these methods benefit from the availability of unlabeled data coming from the target subject/session during the training stage. The method is Unsupervised if only unlabeled target data are exploited. Instead, the method is Semisupervised if further labeled target data are available.

UDA methods, in turn, can be distinguished based on the strategy for handling data:

- *Shallow DA*: data are transformed using an a priori defined function;
- *Deep DA*: the data transformation function is learned as part of the method;
- *Instance Reweighting and Selection (IRS)*: data are selected or reweighted using some strategy;
- *Hybrid*: a combination of the previous approaches is applied.

The Shallow DA methods can be further divided according to the projection space of data transformation: (i) all data are projected into the same space as the Target domain (*Target Space-based - TSB*), (ii) a new shared space is used between the Source and Target (*Shared Space-based - SSB*). Similarly, two subcategories can be identified also for Deep DA methods: (i) *Common Space-based (CS)* if the Source and Target are projected into a new shared space, (ii) *Common+Specific Space-based (CSS)* if Source and Destination are first projected into a single shared space, then, for each available domain, a projection is used in an ad hoc space.

Relying on the above considerations, a taxonomy of the TL methods used in EEG-based emotion recognition is reported in Fig. 4.

Transfer Learning methods are based on the concepts of *Domain* and *Task*. Following the survey of Pan et al. [58], a Domain can be defined as a set  $D = \{F, P(X)\}$  where  $F$  is a feature space and  $P(X)$  is the marginal probability distribution of a specific dataset  $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\} \in F$ . Instead, a Task is a set  $T = \{L, f\}$  where  $L$  is a label space and  $f$  is a predictive function usually learned by the data. For instance,  $f(x_i)$  assigns the predicted label to  $x_i \in X$ . Therefore,  $f$  can be equivalently viewed as the probability of a label  $y$  given a data  $x$ , i.e.  $p(y \in L|x \in X)$ .

A Dataset of  $n$  points can be defined as a set  $S = \{(x_i \in X, y_i \in L)\}_{i=1}^n$ . Transfer learning wants to exploit the knowledge of a domain  $D_A$  on a task  $T_A$  to resolve the same or another task  $T_B$  on another domain  $D_B$ .

By the definition of domain, it is straightforward that two domains  $D_A = \{F_A, P(X_A)\}$  and  $D_B = \{F_B, P(X_B)\}$  can be considered different if they differ in the feature spaces or in the marginal probability distributions. Obviously, the same holds for two Tasks  $T_A = \{L_A, f_A\}$  and  $T_B = \{L_B, f_B\}$ . More in details, the following cases can happen:

1.  $D_A = D_B$  and  $T_A = T_B$ : since the Tasks and the domains are the same, this can be considered a **standard** ML Problem.
2.  $D_A \neq D_B$ :  $F_A \neq F_B$  or  $F_A = F_B$  and  $P(X_A) \neq P(X_B)$
3.  $T_A \neq T_B$ :  $L_A \neq L_B$  or  $f_A \neq f_B$ .

**Due to** the non-stationarity of the EEG signals between different subjects/**sessions**, an emotion classification problem can be viewed as a multi-domain problem where the data belonging to each subject/**session** are sampled from different domains. **More specifically**, given two different subjects  $A$  and  $B$ , a common feature space is assumed to be shared by the two domains (**i.e.** the EEG data representation), the conditional data distributions  $P(L_A|X_A) = P(L_B|X_B)$  are assumed to be the same, **but** the marginal probability distributions are **assumed** different on the available data, **i.e.**  $P(X_A) \neq P(X_B)$ . Therefore, **generalizing across different subjects/sessions** can be viewed as reducing a discrepancy measure between several domains.

In the current literature, TL strategies can be divided into **DA** and **DG** families. These families differ mainly in which data are processed during the learning stage. DA methods start from the hypothesis that data sampled from **at least** two different domains are available, **consisting in** one or more *Source* domains and one *Target* domain. **Usually, methods involving more than a single source domain are said *multi-source*.** In contrast, DG methods rely on the hypothesis that  $d \geq 2$  source domains together with their labeled samples are available, while any data from the Target domain is unknown. DA and DG methods are getting a great deal of attention in the scientific literature in different contexts (e.g. image classification and voice recognition), and several proposals have been made until now. One trend of the literature is to adapt DA/DG methods originally proposed for a context to another one. For example, in [87] methods to adapt DA strategies for image classification to EEG emotion classification are proposed. However, each context has its characteristics and peculiarities, making the transfer of a DA method

from a task to another task not immediate. Several attempts were made by the scientific community to adapt well-established DA/DG methods in tasks involving the processing of EEG signals in the emotion recognition field.

Emotion Recognition tasks usually involve several subjects or sessions with different statistical properties, therefore they can be easily reduced to TL framework. In particular, since data belonging to different subjects/sessions can have different statistical properties due to the non-stationarity of the signal, each subject/ can be viewed as a different domain. However, it is interesting to notice that several TL strategies proposed in literature were developed assuming that the generalization problem is composed by two domains, the former for the corresponding to *all* the available labeled data (usually the training set), and the latter to the unlabeled one (usually the test set). Several recent Emotion Recognition works proposed strategies following this framework, considering all the labeled data available as belonging to the same domain, regardless to actual probability distributions they belong to. This can be viewed as strong assumption, since it implicitly assume that all subjects/sessions belong to the same probability distribution, that it is the same to consider all the data as belonging to the same subject/session. Instead, more recent works project the available data in a multi-source framework, considering each labeled subject/session as belonging to different domain.

Regarding DA methods, they can further be divided into the following subfamilies:

- *Unsupervised/semi-supervised Domain Adaptation (UDA)* methods;
- *Supervised DA*, also known as *PreTraining (PT)*, methods.

The main difference between them is that, while **labeled** dataset  $S_{Source} = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n$  can be sampled from the Source domain(s), only feature data points  $X_{Target} = \{x_j\}_{j=1}^m \in F_{Target}$  can be sampled from the Target one, without knowledge (unsupervised DA) or minimal knowledge (semi-supervised DA) on their real labels.

### ***UDA methods***

We consider a method as UDA if it uses unlabeled data belonging to the Target domain during the training stage. If no extra labeled target data is available in the training stage, the method is said *Unsupervised*, otherwise if there are also labeled target data, the method is considered *Semisupervised*.

Several UDA methods relied on minimizing discrepancy measures between the Source and the Target domains. In [59] these methods are categorized into *shallow DA* and *deep DA*, where

- A) *Shallow DA*: a **a-priori defined function for a new** data representation is given. At most **the mapping parameters** are learned, without affecting the starting data representation;
- B) *Deep DA*: the data representation is **fully** learned as part of the DA strategy.

However, this categorization does not consider works leveraging on the hypothesis that not all the training data can effectively be useful for the target space. In order to avoid negative transfer, a selection of the training data may be necessary. Therefore, in this work the *Instance Reweighting and Selection (IRS)* category is added. Reviewing the literature, it results that these methods are used, in some case, together with Shallow DA and Deep DA. In the proposed taxonomy, such methods are identified as belonging to the *Hybrid* category.

In the following part of this section, reviewed studies according to the categorization above discussed are reported.

#### A) *Shallow DA methods*

Different **Shallow DA** strategies were proposed in literature, usually relied on one of following alternatives:

- *Target Space-Based (TSB)*: searching for a good transformation which directly maps **data belonging to the Source domain** to the Target domain space;
- *Shared Space-Based (SSB)*: searching for a good transformation which maps Source  $S$  and Target  $T$  data in a new shared space **having minimal** discrepancy between  $S$  and  $T$ .

Once all the data are projected in a common space, any supervised method can be applied for classification, as both source and target domains follow a similar distribution.



- *TSB methods:*

As TSB proposal, [88] tried to align the source space toward the target one (Subspace Alignment, SA). Rather than using the data in their original feature spaces, PCA is adopted for a more robust and compact data representation. More specifically, two PCA projection matrices  $Z_S$  and  $Z_T$  are computed for the Source and the Target domain, respectively. Therefore, a transformation matrix  $M$  able to align the source space to the target one is searched by an optimization problem, that is

$$\arg \min_M \|Z_S M - Z_T\|_F^2.$$

This problem has a closed form solution, that is  $M = Z_S^T Z_T$ .

In [89] Adaptive Subspace Feature Matching (ASFM) is proposed for EEG-based Emotion Recognition. Relying on SA, ASFM takes in care that subject attention level and user fatigue can lead to mismatched marginal and conditional distributions of the data.

Differently from other DA strategies, in [90] (Multi-Subject Subspace Alignment, MSSA) the ASFM strategy is applied to each source subject individually, then the projected data are fed to different subject-specific classifiers.

Other data transformations have been investigated in the DA scenario for EEG emotion recognition, such as Robust Principal Component Analysis (RCA) [91] in [92]. RCA decomposes a set  $X$  of data as  $X = L + S$ , with  $L$  and  $S$  superimposed matrices, in particular the former is a low-rank matrix, the latter a sparse matrix. These matrices are computed resolving the following optimization problem:

$$\min_{L,S} \|L\|_* + \lambda \|S\|_1$$

where  $\|\cdot\|_*$  is the matrix nuclear norm,  $\|\cdot\|_1$  the  $l_1$  norm and  $\lambda$  a weighting parameter. In [92] a proposal to build a Cross-Day emotion recognition model using RCA is made.

In [93] a method originally proposed for personalized handwriting recognition (Style Transfer Mapping, STM [94]) is adapted for EEG emotion recognition task to generalize across different subjects. In a nutshell, STM maps source data to target data by an affine transformation. The solution of the proposed problem is in closed form, so it can be easily computed. Few labeled target data are used to select source data, therefore it starts from the hypothesis that a small amount of labeled data is available.

- *SSB methods*:

On the other side, **among the SSB methods**, the Maximum Mean Discrepancy (MMD,[95]) is one of the most used discrepancy measure in DA/DG strategies. MMD **was originally** proposed to test if two probability distributions are different or not. Formally, the authors show that, in a Reduced Kernel Hilbert Space (RKHS), a discrepancy measure between two distributions  $p$  and  $q$  can be defined as

$$MMD(p, q) = \|\mathbb{E}_{X_S \sim p}(\phi(X_S)) - \mathbb{E}_{X_T \sim q}(\phi(X_T))\|_H^2$$

where  $\phi(\cdot)$  is an appropriate feature mapping. In [95] is proven that, in a RKHS,  $MMD(p, q)$  is 0 if and only if the two distributions  $p$  and  $q$  are the same.

MMD can be empirical estimated as the difference between the averages of two dataset sampled from the two distributions projected in a RKHS. Therefore, considering  $X_S$  and  $X_T$  as two sets sampled from the Source and the Target domain respectively, empirical  $MMD(X_S, X_T)$  can be expressed as:

$$MMD(X_S, X_T) = \left\| \frac{1}{|X_S|} \sum_{i=1}^{|X_S|} \phi(\mathbf{x}_S^{(i)}) - \frac{1}{|X_T|} \sum_{i=1}^{|X_T|} \phi(\mathbf{x}_T^{(i)}) \right\|_H^2$$

where  $\mathbf{x}_S^{(i)}$  and  $\mathbf{x}_T^{(i)}$  are elements of  $X_S$  and  $X_T$  respectively. In other words, having two samples **belonging to** two different distributions, the distance between the two distributions can be estimate through the distance between the averages of the samples projected in a RKHS.

Transfer Component Analysis (TCA, [96]) is one of the most used MMD-based DA method. In the **proposing** work, two different TCA versions were proposed: i) an *unsupervised* version, **consisting in finding a** data transformation such that the data variance is maximally preserved **and**, at the same time, the MMD distance of the domains distributions **is minimized**, and ii) a *supervised* one, where the dependence **between** training **data and** labels is taken into account.

A **performance** evaluation of the Unsupervised TCA **applied** on EEG data for Emotion Recognition was made in [97]. Instead of using all the available EEG data, a random selection of samples from Source domain data, letting out **the data of** a subject as target. **Since TCA allows to project data in a reduced space**, in [98] **several spaces with different dimensions are evaluated on SEED dataset**. Instead, in [99] TCA is tested on self-made EEG data.

In [100] through Transfer Sparse Coding (TSC) the MMD was used to find a sparse representation of image data sampled from different distribution. Sparse code representations are well-known data approximation obtained as linear combinations of elements in a set of basis functions. In a nutshell, a sparse coding method searches for a representative over-complete set of basis functions (a *dictionary*) together with an encoding that best represent the data. In its simplest form, the sparse coding problem can be expressed as

$$\min_{B,S} \|X - BS\|_F^2 + \lambda \sum_{i=1}^n |s_i|$$

where  $X \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$  is a matrix containing addthe  $n$  data points to approximate while  $B \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times k}$  and  $S \in \mathbb{R}^{k \times n}$  are the dictionary matrix and the encoding matrix respectively, with  $k > m$  to ensure the over-completeness. The sparsity is induced by the second equation term on the coefficient matrix columns  $s_i$  and regulated through the hyperparameter  $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ . However, if  $X$  is composed of data sampled from two different domains (e.g.,  $X = [X_S|X_T]$ ) the above formalization does not take into account the differences between the marginal distributions. To deal with this problem, [100] adds a further regularization term to the objective function that considers the MMD distance between the different domains of the input data.

Similarly, PCA and Fisher criteria [101] are used together in in [102] with the aim to compute a common dictionary between source and target domain, but preserving the local information between samples together with the discriminative knowledge between the domains. This work required a little set of labeled data from the target domain during the training stage, falling in the Semi-supervised DA approaches.

While it is not specifically designed for Domain Adaptation, Kernel-PCA (KPCA,[103]) is often used in comparisons with several DA methods. In a nutshell, KPCA uses the kernel trick [104] to project the data into a kernel space followed by a PCA. A comparison between Kernel-PCA and TCA for EEG emotion recognition is reported in [97].

Proposed in [105] Subspace Alignment Auto-Encoder (SAAE) combines together auto-encoders and subspace alignment. The subspace alignment is obtained through MMD and KPCA to maximize the embedded data variance. Before the transformation, an auto-encoder trained on source and target data was employed to extract features from the data.

In [106] several shallow DA approaches such as TCA, KPCA, TSVM are

evaluated on SEED dataset in a Leave-On-Subject-Out approach, while in [107] similar methods are tested on SEED and DEAP also for Cross-Dataset generalization.

[107] exploits Maximum Independence Domain Adaptation (MIDA) [108] in the EEG Emotion Recognition case. As similar methods, MIDA projects the data into a subspace able to reduce the inter-domain discrepancy in distributions. In this case the independence between domain is computed with the Hilbert-Schmidt Independence Criterion (HSIC, [109]).

### B) Deep DA methods

In deep DA approaches, a feature data representation **transformation** is embedded into the DA method, **in an end-to-end way**.

Deep DA methods can be further divided in:

- *Common Space (CS)*: Source and Target are projected in a new shared space;
- *Common+Specific Spaces (css)*: Source and Target are first projected in a unique shared space, then, **for each available domain, a projection into an ad-hoc space is used**.

#### - CS methods:

As CS methods, [110] (Deep Domain Confusion, DDC) proposed two identical neural networks trained together, the former classifying data from the Source domain, the latter adapting the distance between Source and Target domains using **features of Target data**. A combination of both the classification performance and the MMD is used as final loss **to minimize**.

[111] uses DDC for cross-subject EEG emotion recognition. The networks' architectures used are of type residual CNNs [112]. To be fed to CNNs, the EEG inputs are firstly transformed into Electrode-frequency Distribution Maps (EFDMs, [113]). **The proposed** results are validated with a LOSO approach.

The authors of [114] proposed a DA framework **exploiting characteristics of a standard** Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), usually composed by a sequence of convolutional layers **ended** by a fully-connected ones. **The start hypothesis is** that in a DNN the transition from general to the **particular** task features grows with the increasing of the network depth. Indeed, in a CNN, while the initial convolutional layers learn general features, the final fully-connected ones learn domain specific features that are not transferable.

Their proposed model (Deep Adaptation Network, DAN) deeply adapt the final fully connected layers minimizing the Multi-Kernel Maximum Mean Discrepancies (MK-MMD, [115]), a multiple kernel variant of MMD used as distribution discrepancy measurement. DAN was evaluated in EEG emotion recognition on SEED and SEED-IV in [116]. In [117] the proposed Multi-Spatial Domain Adaptation Network (MSDAN) aligns source and target domains considering the spatial relationships between the electrodes. This is done by using Graph Convolutional Layers and exploiting MMD distance in the resulting graph space. Differently from other works, [117] uses data acquired in a Virtual Reality (VR) environment to generate stimuli, and the cross-device problem is taken into account.

One of the most used deep DA strategies is the Domain Adversarial Learning, proposed in [59, 118, 119]. The authors proposed an embedded problem formulation considering both the desired task and the Source-Target discrepancy. The basic idea is to make the data distributions indistinguishable for an ad-hoc domain classifier. This can be obtained by a deep neural network model (Domain Adversarial Neural Network, DANN) that, for each input, predicts both the corresponding class and the belonging domain. In a nutshell, DANN is composed of three main components: a feature extractor, a label predictor, and a domain classifier. Therefore, a learning process searches for a feature mapping maximizing the class prediction performances and, at the same time, also maximizing the domain classification loss to make the feature distributions as similar as possible. DANN is evaluated in EEG emotion recognition task in [120] on SEED. In [121] BiDANN, a variation of the original DANN, is adopted for EEG emotion recognition, but considering the differences between the brain hemispheres. More in detail, EEG data from the two hemispheres are processed separately: two different features mapping, together with a domain discriminator, are learned for the brain hemispheres, instead of just one feature mapping as in the original DANN formulation. Difference between the hemispheres in a DA approach is not dealt only by BiDANN; for instance, BiHDM [122, 123] uses two different RNN to encode the data belonging to the two hemispheres, and a domain discriminator is used to mix up the features of the Source and the Target domain. In [124] the authors propose a new DA method which is framed in the context of deep adversarial learning approaches. In particular a temporal convolutional network is used as encoder. Interestingly, the method is successfully evaluated in both cross-subject and cross-dataset. In [125, 126] domain adversarial approaches are used together with Graph Neural Net-

works (GNN, [87]) as feature extractor. In particular, [125] leverages on an attention mechanism [127] to lead the learning process to focus on the more tricky areas of the feature space. Performances are evaluated on SEED dataset. Instead, [126] proposed a Node-wise Domain Adversarial Training (NodeDAT) method to regularize the learning of a GNN for better subject-independent performances. In EEG literature, domain adversarial learning and attentional mechanisms are widely used in several other studies for EEG data recognition, for example in [128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133]. In particular, in [130] possible differences between several brain regions are also taken into account with a proposed attention module. In [134] (Attention-based LSTM with Domain Discriminator, ATDD-LSTM) a domain discriminator in terms of LSTMs is presented to reduce the discrepancy between the distributions. An attention-based encoder-decoder focuses on emotion-related input data, helping the final classification probability estimation.

An interesting adversarial approach was also investigated in [135]. The proposed work exploits the Covariance Matrices between EEG data and Riemannian distances [136]. The work proposed a new kind of Neural Network (daSPDnet) able to retain the intrinsic geometry information of the data. However, a little set of labeled data belonging to the Target domain are required during the training process, resulting as semi-supervised DA method. A similar approach, also requiring a few of labeled target data, was proposed in [137].

In [128] Adversarial Discriminative Domain Adaptation (ADDA), a strategy to tackle the DA on an image classification task, was proposed. Differently from DANN, the ADDA basic idea consisted in building two different functions for the Source and the Target domains, represented with two different encoders  $E_S$  and  $E_T$ , respectively.  $E_S$  is trained together with a classifier  $C$  using labeled data from the Source domain. Then, through an adversarial learning procedure,  $E_T$  is trained to map the Target domain data in the same space of  $E_S$  outputs. Target data can now be classified by  $C$ , consequently. A similar idea was adapted in EEG Emotion Recognition tasks in [138] (Wasserstein GAN Domain Adaptation, WGANDA). More in detail, two generators, the former for the Source and the latter for the Target domain, are pre-trained to output two feature vectors of the same size. These vectors are assumed to belong to the same feature space. Then, an adversarial training step based on minimizing the Wasserstein distance tunes the parameters of the generators such that the outputs match more closely as possible between them. The combined outputs are then used as input for a



final classifier.

Inspired by the MMD optimization made in [105], in [129](TDANN) a two stage DA method is proposed. In the first stage, MMD is minimized training a 2D CNN equipped with adaBN [139]. To be fed to the 2D CNN and to preserve spatial information, the EEG input signals are transformed into images [140, 141]. In the second stage, a domain discriminator is used to further reduce the distance between the source and the target distributions. The method was evaluated in a LOSO cross validation framework. One of the main issue of the DANN networks is that **only the feature data without any label is** considered during the adversarial learning process. **This type of** DA methods can **overlap** the distributions of **Source and Target** domains by reducing the distance between them **without any consideration on the belonging classes**, resulting in a simple mixing of the samples of the two domains, leading the categories within each domain to not be distinguishable. Indeed, in DANN the decision boundary inside each domain is ignored. **Differently**, in [142] (Maximum Classifier Discrepancy, MCD), **also** the labels of the Source domain data are considered, helping to **build** a good task-specific decision boundaries between the classes. **In particular, MCD exploits** different classifiers fed with the same inputs and evaluating the discrepancy. More in detail, two classifier  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  **having** the same **structure** are fed with **the output** of a feature generator  $G$ .  $G$  can be fed with data  $x$  coming from the source or the target domain. The output of  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are the labels of the input  $x$  **transformed** by  $G$ . Before the training step,  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  start from different initial states, rising two different classifiers after the training. How much the two classifiers disagree on their predictions on the same input is defined *discrepancy* by the authors. Indeed, the generator  $G$  is trained to minimize the discrepancy (that is, project source and target data in the same space), while  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are trained to maximize the discrepancy (so that the two classification boundaries are far from each other). The learned generator  $G$  will be able to relocate the target domain data in the source space, but **considering** its most probable belonging class. Task-Specific Domain Adversarial Neural Network (T-DANN, [143]) is an MCD similar model proposed for EEG Emotion Recognition. T-DANN adapts the conditional distribution between domains and, at the same time, adapts classification boundaries between classes exploiting MCD in conjunction with a domain discriminator.

From a different point of view, [144] exploits a few-shot learning **approach together with** an attention mechanism to deal with the excessive alignment

problem. Few-shot learning-based approaches are also used in [145] where Siamese Networks [146] are used to evaluate the similarity between samples belonging to different domains. Siamese networks were originally proposed to determine whether two different inputs belong to the same class or not. In [145] the Siamese framework is enhanced to handle different domains. However, this method requires a few of labeled data belonging to the Target domain.

In [147] the authors propose a DA approach for EEG-based emotion recognition based on a Multi-source co-Adaptation framework by mining diverse Correlation Information (MACI). Notably, MACI considers each subject as belonging to a different domain. The proposed method is compared with several both standard (shallow) DA approaches and CNN-based (deep) DA approaches. Cross-subjects and cross-datasets evaluations are performed. The authors of [148] propose a novel approach which attempts to unify in a unique optimization problem two standard DA approaches, that are instance reweighting and feature matching. This novel approach is named Progressive Low-Rank Subspace Alignment (PLRSA). In particular, instance reweighting is implemented by minimizing the Maximum Mean Discrepancy (MMD) distance with TrAdaBoost algorithm, and feature matching by Transfer Component Analysis (TCA). Importantly, a tiny amount of labeled target data is used. The proposed method is evaluated in a both cross-subjects and cross-sessions scenario. The method is compared with five state-of-the-art DA methods. The results seem promising, however the time complexity is a little more expensive than related state-of-the-art methods.

In [149], Neighborhood Component Analysis (NCA, [150]) is employed to learn the Mahalanobis distance between data. Therefore, data are linearly projected into a subspace such that the classification accuracy is maximized and the dimensionality of the EEG features is reduced. The obtained features are then used with Geodesic flow kernel for Unsupervised Domain Adaptation [151]. In another direction goes Multi-source Domain Transfer Discriminative Dictionary Learning modeling (MDTDDL) [152]. In this case, dictionary learning is used to learn a joint subspace between Source and Target domains [153]. DEEP and SEED are evaluated both in Cross-Subject and Cross-Session mode.

- *css methods:*

Although several studies start from the hypothesis that a single common feature space is enough for DA, *Common+Specific Space (CSS)* methods go



in different direction, **assuming** that a single shared classifier built in a shared space still has poor performance **with sessions/subjects never seen**. Notably, in these studies each subject/session available is considered as a single domain, and not as a whole. Hypothetically, EEG data representations can be splitted into emotional components **shared among** all the subjects, and private components, specific to each subject.

Leveraging on this hypothesis, [23] builds a shared encoder and private encoders for each source subject data, **with the aim** to capture the subject-invariant emotional representations and private components, respectively. The **learned** encoders are then used to build several emotion classifiers. Finally, a classifier **for a new subject** is built. **The parameters of** these classifiers are learned exploiting the shared encoder. A fusion strategy **between the classifiers' outputs** is then applied to obtain the final classification result. However, the proposed framework requires few labeled target data, falling in the **semisupervised** DA category. Multi-source EEG-based Emotion Recognition Network (MEERNet) [154] **proposed** a different classifier for each different domain (subject or session), preceded by a feature extractor shared by all the domains. Final classification is made averaging between domain-specific classifiers. Similarly, [155] proposed a framework composed of a common feature extractor to map all the domains in a common subspace, a main task classifier or regressor, and private discriminators for each domain. The training is made reducing the Wasserstein distance between the marginal distribution of each source domain and target one in an adversarial way. In [156] the authors proposed a Multi Source-Marginal Distribution Adaptation (MS-MDA) algorithm for EEG emotion recognition. Also in this case, the key idea is that the final response is obtained **aggregating** the responses of **different** target-source specific classifiers, preceded by a common feature extractor. Notably, the authors explore the impact of different types of data normalization on the performance of the proposed model. MS-MDA is **also** compared with several standard DA methods. Similarly, the authors of [157] proposed Multi-Source and Multi-Representation Adaptation (MSMRA), an approach with many similarities with MS-MDA. Both cross-subjects and cross-sessions evaluations are performed.

### ***Supervised DA (PreTraining) methods***

In the supervised DA category, four studies were included in the review. In [158] a pretrained version of InceptionResnetV2 [159] is used as feature extractor for EEG data. The classification is made by a final net-

work layer added to the InceptionResnetV2 network. Instead, [160] exploited DenseNet121 [161] as pre-trained model to build a new architecture fed with EEG data transformed into spectrogram images.

In [113] a CNN trained on different subjects and sessions of the SEED dataset is then re-trained on a small amount of data acquired from a subject belonging to the DEAP dataset. This was made to evaluate the cross-dataset emotion recognition performances. In [162] several classifiers trained on different data belonging to different subjects and sessions are ensembled together obtaining a final classifier suitable both for cross-sessions and cross-subjects EEG emotion recognition.

### *IRS & Hybrid*

IRS methods take into account that not all the training data can effectively be useful for the target space. Indeed, a part of the data can lead toward bad performance, therefore it can be better to remove them or to reduce their weights in the training stage. In [163] TrAdaBoost [164], a semi-supervised DA method acting the instances' weights, is used to score the source EEG data in order to avoid possible negative influence of the data during the training process. In a nutshell, a small amount of labeled target data available during the training stage helps to vote on the usefulness of each of the available source data instance. As initial step, only the source subjects data closest to the target one are selected. Similarity between subjects is computed according to the MMD similarity and fed to TrAdaBoost as auxiliary data.

In the revised literature, IRS methods are often used as an initial step of other DA methods. For instance, in [165, 166] the similarity between source and target EEG data is measured using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and the Average Frechet Distance, respectively. In particular, in [166] EEG source data closer to the available target data are projected to a new space through TCA, together with the target one. Finally, the classification step is made by an Echo State Network (ESN, [167]).

In [168] (DMATN) source data belonging to the existing subjects are divided into several subdomains. Then, a set of subdomains is chosen as the most relevant ones for the target data. The proposed architecture combines together DAN and DANN to learn representation that are domains invariant.

## ***DG methods***

Differently from classical DA, DG **assumes that** data from several domains are available, but no data from the **target** domain is observed during the training stage. Differently from classical domain adaptation methods, data from several domains are available, but no data from the test domain is observed during the training stage [169]. DG methods can be divided as:

- A) *shallow DG*: a data transformation is given a priori;
- B) *deep DG*: the data representation is learned as part of the DG strategy.

### ***A) Shallow DG methods***

*Shallow DG* methods share the same principles of shallow DA ones, building a shared space between domains, letting the input data representation unchanged. Domain Invariant Component Analysis (DICA) [169] searches for common features across several domains. Features data are transformed by a learned orthogonal transformation **able to** minimize the dissimilarity between a set of known domains **and** preserving, at the same time, the relations between data features and their real labels. The authors also provided an unsupervised DICA version which did not take care of the class labels.

In [170] Scatter Component Analysis (SCA) is proposed. The aim of the authors is to propose a method adapt both **for** DG and DA requirements. SCA searches for a data transformation where, at the same time, i) the source and the target domains are similar, ii) elements of the same class are similar, iii) elements of different classes are well separated, and iv) the variance of the whole data is maximized. This is made introducing *Scatter*, a measure closely related to MMD. In [171], SCA and DICA are applied and evaluated on SEED dataset.

### ***B) Deep DG methods***

On the other side, *deep DG* methods **embed** the data representation as part of the generalization strategy. In [172] data from similar subjects are used to train the same classifier. The similarity is computed through a clustering algorithm. This subset of similar subjects is used to train a final CNN classifier. **Notably**, in [173] a similar strategy is adopted, but for DA context. [174] joined together BiDANN and Variational Autoencoder (VAE), obtaining a subject-invariant Bi-lateral Variational Domain Adversarial Neural Network (BiVDANN). VAEs are generative neural networks able to learn embedding of data **in a latent space**. As any classical autoencoder, a VAE is

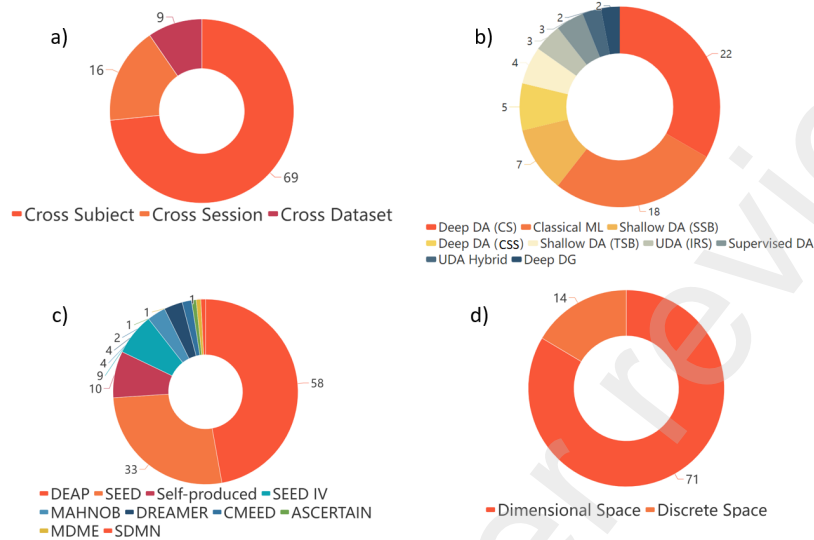


Figure 5: Pie charts for distribution of papers occurrences according to: a) generalization types, b) categories of the taxonomy, c) used datasets, d) emotional theories.

composed of an encoder network able to project data to an embedding space, and an decoder network able to reconstruct the original input from the embedding. In the proposed work, the learned features are further refined by domain adversarial training made across different subjects, with the aim to learn subject-independent features. Furthermore, to maximize cross-dataset performance, spectral topography data of the EEG signal are used as input.

The pie charts in Figure 5 show some statistics about the papers included in the survey. First of all, it is evident that almost three quarters of the studies surveyed (73.4 %) focus on a cross-subject mode of generalization, while cross-session studies account for only 17 % and only 9 % operate a cross-dataset mode of generalization. Graph b) shows the percentage distribution according to the proposed taxonomy. Looking at this graph, it is evident that the majority of generalization studies are moving towards the use of Deep DA (CS) (29.33 %), at the expense of more traditional approaches, which still retain 24 %. This is followed by Shallow DA (SSB) approaches (9.33 %), Deep DA (CSS) (6.67 %), Shallow DA (TSB) (5.33 %), Supervised DA and UDA (IRS) (4 %), and finally Deep DG and Hybrid DA (2.67 %).

The pie chart in Figure 5.c) shows the number of times each EEG dataset

is exploited in the reviewed literature. The mainly used datasets are SEED (45.8 %) and DEAP (27.5 %). This is followed by 8.3 % of studies that propose their own self-produced dataset. Among the other datasets available in the literature, only SEED IV stands out (at 7.5 %), which is interesting in that it adopts a discrete space of four emotions for classification (happy, sad, fear and neutral). Instead, each of the other datasets do not exceed 5 % (MAHNOB [175] and DREAMER [43] (3.33 %), CMEED [176] (1.7 %), ASCERTAIN [177], MDME [178] and SDMN [179] (0.8 %)).

Finally, Figure 5.d) offers an interesting statistic about the interest of the authors of the studies examined in the various perspectives of emotion representation. As already mentioned in section 1.3, the two dominant perspectives, and the only ones considered in the literature examined, are those based on categorical and dimensional models. More than 80 per cent of the works are based on a representation of emotions, and then their subsequent classification in terms of valence and arousal (and only in one case also dominance [135]).

In Tab. 1 all papers included in the review were reported, indicating if belonging to the proposed taxonomy or to classical ML methods. Moreover, for each research study as the type of generalization (cross-subject, cross-session, or cross-device), the EEG dataset, the adopted classifier (whether proposed as a personal contribution or adopted from the literature), and the validation strategy **is reported**. Studies in which the description of the experimental setup was not sufficiently clear, especially in terms of validation strategies, were voluntarily omitted from the table for reproducibility issues. The best performer solutions in terms of mean classification accuracy are proposed in Table 2. Only cross-subject studies were considered, as most of the studies examined. Ten classification issues were focused on. Each issue is defined by considering the number and type of classes (binary and ternary on valence and arousal, quaternary on the two-dimensional valence-arousal plane, binary and quaternary on discrete dimensions) and the adopted dataset (DEAP, SEED, other). For each issue, the best performer study in terms of accuracy was identified. Only studies reporting both mean accuracy and standard deviation were included in the performance assessment.

## 6. Discussion

To date, no robust electroencephalographic patterns are recognized in scientific literature for correlating with emotional states. Some studies base their results on the asymmetry of scalp activations. In general, many theories still coexist and are not statistically well founded (validated on small experimental samples) [180, 181, 182].

When aiming for a generalization goal in EEG-based Emotion Recognition, Transfer Learning methods are becoming more and more established in the literature. Domain Adaptation methods (Deep DA (CSB), Shallow DA (SSB), IRS DA, Deep DA (CSS), Shallow DA (TSB) and Supervised DA) exceed 60 % of the total surveyed studies and exhibit very high accuracy performances in the table of best performers (see Table 2). In particular, Deep DA (Common Space) is used by five best performers studies. This could be also due to the current massive use of Deep DA (Common Space) in the literature. Indeed, one third of the surveyed studies (Figure 5.d) belongs to this category.

However, a still substantial percentage of works (22.67 %) belongs to the Classical ML category. An emblematic case in this context is [85], namely the best performer in the classification issue on SEED IV with four discrete classes. This is an interesting study based on a self-organized graph construction module. This solution can be considered as a peculiar implementation of the well established adaptive filters strategy, when the generalization goal is pursued by customizing the network to the current input. Conversely, the DA strategies make the data belonging to different domains more homogeneous by means of appropriate transformations. The different impact between DA and adaptive filters approaches can be better appreciated by making a comparison between the previous study and [126]. Both studies address the problem of four-class classification on the same dataset by using a pipeline based on graphs and deep networks. In the first case, an adaptive graph is used without any DA methods, while the second study makes use of a (nonadaptive) graph approach in combination with DA techniques. Even though they use different approaches, the reported accuracy performances are comparable. This suggests how the dynamic search for feature extraction procedures represents an interesting frontier for future studies in this area, not excluding the potential of using this approach in combination with DA/DG techniques.

Several issues should be taken into account considering TL methods.

Firstly, UDA methods require the availability of unlabeled target data in the training phase. In the emotion recognition problem, this implies that EEG recordings belonging to the target session/subject are provided. This availability is not granted, especially in online applications. In alternative, initial calibration data can be acquired from the target subject, but this requires additional efforts both for the subjects and the operators.

Secondly, a large part of DA strategies uses the source data as they all belong to the same domain. This assumption can be too strong, especially if the source data are acquired in different sessions or, worse, from different subjects. This point is taken into account by multi-source DA approaches, such as Transductive Parameter Transfer (TPT) [183], or by multi-source DA approaches specific for EEG data, such as MSSA or MEERNet, where different source subjects/sessions are considered as different source domains, and by DG methods.

Thirdly, in several DA strategies labels of both the source and target domains are not considered in the alignment of the domains. This type of DA methods can lead to overlapping distributions of source and target domains, without any consideration on the belonging classes. As a consequence, the class separability can worsen. This can be a weakness of some Shallow DA methods, such as unsupervised TCA.

Specific weakness can be highlighted for each DA category of the proposed taxonomy.

Shallow DA methods require data projections between different spaces by means of handcrafted transformations. Therefore, the adopted transformations may not be suitable for the available data. Moreover, among proposed data transformations, some of them require all the data be processed together, with a large amount of memory needed.

On the other side, Deep DA methods require a greater number of parameters with respect to a shallow method. This can result in high computational complexity, such as in MACI and Adversarial learning-based methods. This can lead toward overfitting and the curse of dimensionality problems [104] if not enough data are available. However, despite their high computational load, Deep DA methods exhibit the best performance in terms of accuracy at least in four of the cases considered, as can be seen in Tab. 2.

Instance Reweighting and Selection methods select or score data to manage uncorrelation between source and target data. Therefore, a part of the data may not fully be used in the training stage, making these methods strongly dependent on the score/selection function adopted. Moreover, their compu-



tational cost can be not negligible, since they re-weight the available data according to their similarity.

Supervised DA methods require models trained on data belonging to the source domain. In several tasks (such as image classification) several pre-trained model on big amount of data are freely and publicly available to the user (for example ResNet models trained on ImageNet [112]). However, it is harder to find similar models trained on EEG data for Emotion Recognition task. This can be due to the scarcity of publicly available large dataset. Moreover, also by collecting together several public dataset, the resulting model may have low performance. Indeed, being the EEG is a highly non-stationary signal, it results very susceptible to different experimental conditions. In contrast to DA approaches, the aim of Domain Generalization (DG) is to generalize over several domains. Therefore, data belonging to the target may not be required in the training stage. Instead, data from several other domains (i.e. sessions/subjects) are required. This may be impractical especially in experimental scenarios, due to the difficulties of enrolling subjects and the time required to conduct multiple acquisitions. Thus, DA approaches are currently the most proposed methods in Emotion Recognition scenarios involving TL.

Originally, the well-known TL methods were developed outside the Emotion Recognition framework. In recent years, several studies have exploited these methods in emotion recognition but focusing only on their effectiveness, without conducting an in-depth analysis of the specific contributions made by TL methods in this field. In fact, several DA pipelines consist of several steps, and a comparison of performance with and without TL methods does not identify the most effective steps. For example, in [184] it is shown that in several cases the data normalization adopted as first step of several TL pipelines has a stronger impact on the model generalization respect to the TL methods themselves. Other studies [77, 78, 79] have confirmed that simple data normalization with low computational and spatial efforts allows for interesting results in EEG-based Emotion Recognition, in some cases comparable or better than several current DA/DG approaches. In general, the merits of TL techniques are not in question, but in the future, a more in-depth analysis by scientists is needed, for example by accompanying their proposals with ablation studies.

Another point to take into account is that the proliferation of EEG acquisition devices on the market is not always coupled with consistency in terms of



quality between the various devices (considering electrode type and positioning, interference shielding, and signal-to-noise ratio, amplification strategies, etc). A comparison among different studies must take into account the quality of EEG instrumentation used. The IEC 60601-2-26 standard applies to basic safety and essential performance of electroencephalographs used in a clinical environment. Among the requirements, the minimum overall signal quality for an electroencephalographic device to be considered acceptable is defined [185]. Even if IEC 60601-2-26 is a standard specifically developed for clinical purposes, it is nowadays the only available standard for EEG instrumentation quality certification. In the future, it is desirable for research to be increasingly based on certified instruments. However, an encouraging trend emerges from the most recent public datasets. Indeed, they are all based on standardized equipment: (i) Neuroelectrics Enobio 8 in the case of LUMED [158], (ii) NuAmp Neuroscan in the case of CMEED [134], and (iii) gtec.HIamp in the case of the dataset produced by [129]).

A further concern in the use of public datasets is its underlying theoretical background, often uncritically accepted by the scientists. Many studies validate the same machine learning algorithm on different datasets although the targeted psychic phenomena are radically different. Indeed, each dataset leverages on a specific theory of emotions and related experimental setup of emotion elicitation. For instance, DEAP is based on a dimensional approach and SEED IV on discrete one.

Finally, at present, the available public datasets do not adopt an established practice of psychological screening of the subjects involved. In general, studies on EEG-based emotion assessment could benefit from administering psychometric questionnaires to participants. Indeed, psychological data could help to understand individual differences in emotional response, leading to clustering of subjects [173]. Recently, unsupervised clustering based on large datasets is emerging as a promising strategy for empirical identification of personality types [186]. Meanwhile, correlations have been found between personality types and EEG patterns [187]. Moreover, prior psychological assessments allow to manage bias due to individual traits or states. The introduction of psychometric tests and assessments during the production of upcoming datasets could lead to a much more fruitful use of data in support of generalization.

## 7. Conclusion

In this work, a systematic literature review collecting papers on machine learning strategies to pursue (cross-subjects and cross-sessions) generalizability in EEG-based emotion recognition was carried out. Among the 418 articles retrieved from Scopus, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Xplore, and PubMed databases, 75 papers resulted eligible. Furthermore, the studies with the best results in terms of average classification accuracy were identified, and the ten best results considering as many classification problems were highlighted.

Most of the analyzed works adopted Classical ML or TL approaches to deal with the generalization problem. In particular, TL methods received a considerable attention from the scientific community, as their basic framework is particularly suited to the EEG Emotion Recognition generalization problem. In spite of their limitations (i.e., the need for target data during the training stage), today DA methods result to be particularly encouraging to handle the EEG Emotion Recognition generalization problem. DG methods aim to achieve a more generalized approach compared to DA, which relies on target data availability. However, due to the challenging nature of this approach, current DG methods generally have lower performance than DA approaches in the task of Emotion Recognition. Finally, works relying on simple ML methods combined with proper normalization strategies lead to interesting results with a low computational load. This can be due to the ability of some simple transformations to project data into spaces where shared characteristics between the domains are emphasized.

An interesting perspective based on self-organized graph construction modules emerged as peculiar strategy. This suggests how the adaptive feature extraction procedures represent an interesting frontier for future studies in this area, not excluding the potential of using this approach in combination with DA/DG techniques.

Future research on EEG-based emotion assessment could also benefit from administering psychometric questionnaires to participants in order to conduct a psychological screening of the experimental sample. This could help to understand individual differences in emotional responses, leading to clustering of subjects also taking into account the different subjects' personality.

## 8. Acknowledgement

This work was carried out as part of the “INTENSE” project, which was financially supported by the Italian Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy (Mimit). The work was also supported by European Union - FSE-REACT-EU, PON Research and Innovation 2014-2020 DM1062/2021 contract number 18-I-15350-2 and by the Ministry of University and Research, PRIN research project ”BRIO – BIAS, RISK, OPACITY in AI: design, verification and development of Trustworthy AI.”, Project no. 2020SSKZ7R. The authors also thank the PhD Grant ”AR4ClinicSur- Augmented Reality for Clinical Surgery” (INPS - National Social Security Institution – Italy). The authors would like to thank the editor and the anonymous reviewers for their stimulating and precious suggestions and comments to the review of this paper.

### Acronyms

**A-DNN** - Adversarial Deep Neural Network  
**AD-TCN** - Adversarial Discriminative Temporal Convolutional Network  
**ASFM** - Adaptive Subspace Feature Matching  
**ASI** - Add-Session-In  
**ATDD-LSTM** - Attention-based LSTM  
**BiDANN** - Bi-hemispheres DANN  
**BiHDM** - Bi-Hemispheric Discrepancy Model  
**BiLSTM** - Bidirectional LSTM  
**BiVDANN** - Bi-lateral Variational Domain Adversarial Neural Network  
**CS** - Common Space-based  
**DAN** - Deep Adaptation Network  
**DANN** - Domain Adversarial Neural Network  
**DASC** - Domain Adaptation Subject Clustering  
**DASRC** - Domain Adaptation Sparse Representation Classifier  
**DDC** - Deep Domain Confusion  
**DECNN** - Dynamic Empirical Convolutional Neural network  
**DGCNN** - Dynamical Graph Convolutional Neural Networks  
**DG-DANN** - Domain Generalization DANN  
**DResNet** - Domain Residual Network  
**ESN** - Echo State Network  
**GNB** - Gaussian Naïve Bayes

**HO** - Hold Out  
**IRS** - Instance Reweighting and Selection  
**LOO** - Leave One Out  
**LSTM** - Long short-term memory  
**MACI** - Multi-Source Co-adaptation Correlation Information  
**MDTDDL** - Multi-source Domain Transfer Discriminative Dictionary Learning modelling  
**MEERNet** - Multi-Source EEG-based Emotion Recognition Network  
**MIDA** - Maximum Independence Domain Adaptation  
**MSDAN** - Multi-Spatial Domain Adaptation Network  
**MS-MDA** - Multi Source-Marginal Distribution Adaptation  
**MSSA** - Multi-Subject Subspace Alignment  
**Na** - not available  
**NCA** = Neighborhood Component Analysis  
**O2OSE** - ONE-TO-ONE-SESSION  
**PLRSA** - Progressive Low-Rank Subspace Alignment  
**PPDA** - Plug-and-Play Domain Adaptation  
**R2G-STNN** - Regional To Global Spatial-Temporal Neural Network  
**RCNN** - Residual CNN  
**RF** - Random Forest  
**RFE** - Recursive Feature Elimination  
**RGNN** - Regularized Graph Neural Network  
**RPCA** - Robust Principal Component Analysis  
**SAAE** - Subspace Alignment Auto Encoder  
**SBS** - Sequential Backward Selection  
**SDA-FSL** - Single-Source Domain Adaptive Few-Shot Learning Network  
**SE2SE** - session-to-session  
**SOGNN** - Self-Organized Graph Neural Network  
**sp** - self-produced  
**css** - Specific+Common Space-based  
**SSB** - Shared Space-Based  
**STM** - Style Transfer Mapping  
**SU2SU** - subject-to-subject  
**SVM** - Support Vector Machine  
**TCA** - Transfer Component Analysis  
**TDANN** - Two-Level Domain Adaptation Neural Network  
**TPT** - Transductive Parameter Transfer  
**TRFE** - Transferable Recursive Feature Elimination

**TSB** - Target Space-Based

**UDA** - Unsupervised/Semi-supervised Domain Adaptation

**VAE** - Variational Auto Encoder

**WGANDA** - Wasserstein Generative Adversarial Network Domain Adaptation

**wMADA** - Wasserstein-Distance-based Multi-Source Adversarial Domain Adaptation

## Funding

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Table 1: Reviewed studies on generalization strategies for emotion recognition. Datasets used, classifiers, evaluation strategy, and type of generalization (i.e. intersubjects, cross sessions and cross datasets) are presented for each entry in the table. (sp = self produced, nl = not labeled; for the other abbreviations see section 8).

Classifier Category	Study	Dataset	Classifier	Evaluation Strategy	Cross Subject	Cross Session	Cross Dataset
CLASSICAL ML	[70]	DEAP	TRFE	LOO	X		
	[65]	DEAP, MAHNOB, sp	RF	LOO	X		X
	[66]	DEAP, SEED	SVM	LOO	X		
	[84]	SEED, DREAMER	DGCNN	LOO	X		
	[67]	DEAP, SEED	SVM	LOO	X		
	[68]	DEAP, sp	SBS	LOO	X		
	[69]	DEAP	TRFE	LOO	X		
	[73]	DEAP, SEED	VAE-LSTM	LOO	X		
	[76]	DEAP	SVM	LOO	X		
	[79]	DEAP, MAHNOB, DREAMER	SVM	LOO	X		
	[71]	DEAP, MAHNOB	RFE	LOO	X		
	[72]	SEED	DECNN	LOO	X		
	[75]	DEAP, SEED	VAE-LSTM	LOO	X		
	[77]	SEED	SVM	LOO	X		
	[78]	SEED	SVM	LOO	X		
	[83]	ASCERTAIN	BiLSTM	LOO	X		
	[85]	SEED, SEED IV	SOGNN	LOO	X		
	UDA (IRS)	[64]	SEED, sp	PTSVM	LOO		X
[163]		DEAP	SVM	LOO	X		
[149]		DEAP	NCA	LOO	X		
SHALLOW DA (TSB)	[168]	SEED	DMATN	LOO	X		
	[89]	SEED	ASFM	LOO	X	X	
SHALLOW DA (SSB)	[90]	SEED	MSSA	LOO	X		
	[92]	MDME, SDMN	RPCA	ASI		X	
	[93]	SEED	STM	LSO	X		
SHALLOW DA (SSB)	[97]	SEED	TCA	LOO	X		
	[105]	SEED	SAAE	SU2SU, SE2SE, LOO	X	X	
	[106]	SEED	TPT	LOO	X		
	[107]	DEAP, SEED	MIDA	LOO	X		X
	[98]	SEED	TCA	LOO	X		
	[102]	DEAP, SEED	DASRC	LOO		X	X
DEEP DA (CS)	[99]	sp	TCA	HO		X	
	[120]	SEED	DANN	LOO	X		
	[116]	SEED, SEED IV	DAN	LOO	X		
	[121]	SEED	BiDANN	LOO	X		
	[138]	DEAP	WGANDA	LOO	X		
	[111]	SEED	DDC	LOO	X		
	[130]	SEED	R2G-STNN	LOO	X		
	[131]	DEAP, SEED	nl	LOO, SU2SU, O2OSE	X	X	
	[123]	SEED, SEED IV, MPED	BiHDM	LOO	X		
	[126]	SEED, SEED IV	RGNN	LOO	X		
	[129]	SEED, sp	TDANN	LOO	X	X	
	[133]	SEED, CMEED	A-DNN	LOO	X		
	[134]	DEAP, SEED, CMEED	ATDD-LSTM	LOO	X	X	
	[117]	sp	MSDAN	LOO	X		
	[132]	SEED	nl	LOO	X		
[137]	SEED	nl	LOO	X			
[143]	SEED	TDANN	SU2SU	X			
[144]	DEAP, SEED	SDA-FSL	LOSO	X		X	
[147]	DEAP, SEED	MACI	LOO	X		X	
[148]	DEAP, SEED	PLRSA	LOO, SU2SU	X	X		
[124]	DEAP, DREAMER	AD-TCN	LOO	X		X	
[122]	SEED	BiHDM	LOO	X			
[152]	DEAP, SEED	MDTDDL	LOO	X		X	

Classifier Category	Study	Dataset	Classifier	Evaluation Strategy	Cross Subject	Cross Session	Cross Dataset
DEEP DA (CSS)	[23]	SEED	PPDA	LOO	X		
	[154]	SEED, SEED IV	MEERNet	LOO	X	X	
	[173]	DEAP, sp	DASC	LOO	X		
	[156]	SEED	MS-MDA	LOO	X	X	
	[155]	SEED	wMADA	LOO	X		
UDA (HYBRID)	[165]	sp	GNB	ASI		X	
	[166]	DEAP	ESN	LOO	X		
	[158]	DEAP, SEED, sp	nl	LOO	X		X
SUPERVISED DA	[113]	DEAP, SEED	RCNN	LOO	X		X
	[160]	DEAP, SEED	Densenet	LOO	X		
DEEP DG	[171]	SEED	DG-DANN, DResNet	LOO	X		
	[174]	DEAP, SEED	BiVDANN	LOO	X		

Table 2: The most representative studies according to their classification accuracy, categorised by EEG dataset (SEED, DEAP, others), by number and type of classes considered. DIM = Dimensional; DIS = Discrete; sp = self-produced.

Proposed category	Study	Dataset	Reference Theory	#Classes	Accuracy
SUPERVISED DA	[158]	DEAP	DIM (VAL)	#2 (LV/HV)	72.81 ± 5.07
		Other	DIM (VAL)	#2 (LV/HV)	81.80 ± 10.92
UDA (IRS)	[166]	DEAP	DIM (VAL)	#3 (LV/MV/HV)	68.06 ± 10.93
DEEP DA (CSS)	[173]	DEAP	DIM (VAL-ARO)	#2 (LV/HV)	73.90 ± 13.50 (VAL)
				#2 (LA/HA)	68.80 ± 11.20 (ARO)
DEEP DA (CS)	[131]	DEAP	DIM (VAL-ARO)	#4 (LALV-HALV-LAHV-HAHV)	62.66 ± 10.45
DEEP DA (CS)	[144]	SEED	DIM (VAL)	#2 (LV/HV)	97.66 ± 14.46
DEEP DA (CS)	[134]	SEED	DIM (VAL)	#3 (LV/MV/HV)	90.92 ± 1.05
		Other	DIM (VAL-ARO)	#2 (LV/HV)	94.21 ± 5.88 (VAL)
				#2 (LA/HA)	88.03 ± 6.32 (ARO)
DEEP DA (CS)	[129]	Other	DIS (HAPPY, SAD FEAR, ANGER)	#2 (JOY/SADNESS)	83.79 ± 1.55 (JOY/SAD)
				#2 (JOY/ANGER)	84.13 ± 1.37 (JOY/ANGER)
				#2 (JOY/FEAR)	81.72 ± 1.30 (JOY/FEAR)
CLASSICAL ML	[85]	Other	DIS (HAPPY, SAD FEAR, NEUTRAL)	#4 (HAPPY/SAD/ FEAR/NEUTRAL)	75.27 ± 8.19