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Applications of Electroencephalography in Construction

Abstract

A wearable electroencephalogram (EEG) is considered a means for investigating psychophysiological conditions of individuals in the workplace in order to ameliorate occupational health and safety. Following other sectors, construction scholars have adopted this technology over the past decade to strengthen evidence-based practices to improve the wellbeing of workers. This study presents the state-of-the-art hardware, algorithms, and applications of EEG as a platform that assists in dealing with the risk-prone and complex nature of construction tasks. After summarizing the background of EEG and its research paradigms in different sectors, a comprehensive review of EEG-enabled construction research is provided. First, through a macro-scale review aided by bibliometric analysis a big picture of the research streams is plotted. Second, a micro-scale review is conducted to spot the gaps in the literature. The identified gaps are used to classify the future research directions into theoretical, application, and methodological developments.

Keywords: EEG, EEG-enabled Construction, Wellbeing of Workers, Health and Safety, Systematic Review

1. Introduction

The construction sector has long been regarded as a high-risk industry. In this sector, workers are consistently exposed to unsafe work environments due to, for instance, interactions with machinery and physical hazards [1]. The dynamic workplace and varying nature of construction tasks lead to differing working states and, thus, place the wellbeing of construction workers at exacerbated risks compared to workers of other sectors [2]. According to Safe Work Australia [3], the construction sector accounts for 9% of the total workforce in Australia but recorded 12% of work-related fatalities. This situation is not different in other countries. For instance, in 2016, the construction industry had the highest number of fatal work injuries among all other industries in the United States [4]. Therefore, enhancing health and safety in the construction sector is a top priority for both construction contractors and governmental authorities.

Construction health and safety is multidisciplinary in nature [5-7]. With the emergence of disruptive technologies in recent years, wearable technologies have attracted significant attention to ameliorate occupational health and safety and improve workers' wellbeing in different industries. In this cluster, electroencephalography (EEG) has emerged as one of the fast-growing technologies for measuring individuals' cognitive and mental states under different circumstances in the workplace [8].

EEG is an electrophysiological monitoring system that records the electrical activities generated by cortical neurons [9]. Advancements in computing platforms and sensory technologies have enabled EEG systems to be designed as miniature, lightweight, ultra-low power [10, 11], wireless [12], and low cost devices [11, 13]. Therefore, deploying portable and mobile EEG has been on the increase in different sectors [14].

41 The aforementioned developments in EEG and computational neuroscience make it a good choice
42 for scientific and interdisciplinary studies. Thus, EEG has been used not only in clinical and
43 psychiatric [15-17] and psychological and neuroscientific studies [18-23], but also in other fields,
44 such as brain-computer interface (BCI) [24, 25], neuromarketing [26-29], gaming [30-33], neuro-
45 ergonomics [34-39], neuro-aesthetics [40, 41], transportation [42-47], and athlete performance
46 evaluation [48, 49]. In the building industry, both neuro-architecture and neuro-urbanism [50-54]
47 use EEG and mobile EEG in their studies to enhance the built environment features.

48 Based on the theory of behavioral psychology, psychological status affects human behavior [55]
49 and external phenomena affect human behavior through mental factors [56, 57]. These have
50 perhaps led the construction industry to trial EEG technology in studying the psychophysiological
51 impacts of the workplace on construction workers. The overall aim has been to improve health and
52 safety in construction projects.

53 EEG is considered as a strong tool in the construction studies because it directly and cost-
54 effectively measures neural activity with high time resolution, and can be used in mobile format.
55 Mobility is an essential feature for all technologies to be used on the construction sites because of
56 the physical complexities of the workplace or the physical demands of the work. EEG has a great
57 advantage to conduct both laboratory and on-site studies in the construction sector, while other
58 techniques, such as functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Positron Emission Tomography, and
59 Magnetoencephalography, can only be used in stationary studies [58-70].

60 Despite the importance of using EEG in the construction field and its expected contributions, the
61 body of knowledge lacks a structured review on this subject. With a growing number of articles in
62 this field, such a systematic review can organize research areas, methodologies, outcomes, and
63 challenges. A thorough review of the extant literature also assists in spotting the research gaps and,
64 therefore, establishing a readily actionable reference to pathways for future research. Moreover,
65 the review of the scholarly works provides insight into the network of researchers and
66 professionals involved in the implementation of EEG in construction health and safety. This would
67 facilitate future collaborations to share knowledge and expand the adoption of EEG in
68 construction.

69 The aim of this research is to shed light on the potential applications of mobile EEG on
70 construction sites and investigate the contribution of this technology to workers' wellbeing and
71 safety. This paper paves the way for extended application of mobile EEG to tackle construction
72 challenges relating to workers' mental states. In this regard, reviewing the literature of EEG as a
73 wearable technology to support the construction workforce is the primary concern of this paper.
74 Therefore, the present study summarizes the EEG features and its general research paradigms
75 beyond construction, discusses key EEG applications, research themes and analytical methods in
76 the construction industry, and highlights possible pathways for the future of EEG adoption in the
77 construction industry as a wearable technology to support the workforce. The study adopts both
78 macro-scale and micro-scale approaches in analyzing the literature. While the macro-scale
79 approach is mainly used to identify the overall focus of papers, the micro-scale analysis is
80 employed to systematically classify the research themes and the gaps in the construction literature.

81 *1.1. EEG in practice*

82 *1.1.1 Brain electrical activity*

83 The cerebrum is the largest part of the brain anatomy and has four major areas, namely frontal,
84 temporal, parietal, and occipital lobes [71]. These lobes consist of billions of neurons that transfer
85 information, leading to voltage changes in milliseconds across their membranes.

86 The generated electrical signal is a blend of different frequencies, each of which correlates to a
87 specific state of the brain. These frequencies are classified as delta (0.5–3.5 Hz), theta (4–7 Hz),
88 alpha (8–12 Hz), beta (13–30 Hz), and gamma (> 30 Hz) bands [72]. The delta band frequency
89 appears in deep non-rapid eye movement sleep, which is typically located in the thalamus and is
90 investigated for sleep disorders and alcoholism [9]. The frontal theta band is related to the hardship
91 of mental operations (e.g., memory recall, processing, focused attention, and learning). It becomes
92 more important with the increasing difficulty of a given task. Therefore, mental workload or
93 working memory can be investigated through fluctuations of the theta frequencies, making this
94 band an appropriate candidate to monitor workers, for instance, during construction operations.
95 Beta frequencies appear in the moment of active, busy, or anxious thinking. Typical studies on
96 beta frequencies encompass motor control and simulated-induced alertness [73]. The highest
97 frequencies generated from the human brain are considered gamma band frequencies.
98 Investigations into its origins are still ongoing [74].

99 *1.1.2. EEG electrodes*

100 In EEG, metal sensors (i.e., electrodes) are placed onto the scalp to record the electrical activity of
101 the brain. Since the recorded signals are low voltage, an amplifier is used to strengthen the signals
102 and make the electrical data more tangible [75].

103 There are different kinds of electrodes that can be selected according to the conditions of the
104 experiment. Mostly, electrodes are categorized based on the conductor between the electrode and
105 the scalp. According to this classification, there are four types of electrodes, including wet, dry,
106 active, and passive [76]. In wet electrodes, a conductive gel, usually made from a compound of
107 silver chloride, is applied to skin; therefore, a better connection is established between the electrode
108 and the scalp [77]. In the absence of a jellied conductor, dry electrodes use a metal piece (usually
109 stainless steel) as a conductor between the electrode and the scalp [78]. Another type of electrode,
110 known as “active”, amplifies the signal immediately in between the electrode and the scalp and
111 before transmitting it to the recording system [79]. This can prevent the addition of noise between
112 the electrode and the system. Passive electrodes use a simple approach to ameliorate the signal
113 quality by extending the connection from the conductive material to the equipment [80].

114 To array the electrodes, the American Electroencephalography Society has presented a 10–20
115 system in which the electrodes' positions are defined and named across the scalp [68]. In this
116 system, the electrodes are named based on their positions on the scalp, such as Fp (frontal polar),
117 F (Frontal), C (Central), P (parietal), O (occipital), and T (temporal). The number of electrodes
118 may vary based on the experiment; however, the key is to try to distribute the electrodes evenly
119 across the scalp [81].

120 There are many electrodes and headsets in the market for scientific studies. With recent
 121 developments in neuroscience, the number of mobile headsets has also increased. Some headsets
 122 are more suitable for construction studies, such as mobile, wireless, and lightweight headsets with
 123 a reasonable number of electrodes. Also, electrodes with high-quality signal acquisition without
 124 too much preparation are preferred for construction site experiments.

125 *1.1.3. EEG experimental paradigms*

126 The advanced use of EEG requires expertise for signal preprocessing, artifact detection, and
 127 feature extraction. EEG signals are prone to artifacts, which can be physiological noises (e.g.,
 128 lateral eye motions, blinks, and muscle movements), and external ones (e.g., movements of an
 129 electrode or the headset, line noise, swaying or swinging) [82]. The complexity of signal
 130 processing lies in the fact that an EEG-based dataset is characterized not only by features of the
 131 device but also by the respondent population, recording conditions, stimuli, and overall
 132 experimental paradigm [83]. Table 1 relates the features and the experimental paradigms by
 133 summarizing different EEG signals' analyses, their goals, characteristics, and fields of application.

Metrics and features	Goal	Characteristics	Application fields
Event-related potentials (ERP) analysis	To collect brain electrical signals generated by external stimuli	-Voltage changes in response to stimuli or events - Data selection by epoching or segmentation - The average EEG time-course over different trials is used in the analyses	-General and experimental psychology - Clinical psychology -Biomedical engineering
Frequency-based analysis	To understand the brain processes which direct emotions, feelings, and thoughts	- Analyzing the frequencies that are mainly associated with internal factors, including brain structures and physiological processes - Suitable for studying the general mental state under limited testing time and when the timing precision of stimulus is not the main concern	Investigation of subject response to certain content, product, website, or software interfaces
Frontal asymmetry metrics	To understand states of emotion through high-level frequency-based metrics in which the imbalanced frequencies between the left and right sides of the brain are investigated	- Beta and/or gamma signals are investigated, especially in frontal cortical regions - Positive emotions, engagement, and motivation result in higher band power in the left vs. right frontal cortex and vice versa - Frontal asymmetry can be investigated throughout the frontal electrodes, such as F3 and F4	- Emotion, motivation, and psychopathology - Resting and psychophysiology - Consumer neuroscience, advertisement, and marketing research
Cognitive-affective metrics	To enable understating performance, personality, situation, and interactions	- Associated with functions in the outer layer of the cerebrum related to mental workload or drowsiness - Enables the possibility of monitoring subjects' physiological and mental state (e.g., fatigue and attention level) - Two of the most important metrics are “cognitive state” and “workload”	- Educational technology and educational assessment - Educational psychology - Military psychology - Fatigue, sleep, and psychological assessment

134 **Table 1: EEG experimental paradigms [9]**

135 **2. Research method**

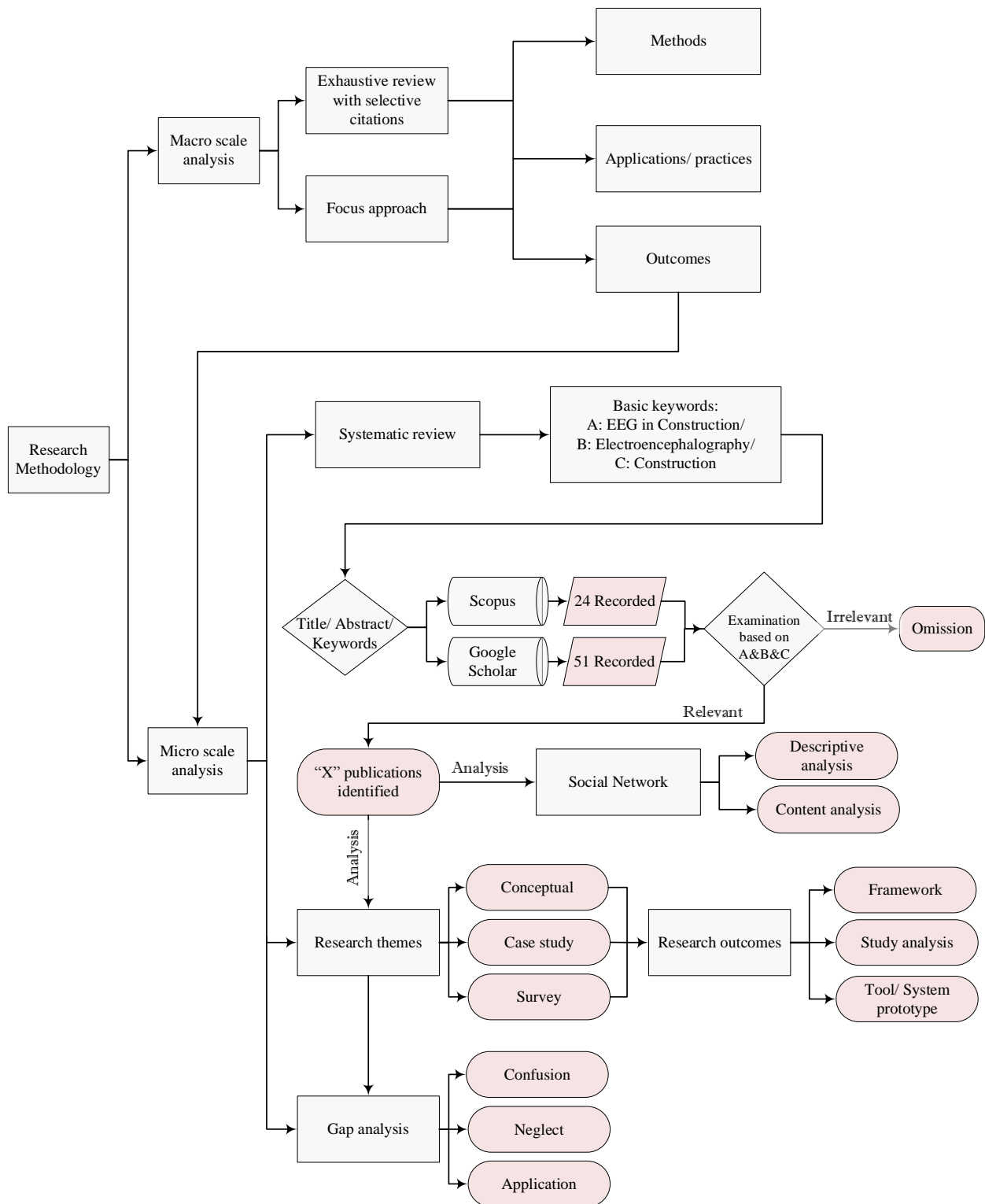
136 In this study, a systematic review approach is adopted to avoid any bias and concurrently enhance
137 the quality in mass review of the articles. As shown in Figure 1, the selected approach for the aim
138 of this review is a hybrid of macro-scale and micro-scale reviews. The study first began at a macro-
139 scale, characterized by an “exhaustive review with selective citation”, that is, covering relevant
140 articles from two prominent databases. At this scale, the “focus” of the selected articles was
141 investigated through summarizing their methods, applications, and outcomes [84]. In line with the
142 method stated by Cooper [85], the study was then taken to micro-level by conducting detailed
143 scrutiny of the research outcomes. At the micro-scale, the outcomes were systematically analyzed
144 with a view to identifying the research themes and the gaps in the literature.

145 *2.1 Systematic review*

146 The protocol for searching relevant materials was adopted from Major and Saven-Baden [86]. As
147 depicted in Figure 1, the process encompassed an exhaustive search into the title, abstract, and
148 keywords of the published research listed on two of the most reputable bibliographic databases,
149 Scopus and Google Scholar. The relevant articles with the required themes and content were
150 identified through screening the abstract and introduction sections. As this review is scoped on the
151 application of mobile EEG in the construction industry, materials that were not fully related were
152 also filtered out from micro-scale review. This means the EEG-related articles must have studied
153 the construction tasks undertaken by construction workers either in a field research (i.e. in real
154 construction sites) or in laboratory settings (i.e. in a pilot study of construction environments) to
155 meet the micro-scale review criterion.

156 A spreadsheet was then created in order to identify categories of publications for both descriptive
157 and content analysis. The descriptive analysis was to classify the publications based on year, type,
158 title of the publications, and the academic institutions. Furthermore, the focus of the study, EEG
159 channels, software and hardware, signal processing methods, and accuracy of digital signal
160 processing (DSP) were placed into different categories for content, thematic and gap analyses. In
161 this paper, social network analysis (SNA) is adopted as a tool to analyze the categories in both
162 descriptive and content analysis. In order to explore the patterns of the relationships among
163 individuals and groups, SNA provides a wide range of analysis and techniques [87]. There is a
164 plethora of software and tools to perform a network analysis, each of which has its own features
165 and strengths specified for a certain type of network [88]. In this research, Gephi (0.9.2 version)
166 was used as the network analysis tool [89]. It is an open-source software that provides a visualized
167 insight into the structure of the formed networks. The methods used in the present study meets the
168 requirements presented in the previous seminal studies [85, 86, 90, 91] for a methodologically
169 robust and holistic literature review.

170



171

172

173

Figure 1: Methodology flowchart

174 2.2 Thematic and gap analysis

175 Differentiation of themes was based on a classification provided by Fellows and Liu [92]. This
176 method classifies the themes of publications into theoretical and conceptual papers, case studies,
177 and survey articles. Also, the prime model to categorize the outcome of research is presented as a
178 study analysis, framework, and tool/system prototype [90, 93, 94]. Although gap analysis is
179 usually conducted intuitively in construction research [92], this paper used a structured approach
180 proposed by Sandberg and Alvesson [93] to spot the gaps in the extant literature. Accordingly, the
181 gap spotting encompassed three particular modes, entitled confusion, neglect, and application [93]:

- 182 • *Confusion*: The main concern of this approach is to reveal the confusion in previous studies.
183 In other words, the problem has been investigated already in the literature, but the result
184 conflicts with the available evidence. Research questions in this mode seek to highlight and
185 explain contradictions in the existing literature.
- 186 • *Neglect*: Pointing out a neglected area in the literature is one of the most prevalent ways to
187 construct a research question. In this mode of gap analysis, the scholar tries to unveil a
188 neglected territory to develop an investigation about it. Papers subject to this kind of gap are
189 categorized in three groups according to their method and result (i.e., over-looked, under-
190 researched, and lack of empirical support).
- 191 • *Application*: The last basic mode to identify a gap in the existing body of knowledge is in
192 identifying a new application. Applying this version of gap analysis enables researchers to
193 construct a research question based on the inadequacy of a specific theory or a clear outlook
194 in a particular area of the research. The main idea is to detect the needs of a certain literature
195 for completion or extension.

196 Although most studies have employed one key approach to construct research questions, applying
197 a combination of different gap analysis modes is not uncommon [93].

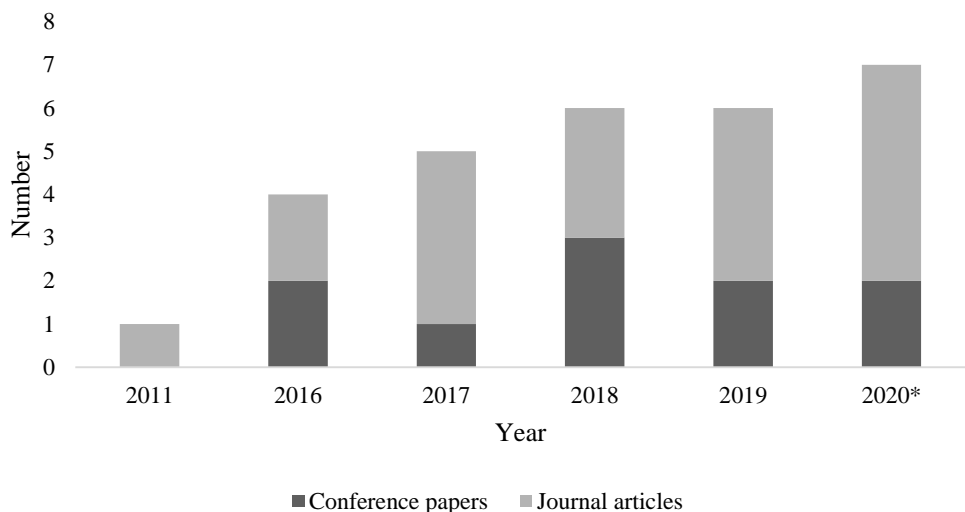
198 3. Results and discussion

199 3.1 Descriptive analysis

200 The review of EEG-related construction articles shows that the studies have placed emphasis on
201 demonstrating the potential applications of EEG in the construction industry as a whole rather than
202 narrowing down to any specific construction trade. This has been pursued by experimenting the
203 use of EEG on the tasks that could be performed by most of the trades and in different construction
204 processes. The investigated tasks may involve accident-prone processes, including but not limited
205 to visual concentration or cognitive demand processes in conjunction with a muscular activity
206 under a hazardous situation [95-97]. To exemplify these, some studies have designed a series of
207 tasks, such as climbing a ladder, selecting and picking a tiny material, and fabricating an element,
208 to experiment the usefulness of EEG technology [98]. Nonetheless, there are scenarios in which
209 EEG technology has been used in non-hazardous conditions, for instance, to compare performance
210 of workers with when they are exposed to hazardous conditions.

211 The first publications related to the application of mobile EEG in the construction industry
212 emerged around 2011 [99]. This was later followed by a slow growth of publications throughout

213 the last decade, as depicted in Figure 2. By the end of the literature search, a total of 29 purely
 214 construction-based EEG studies were found. This may suggest that construction researchers have
 215 accepted the concept behind EEG technology and trialed it in the construction sector in recent
 216 years. Nonetheless, this concept has been disseminated mostly through the first-tier construction
 217 journals (in terms of impact factor), such as *Automation in Construction* (standing for one-third of
 218 the publications) and a number of American Society of Civil Engineers’ journals. EEG has not yet
 219 been ubiquitously used in this sector.



220
 221 **Figure 2:** Annual distribution of the publications, (*: this bar includes publications up until April
 222 2021).

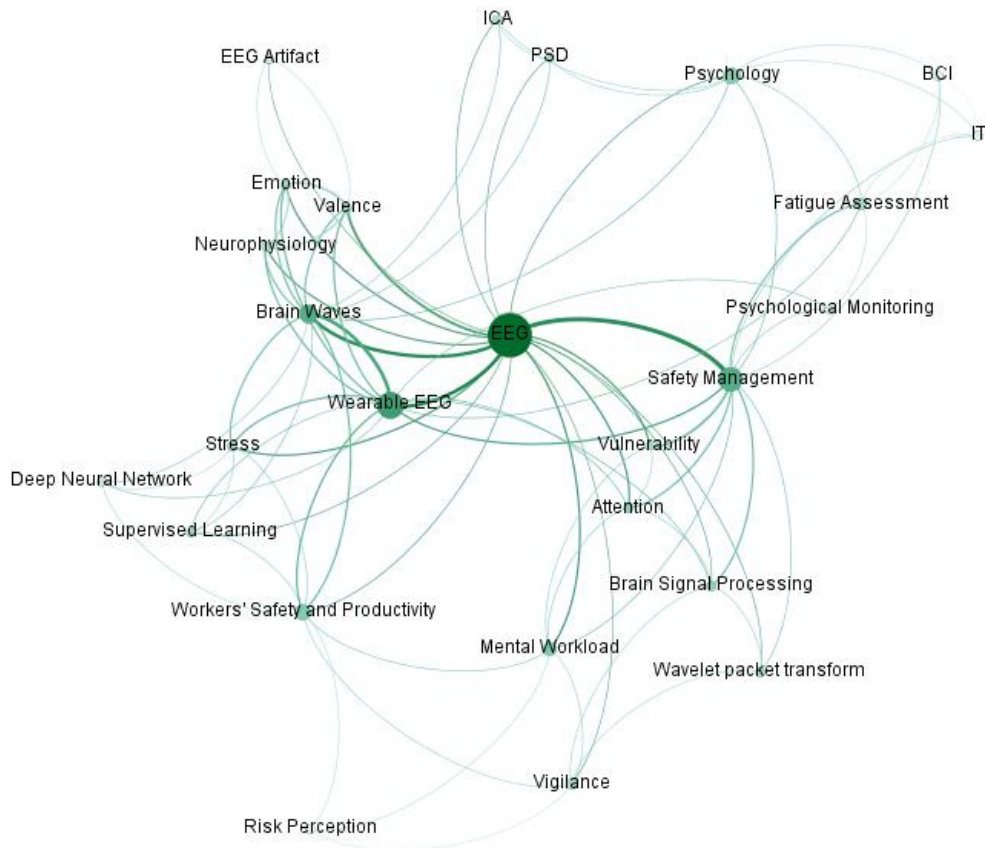
223
 224 *3.2 Content analysis*
 225 *3.2.1 Keywords*

226 The SNA explores the relationships between entities and how these relationships influence a
 227 phenomenon, such as information, through a number of measures. In this study, the most popular
 228 individual centrality measures, including degree centrality, weight degree centrality, betweenness
 229 centrality and closeness centrality [100], were computed. The use of wearable EEG in construction
 230 studies varies according to the nature of the study or research problem. Therefore, a knowledge
 231 structure could be mapped by analyzing the keywords’ co-occurrence network [101]. In the
 232 network of keywords, generated by Gephi (0.9.2 version), the weight assigned to the link between
 233 two keywords is computed based on the number of articles in which both of the keywords exist
 234 [102]. The initial layout of the network was reformed by applying the force atlas algorithm for
 235 further visual clarity [103]. Moreover, nodes with more than two degrees were filtered out for
 236 further analysis and this resulted in a more visually accurate network.

237 To ensure a reliable analysis, similar terms, such as “wearable devices”, “wearable EEG”, “mobile
 238 EEG” and “wearable sensing”, were amalgamated. The size of the nodes and their color were
 239 adjusted based on the betweenness centrality measures. The betweenness centrality disclosed the

240 importance of location of the nodes and their effect on the whole network. The size of node labels
 241 was established in such a way to ensure the flow of information in the network was intelligible.
 242 Several analyses were conducted on the network, including the betweenness centrality and weight
 243 degree centrality. Eventually, a network consisting of 26 nodes and 95 links, as depicted in Figure
 244 3, was generated, indicating the keywords of construction EEG-based research.

245



246

247 **Figure 3:** Relationships and importance of keywords in construction EEG-based studies.

248 (In this network, between two particular nodes (keywords), the weight of the edge represents the number of papers
 249 in which both keywords existed. The size and color intensity of each node is justified based on the betweenness
 250 centrality. Nodes with less than two edges are filtered out from the network.)

251 In Table 2, analytical results of the network are presented. The relative importance of keywords is
 252 based on the values of betweenness centrality. As seen, wearable EEG, brain waves, and safety
 253 management are the most frequently used keywords in the research into EEG. “Psychology” and
 254 “workers' productivity” are the other two that relate to human factors and placed in the top ten
 255 keywords. The only keyword that presents the signal processing territory is “brain signal
 256 processing”, which appeared in only two publications in the literature [82, 104].

Keyword	Betweenness centrality	Weighted degree centrality	Relative importance
Wearable EEG	70	22	1
Brain waves	45	19	2
Safety management	44	14	3
Workers' productivity	28	10	4
Psychology	22	7	5
Mental workload	9	5	6
Brain signal processing	8	6	7
Fatigue assessment	7	7	8
Vigilance	5	5	9
Attention	1	5	10

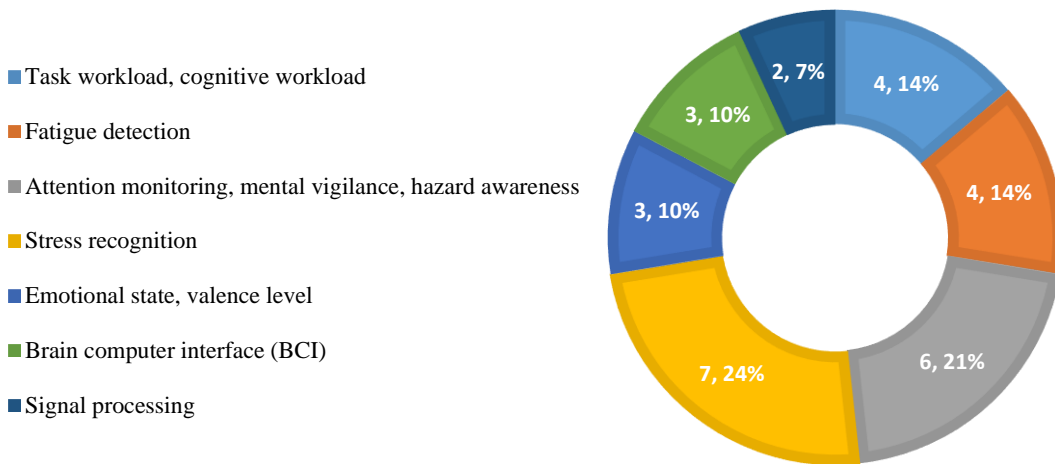
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259

Table 2: Top ten primary keywords of construction EEG-based studies

260 *3.2.2 Topics*

261 Task workload and cognitive load, fatigue detection, attention, vigilance and hazard awareness,
 262 stress recognition, emotional state and valence level, BCI and signal processing were found as the
 263 main topics of interest in EEG-based construction research. Figure 4 demonstrates the percentage
 264 of publications in each area of EEG adoption. As seen, the highest percentage of publications
 265 belongs to stress recognition. In spite of its top priority, the SNA results (shown in Table 2) does
 266 not classify it among the top ten keywords provided by researchers.



267

268

Figure 4: Topics of interest in the EEG-enabled construction research

269 Technically, EEG adoption in the construction industry is tied to the advent of suitable signal
 270 processing frameworks and their accuracy and effectiveness in practice. The signal processing
 271 method has received little attention in EEG-related research in the construction sector and, in

272 particular, for on-site applications. It is noteworthy that the findings of the betweenness centrality
273 of the keywords shows that EEG has been utilized for safety purposes rather than productivity,
274 and referring to workforce productivity in the context of publications does not indicate the focus
275 of the work.

276 3.2.2.1 Task workload allocation

277 Task workload plays a critical role in both the wellbeing and productivity of the workforce. One
278 of the main focuses of EEG research in the construction field is to assess the mental workload of
279 workers. An example is the work of Chen et al., which investigated the potential of applying EEG
280 for evaluating hazards (e.g., workers falling from high places, unsafe behavior) through time-
281 frequency analysis [98]. The mental demands of different construction activities were
282 quantitatively assessed and the signal patterns provided clear distinctions between the studied tasks
283 through their mental loads. In such types of research, the mental workload is correlated to the risk
284 level associated with construction tasks. One approach is to measure EEG signals transmitted from
285 workers' brains as a proxy for assessing their working memory [105]. The ERPs and time-
286 frequency based analysis have been applied to identify vulnerable workers. In line with this,
287 construction scholars have developed a novel framework to assess task workloads using EEG as a
288 quantitative system for monitoring the mental and memory conditions of the workers [106]. A
289 recent research has taken one step further to analyzing EEG signals for assessing task workload
290 with a view to ameliorate poor task allocation [107].

291 A dominant strategy in using EEG for task workload assessment has been the simplification of the
292 analyses. Simplification approaches include limiting the number of studied tasks, number of
293 electrodes, types of signals, and method of analysis [98, 104, 105]. The studies have concentrated
294 on three or four tasks to limit the complexity of obtained data. They may also constrain the number
295 of electrodes to one to four channels, mainly from Fp1, Fp2, Tp9, or Tp10 [104, 105]. In addition,
296 the focus has been placed on signals from alpha, beta, and gamma bands [98, 105]. Also, the data
297 analysis can be limited to recognizing overall patterns, such as statistical variance, and/or sudden
298 spikes in the recorded signals.

299 3.2.2.2 Fatigue detection

300 Early detection of fatigue among the construction workforce can reduce the accident rate. EEG
301 has been examined as a means of assessing workers' fatigue levels [108-111]. Fatigue levels have
302 been identified based on variations in a single type of signal or in a metric that combines multiple
303 types of signals. The signals of interest, thus far, have been alpha, beta, and theta. A drop in the
304 signal(s) or a ratio of different signals (for instance $(\text{Alpha1} + \text{Theta}) / \text{Beta1}$) can indicate a
305 fatigued worker [108-110]. Compared to the aforementioned approach for task workload analysis,
306 the EEG signal analysis for fatigue detection is more sophisticated. It may require employing data
307 classifiers, such as Support Vector Machine (SVM)-based algorithms, in the signal processing
308 stage [109]. The complexity of fatigue recognition has led to applying EEG in conjunction with
309 devices for measuring physiological states of workers. Skin temperature and heart rate, combined
310 with brainwave signals, can provide an understanding of both physical and mental fatigue [109].
311 However, these factors are interrelated and, thus, researchers have begun to investigate such
312 interrelationships [111]. Fatigue is a complex phenomenon and cumulative in nature and,

313 therefore, requires studying construction workers over a longer period of their performance. This
314 exposes practical challenges to using EEG on construction sites [108].

315 3.2.2.3 Attention and vigilance

316 EEG-enabled publications attempting to investigate the level of attention and vigilance of
317 construction workers are limited but have been increasing in recent years. The central aim is to
318 measure workers' perceptions and reactions to site risks and hazards [112-115]. Mobile EEG
319 systems are used to identify varying vigilance levels of workers with different demographic
320 backgrounds when they are undertaking tasks in risk-prone scenarios. Such investigations rely on
321 collecting different EEG signals, predominantly from 14 channels [113, 114]. However, it is highly
322 likely that a preprocessing stage is required to clean the data sets from artifacts caused by, for
323 instance, eye blinks [114]. In doing so, it is common to use frequency band filters. The paradigm
324 of experiments may set to ERP or frequency-based analyses. In the preprocessing stage, bandpass
325 filter (1-60Hz), notch filter (50Hz) and Independent Component Analysis (ICA) may be applied
326 while the signal features may be extracted and classified using Fast Fourier Transform (FFT),
327 Sparse Fast Fourier Transform (SFFT), Wavelet Packet Decomposition (WPD), and SVM
328 algorithms [113, 114]. An attempt has recently been made to synchronize the data obtained from
329 eye-tracker and EEG signals with a view to assess visual hazard recognition and its correspondence
330 with brain activity [115].

331 3.2.2.4 Stress recognition

332 Several studies have been conducted to assess the stress level of construction workers by mobile
333 EEG. They have all used 14-channel off-the-shelf mobile EEG devices. The effectiveness of stress
334 recognition, however, has significantly been dependent on artifact removal and data classification
335 stages [95-97, 116-119]. These require employing sophisticated computational analysis methods
336 to ensure accuracy of the results. An exemplary study proposed an EEG-based stress recognition
337 framework, which employs two deep neural network algorithms (i.e., a fully connected deep neural
338 network (FCDNN) and a deep convolutional neural network (CNN)), to classify the signals and
339 determine the stress level [97]. Data were collected from ten subjects who were performing tasks
340 in both hazardous and non-hazardous conditions, using a 14-channel EEG device and,
341 subsequently, artifact removal methods, such as bandpass filter and ICA, were performed. To
342 classify and measure stress levels, an FCDNN algorithm was applied using Neural Network
343 Toolbox in MATLAB, and its accuracy was 86.5%. In an effort to recognize stress levels in nearly
344 real time, Jebelli et al. used a self-developed algorithm, Online Multitask Learning, and predicted
345 the stress levels with 77.61% accuracy [116]. In another study, researchers applied both linear and
346 nonlinear SVM algorithms to recognize stress levels in the workers with 71.1% accuracy [96].
347 Principal component analysis (PCA) has been used to reduce the dimension of signal properties.
348 Moreover, fixed and sliding windows have been applied to extract time and frequency domain
349 features. In 2020, Arpaia et al. claimed more than 90% accuracy in recognition of stress using a
350 single differential channel with dry electrodes [95]. Signals were collected according to frontal
351 asymmetry and the collected data were analyzed in MATLAB. PCA was used in the preprocessing
352 stage and the four post-processing algorithms applied included K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN), SVM,
353 Random Forest and Artificial Neural Network (ANN). Although this study was conducted in a
354 non-construction context, the findings show the potential of algorithms in accurate stress

355 recognition. A new stream of research into this domain was introduced in 2020 and found that a
356 correlation between questionnaire-based and EEG-based stress recognition systems exists [118].

357 3.2.2.5 Emotional state and valence level

358 Concerning the use of EEG in evaluating emotional state and valence level, two studies were
359 identified in the literature. Jebelli et al. employed a mobile EEG device (Emotiv EPOC+) in safety
360 practice and tried to measure construction workers' valence levels at the workplace [120]. Four
361 EEG channels, including Af4, F4, Af3, and F3 were investigated, and EEG data were obtained
362 from three participants, who performed different kinds of tasks under three scenarios: on the
363 ground, on a ladder, and in a confined space. Hwang et al. applied a bipolar emotional model,
364 valence and arousal, to quantify the workers' emotional states [121]. Data were obtained using a
365 mobile EEG sensor with 14 channels; however, only signals from Af3, F3, Af4, and F4 were
366 investigated. The bandpass filter and ICA were applied to clear out the extrinsic and the intrinsic
367 artifacts, respectively. In the processing stage, mean power spectral density (PSD) of frequency
368 bands (i.e., alpha and beta) were calculated and, based on the power spectrum features, the frontal
369 EEG asymmetry was employed to measure emotional levels. To validate the result, researchers
370 applied the one-way analysis of variance method, and the results of this study shed light on
371 measuring and quantifying on-site workers' emotions and the effects of working conditions on
372 workers' emotions.

373 3.2.2.6 BCI

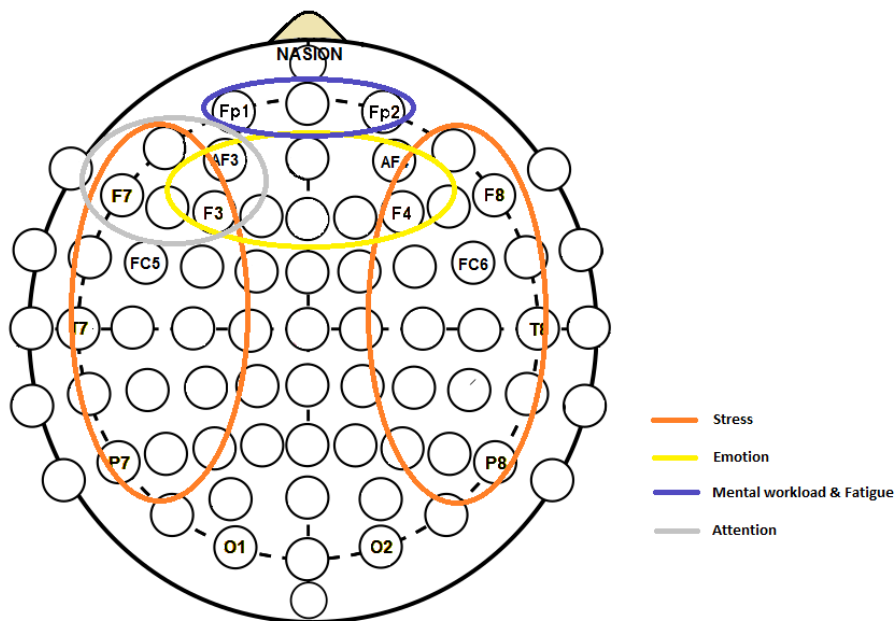
374 There are different views on EEG-based studies of BCI. In this paper, we classify a publication as
375 relating to BCI if construction operators have to interact with computers. A scientific attempt has
376 been made by Rezazadeh et al., who proposed a novel approach to monitoring workers' cognitive
377 load in a virtual environment [99]. In this research, two training environments were developed for
378 crane drivers, in which they were able to control the hoisted loads at a virtual construction site
379 using facial gestures. The results of this paper may lead to improving performance of crane drivers.
380 In 2021, Lui et al. proposed a framework for brainwave-driven human–robot collaboration in
381 which the robot detects the worker's cognitive load and adjusts the robotic performance
382 accordingly [122]. In another research effort, Lui et al. presented a BCI system based on workers'
383 brainwaves to remotely control a robot with 90% accuracy [123].

384 3.2.2.7 Signal processing

385 Signal processing is a part of nearly every EEG-based construction research. However, there are
386 only two publications predominantly focused on EEG signal processing of construction activities
387 [82, 104]. Since construction sites are dynamic in nature and wearable EEG headsets are prone to
388 noise and artifacts, obtaining high-level EEG signals on construction sites is of high importance.
389 The prominent work by Jebelli et al. proposed a framework to identify and sort out artifacts which
390 originate from body movements [82]. Liu et al. presented a signal processing framework to clear
391 out the ocular artifacts [104]. The researchers compared dependent component analysis with
392 traditional methods, ICA, and PCA. Their proposed methods yielded a promising result in order
393 to obtain high-quality signals on construction sites.

394 3.2.3 EEG electrodes

395 To provide a clear illustration of the investigated channels for each state, a zoned scalp is presented
396 in Figure 5 based on the data presented in the body of knowledge. Previous construction EEG-
397 based research with a focus on stress recognition examined a series of channels that cover almost
398 all the surface of the scalp [95-97, 116-119]. These channels include AF3, F3, F7, Fc5, T7, P7,
399 O1, O2, P8, T8, Fc6, F4, F8, and AF4. The EEG-based studies that investigated workers' emotional
400 states have had a focus on AF4, F4, F3, and AF3 channels. The emotional state in the frontal lobe
401 of the brain has been well investigated. The issue of fatigue was investigated in four studies [108-
402 111]. Fp1 is the channel by which the researchers assess workers' fatigue. Compared with fatigue-
403 related channel studies in the transportation sector, both studies emphasized on frontal channels,
404 especially Fp1, as the channels most related to fatigue. The issue of mental workload has also been
405 investigated in frontal lobe studies, especially through Fp1 and Fp2 channels. AF3, F7, and F3
406 were selected as the most relevant channels for investigating attention levels and mental vigilance
407 of workers. The research findings indicated that EEG signals disseminated from the frontal lobe
408 are highly correlated to the workers' mental and physical state. The aforementioned studies into
409 EEG electrodes provide information about those electrodes on the scalp which have not yet
410 received sufficient attention in construction-based EEG research. For instance, a future study could
411 focus on investigating whether workers' attention, while performing construction tasks, is related
412 to channels F7, F3, and AF3. A positive answer would mean the focus should be on the signals
413 generated from this part of the brain.



414
415 **Figure 5:** Electrode position and their cognitive effects used in construction studies

416
417 3.2.4 EEG analysis software

418 There are numerous platforms available for processing EEG signals. The most common ones that
419 are being used include R programming language (R Core Team, 2013), MATLAB (The

420 Mathworks, Inc., Natick, MA, USA) and its toolboxes (e.g., fieldtrip [124], EEGLab [125]), Python
 421 programming language (Python Software Foundation), and brain vision analyzer software (Brain
 422 Products GmbH). Among them, MATLAB and its toolboxes are perhaps the most commonly used
 423 software suite as four out of five papers published in this domain have used this platform.

424 *3.2.5 Applied hardware in EEG signal acquisition*

425 The two most common devices for data acquisition on construction sites in previous studies are
 426 NeuroSky and Emotiv. NeuroSky offers both sensors (TGAM) and headsets (MindWave), and
 427 Emotiv products cover a wide range of devices for different purposes (e.g., Epoc+, Insight, Epoc
 428 Flex). Nearly 74% of the experiments used Emotiv and 26% employed NeuroSky products (see
 429 Table 4). There is no explicit mention of prioritizing one product over another in the scientific
 430 literature.

431 *3.2.6 DSP and the level of accuracy*

432 Due to transient and dynamic nature of construction site environments, it is important to develop
 433 suitable DSP frameworks for gathering signals. EEG signals are the signatures of neural activities
 434 [9], and among these signals there are some signal distortions, or artifacts [72]. Signal processing
 435 has three main stages, including image acquisition, preprocessing, and processing, as shown in
 436 Table 3. Image acquisition refers to the signal to record. Preprocessing consists of two steps,
 437 including artifact removal and data filtering. Processing also includes two steps, which are feature
 438 selection/extraction and classification [126]. The techniques and approaches adopted in the
 439 previous studies for the preprocessing stage include: ICA/high pass filter, low pass filter, and
 440 Notch filter (57%), bandpass filter (22%), third order one-dimensional median filter, Savitzky-
 441 Golay filter, and moving average filter (7%), time window (7%), and ICA/multi-nominal logistic
 442 regression (7%). The preprocessing and processing methods that have been applied are presented
 443 in Table 3.

444

Preprocessing	Processing
Data filtering/Artifact removal	Feature selection and extraction/Classification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICA • PCA • DCA • Multi-nominal logistic regression • High pass filter • Low pass filter • Notch filter • Third order one-dimensional median filter • Savitzky-Golay filter • Moving average filter • Time window (Hanning window, Rectangular window). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power spectral analysis • Online multitask learning • Machine learning (K-Nearest Neighbors, Gaussian discriminant analysis, SVM with different kernel functions (e.g. linear, nonlinear, quadratic, cubic, Gaussian)) • Convolutional neural network • Fully connected neural network • PCA • Sliding time window • WPD • Decision trees • Boosted trees • Mathematical method.

445

446 **Table 3:** Common methods and techniques for EEG signal processing

447

448 Analyzing the accuracy of the applied DSP methods provides insight into the suitability of the
449 algorithms and techniques, which is valuable to future studies. A DSP approach that yields a high
450 accuracy result has the capacity to be reutilized in future research. As research into EEG in the
451 construction discipline is relatively new, only a very limited number of the papers investigated the
452 accuracy of their algorithms. Thus far, there are five publications that have examined the accuracy
453 of their DSP algorithms. For instance, Aryal et al. applied several algorithms to record and collect
454 EEG signals for scrutinizing workers' fatigue; the boosted trees have yielded the highest accuracy,
455 with 82.6% in the algorithm tested [109]. Other studies have employed various algorithms, such
456 as linear/non-linear SVM, online multitask learning (OMTL), CNN, FCNN, K-Nearest Neighbors,
457 and Gaussian SVM (Table 4). Among these, the FCNN (i.e., Fully Connected Deep Neural
458 Network) has yielded the highest accuracy, with 86.62%, followed by Gaussian SVM, OMTL, and
459 nonlinear SVM for recognizing the stress levels in construction workers (Table 4). One of the latest
460 publications in this field suggests using the combination of four algorithms, including KNN, SVM,
461 Random Forest, and ANN [95]. These methods together yielded an average accuracy above 97%
462 for a non-construction context.

463

Ref.	Focus of Study	Channels	Frequency bands	Hardware	Software	DSP		Accuracy (%)
						Preprocessing	Extracting, Classifying	
[98]	Mental workload	Fp1, Tp10	theta, alpha, beta, gamma	Neurosky	-	Time window, Lowpass filter	PSD, Engagement index	-
[108]	Fatigue	Fp1	low alpha	Neurosky	-	-	-	-
[105]	Mental workload, vulnerability	Tp10	alpha, beta, gamma	Neurosky	-	Time window	Engagement index, PSD	-
[106]	Mental workload	Fp1	alpha, beta, gamma	Neurosky	-	-	Frequency analysis, PSD	-
[109]	Fatigue	Beta 1 channel	beta	Neurosky	Neuro-Experimenter	Third order one-dimensional median filter, Savitzky-Golay filter, Moving average filter	Boosted trees	82.6
[82]	Signal processing	-	beta	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Low pass filter, High pass filter, Notch filter, ICA	Mean PSD	-
[112]	Attention, Vigilance	AF3, F7, F3	lower gamma frequency	Emotiv Epoc+	EEGlab	Low pass filter, ICA	PSD	-

[120]	Emotional state, Valence level	Af4, F4, Af3, F3	alpha, beta	Emotiv Epoc+	MATLAB	Bandpass filter (0.5<-<40 Hz), ICA	Valence value	-
[121]	Emotional state	Af4, F4, Af3, F3	alpha, beta	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Bandpass filter, ICA	Mean PSD, Frontal EEG Asymmetry	-
[95]	Stress	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	-	Emotiv Epoc+	MATLAB	Low pass filter, High pass filter, Notch filter, ICA	Fully Connected Deep Neural Network	86.62
[96]	Stress	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	delta, theta, alpha, beta	Emotiv Epoc+	MATLAB, EEGLAB toolbox	Bandpass filter (0.5<-<40 Hz), Notch filter, ICA	OMTL-VonNeuman	77.61
[97]	Stress	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	delta, theta, alpha, beta	Emotiv Epoc+	-	A bandpass filter (0.5<-<40 Hz), ICA	Non-linear SVM	71.1
[113]	Mental vigilance	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, AF4	alpha, beta, gamma	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Higher cutoff (>60 Hz), PCA, Event-related potential, Fast Fourier Transform	Wavelet packet transform	-
[116]	Stress	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	delta, theta, alpha, low beta, beta, high beta, gamma	Emotiv Epoc+	-	PCA, Low pass filter, High pass filter, Notch filter, ICA	Gaussian support vector machine	80.32
[114]	Attention and vigilance	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	delta, theta, alpha, beta, low gamma	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Fast Fourier Transform, Bandpass filter, PCA	Sliding window, WPD, Vigilance indices	-
[107]	Mental workload	Fp1	gamma	Neurosky	-	ICA	PSD, Three-way analysis of variance	-
[99]	BCI	Frontal, Temporal	alpha	BioPac system	ack100w	Lowpass filter (0.1Hz)	Root mean square, Fuzzy clustering	96.99%

[110]	Fatigue	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	alpha, beta, theta	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Notch filter (50Hz), Bandpass filter (0.5-50Hz), PCA (Channel selection)	Fourier transform (Time domain to frequency domain), power spectrum	-
[111]	Fatigue	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	theta, alpha, beta	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Filtering (0.5-40Hz), ICA	PSD, Mental fatigue index	-
[115]	Attention	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	delta, theta, alpha, beta, low gamma	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Filtering (60Hz), Clustering	Wavelet packet decomposition, Vigilance index	-
[117]	Stress	-	-	Emotiv Epoc+	-	Filtering, ICA	Fully connected neural network	79.26%
[118]	Stress	Fp1, Fp2	-	EEG-SMT (olimex)	MATLAB	PCA	KNN, SVM, Random forest ANN	>97%
[119]	Stress	Fp1, Fp2	-	Omnifit mindcare headset	-	-	Spectral edge frequency-90	-
[122]	BCI	-	-	Emotiv Epoc+	-	-	-	-
[123]	BCI	-	-	Emotiv Epoc+	-	-	-	-
[104]	Signal processing	AF3, F7, F3, FC5, T7, P7, O1, O2, P8, T8, FC6, F4, F8, AF4	-	Emotiv Epoc+	-	DCA	-	-

464

465

Table 4: Results of content analysis

466

467 3.3 Thematic and gap analysis

468 The current research into the EEG applications in the construction discipline was exhaustively
 469 reviewed, and their contents were analyzed in three different sections, including the research
 470 themes, research outcomes, and the gap analysis. Table 5 presents the outcomes of the analyses.

471

Ref.	Research Design			Research Outcomes			Gap Analysis				
	Conceptual	Case Study	Survey	Study Analysis	Framework	Tool/ System prototype	Confusion	Neglect			Application
								Over-looked	Under-researched	Lack of empirical research	
[98]		✓		✓			✓				
[108]	✓				✓			✓			✓
[121]		✓		✓					✓		
[112]		✓		✓					✓		✓
[105]		✓		✓					✓		
[106]		✓			✓		✓	✓			✓
[109]		✓		✓							
[82]	✓				✓						✓
[120]		✓		✓							
[95]		✓		✓							
[96]	✓					✓					
[113]		✓			✓						
[116]	✓					✓					
[107]	✓					✓					
[99]		✓		✓	✓						✓
[110]		✓		✓	✓						
[111]		✓		✓			✓				
[114]		✓		✓	✓						
[115]		✓		✓			✓			✓	✓
[122]		✓			✓					✓	✓
[123]		✓				✓					✓
[117]		✓		✓							
[118]		✓		✓							
[104]		✓		✓							
[8]			✓	✓					✓		
[97]		✓				✓			✓		
[10]			✓	✓					✓		✓
[14]			✓	✓						✓	
[119]		✓				✓			✓		
Total No.	5	21	3	18	8	6	4	2	7	3	9

472

473 **Table 5:** Research themes, outcomes, and research deficiencies of the collected publications

474

475 *3.3.1 Research themes*

476 Approximately 80% of the studies that adopted mobile EEG in construction can be categorized as
477 case studies. These studies largely focused on different technical aspects of EEG-based solutions
478 that predominantly contributed to construction safety. The remainder of the studies attempted to
479 discuss a conceptual foundation for the application of EEG in construction. There is a lack of a
480 structured study to survey opinions of experts and practitioners on the potential execution of
481 wearable EEG in construction projects. Moreover, a large-scale survey on the longitudinal study
482 should be conducted to understand the ambiguities pertaining to the applications of EEG in
483 construction.

484 *3.3.2 Research outcomes*

485 More than half of the published studies included some form of statistical/data analysis in deriving
486 their outcomes. These are mainly from the case study themes. These studies provide a scientific
487 ground for the adoption of EEG, its potentials, challenges, and recommendations to overcome the
488 challenges [109, 117]. There are four publications aimed at developing prototypes or systems
489 based on the conceptual and case study themes. For instance, Jebelli et al. proposed a stress
490 recognition system to detect workers' stress in a nearly real-time fashion [117]. Of the publications,
491 30% focused on developing a new conceptual framework, including logics or rules, for enhancing
492 EEG applications in the construction [82, 108].

493 *3.3.3 Research gaps*

494 The three types of gaps in the literature, including confusion, neglect, and lack of empirical
495 research, are discussed below:

496 *3.3.3.1 Confusion*

497 While there is extensive potential for using EEG in construction, its practicality may be viewed
498 with skepticism if the experimental studies do not conform to the real-world situations. It is
499 crucially important to assess the conducted methodology with hazardous tasks under real
500 circumstances. Thus, simple tasks and unreal experimental conditions are two issues encountered
501 by the researchers in this particular area. There are a number of works conducted under laboratory
502 settings for examination of their hypotheses (see Table 5). Such works have significant technical
503 merits; however, future studies are required to accommodate real-world settings.

504 The study conducted by Chen and Song is based on performing one simplified task to evaluate and
505 test their methodology [98]. Compared to the complex and diverse tasks undertaken by an
506 individual worker on a construction site, which require a high level of attention, the selected tasks
507 are usually simpler and require less attention. In addition, the test environment does not simulate
508 the construction site as the studies tend to focus on a short period of performing tasks. This may
509 lead to overlooking the accumulative workload associated with prolonged performance. While the
510 limitations of conducting research are understandable, it is important to focus on pertinent tasks in
511 an environment similar to a real construction site in order to generate a reliable EEG assessment
512 outcome.

513 3.3.3.2 Neglect

514 There are a number of issues of neglect in the literature of construction EEG-based research. First,
515 there is a lack of evidence to support the accuracy and reliability of the studies. For instance, the
516 DSP method and its accuracy have great importance in deriving research findings. Therefore, the
517 accuracy yielded from the DSP method should also be studied [105, 106]. On the other hand, many
518 of the existing publications have not provided sufficient information about applied DSP
519 algorithms. This impacts the replicability of EEG-related research. With the lack of such
520 information, new studies have to trial multiple algorithms in order to choose the most suitable
521 method for complex and dynamic environment of construction projects.

522 Moreover, the employment of cutting-edge approaches, such as machine learning algorithms, has
523 yet to be fully applied in EEG-related research. Machine learning approach has proven efficient in
524 dealing with the abundance of data and, thus, the digitalized data generated by EEG devices can
525 potentially be analyzed using such novel algorithms. As virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality
526 (AR) have advanced in the recent years they can provide a more realistic and immersive
527 environment for preliminary experiments to bridge the gap between research and practice.

528 3.3.3.3 Application

529 Vast majority of the published works have explicitly highlighted their contribution to the body of
530 knowledge. There are five publications (shown in Table 5) that require further clarity on how their
531 results contribute to the existing literature. On the other hand, due to insufficient knowledge about
532 the methodical approaches of EEG research in the construction discipline, a number of articles
533 seem to lack a strong underpinning theory [112, 119]. This has impeded conclusive validation of
534 the research findings. Employing a theory reinforces the findings and assists in systemic
535 identification and extension of directions for future research in this area.

536 Lastly, the current applications of EEG predominantly remain at a tactical level of on-site
537 construction management. The investigations on the usefulness of EEG need to be extended to
538 trigger changes in the existing policies for managing construction workforce.

539 3.4 Future research directions

540 To fulfill the aims of this research, potential applications and contributions of mobile EEG are
541 outlined below. Based on the analyses and the identified gaps, key future research directions are
542 summarized as follows:

543 3.4.1 Theoretical developments

544 Empirical research is required to scrutinize requirements for ubiquitous adoption of EEG in the
545 construction context. Technical viability, economic feasibility, industry perception and
546 acceptance, and legal aspects of applying EEG in construction projects can be key attributes of up-
547 coming studies. The outcomes of such research will assist in designing verifiable EEG case studies.
548 The world of theory is wide; however, the most relevant theories can be borrowed from sectors
549 such as psychology, neuroscience, and management science.

550 3.4.2 Application/scope development

551 One new direction is to use EEG for studying the optimal allocation of tasks to construction
552 workers. The extant literature has little or implicit reference to the potential of EEG for such

553 applications. However, this domain deserves a separate pathway to proactively address issues with
554 safety, workload imbalances within a crew, on-the-job skill training and skill promotion on one
555 common platform. Extreme workload is one of the main causes of fatigue in workers and EEG has
556 the potential to provide an evidence basis for a universally adoptable framework for job assignment
557 to construction workers. With growing recognition toward using human-assisted robots on
558 construction sites, it is envisioned that issues associated with human-machine interactions are on
559 rise. This opens a new avenue for EEG-based studies of human-machine interactions in order to
560 optimize the design and utilization of such robots and the design of a convenient environment for
561 human-robot interaction. In future construction research, investigation and comparison of the
562 trades and processes in which wearable EEG has been used is of high importance. To consider real
563 construction trades and demonstrate EEG contribution will contribute to a wider adoption of this
564 technology. Trialing EEG on a wide spectrum of construction tasks with varying levels of
565 complexity and risk can provide a more realistic picture about capabilities and limitations of EEG-
566 based research.

567 *3.4.3 Methodological developments*

568 Signal processing has significant potential in improving and expanding the current application of
569 EEG in construction. Future research can further extend the focus on developing hybrid analytical
570 methods for preprocessing (noise and artifacts removal) and post-processing (clustering and
571 pattern recognition) of the collected data from construction sites. Attention can be paid to
572 visualizing the outcomes of analyzed data in order to enable rapid diagnosis of issues with
573 workplace and workers' wellbeing. Future construction studies could also focus on advancing
574 EEG-based research in virtual environments using technologies such as AR and VR. Such
575 platforms enable nearly limitless experimental settings, simulating real-world scenarios in an
576 economic way. More importantly, AR and VR can come into play for assessing the efficacy of
577 signal processing algorithms. Signal processing is an evolutionary and iterative process in most
578 cases relying on data abundance. Hence, existence of cost-effective platforms can facilitate the
579 improvement of this process. Another potential application of VR technology in this field is to
580 investigate the possibility of VR-based construction safety training. Hybridizing EEG devices with
581 other easy-to-use biometric technologies (such as temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure
582 meters) is an area to examine whether and how such technologies can complement or act as a
583 proxy for one another in assessing workers' wellbeing and safety.

584 **4. Conclusions**

585 This paper provided a comprehensive review of the EEG technology and its applications in
586 construction research. The systematic review was founded on three pillars consisting of
587 bibliometric, thematic, and gap analyses. The study characterized the EEG tools and gears,
588 experimental paradigms, topics, keywords, and network of researchers. Moreover, it outlined the
589 major research theme and signal processing approaches. The review highlighted the gaps in EEG-
590 related research through three modes of confusion, neglect and application. Then, it derived
591 various directions for future research.

592 There are diverse types of EEG devices available in the market. Besides cost factors, selecting a
593 suitable device is mainly based on the movability, number of channels, type of electrodes and

594 amplifying quality of signals. Construction scholars have preferred off-the-shelf wireless EEG
595 devices with up to 14 channels and dry electrodes along with a conventional amplifier. The
596 dominant experimental paradigms include ERP analysis, frequency-based analysis, frontal
597 asymmetry metrics, and cognitive-affective metrics. The US and China are leading the research
598 into EEG-enabled construction and the major topics of interest are stress recognition, attention
599 monitoring, vigilance, and hazard awareness. “Wearable EEG”, “brain waves”, and “safety
600 management” convey the highest weighted degree of centrality in the extant keywords. Case
601 studies are the main research approach in applying EEG to construction. Some of the construction
602 scholars have pursued a simplification strategy by limiting the number and complexity of studied
603 tasks and trialing in laboratory settings. Moreover, DSP has been limited to the signals from a few
604 channels in some cases, for instance, only Fp1 for workload assessment, due to the high level of
605 artifacts and noise associated with the collected signals. Under such scenarios, a pattern of spikes
606 in the recorded signal is attributed to anomalies of tasks or workplace conditions. Other studies
607 have proven the potential of applying advanced preprocessing filters and post-processing
608 classifiers in drawing accurate conclusions about tasks, workplaces, and workers.

609 Future research should be directed towards theoretical development, scope expansion, and
610 methodological advancement. Theoretical development can focus on empirical research to
611 scrutinize requirements for ubiquitous adoption of EEG in construction and enhancing the
612 theoretical foundations of EEG-based construction research. Scope expansion can divert attention
613 to studying a wider spectrum of site tasks, optimal job assignments, workers' productivity, and
614 interactions between workers and human-assisted robots. Methodological developments should
615 mainly place emphasis on advancing DSP and trialing EEG in conjunction with other digital
616 technologies.

617 **Declaration of conflicting interests**

618 None.

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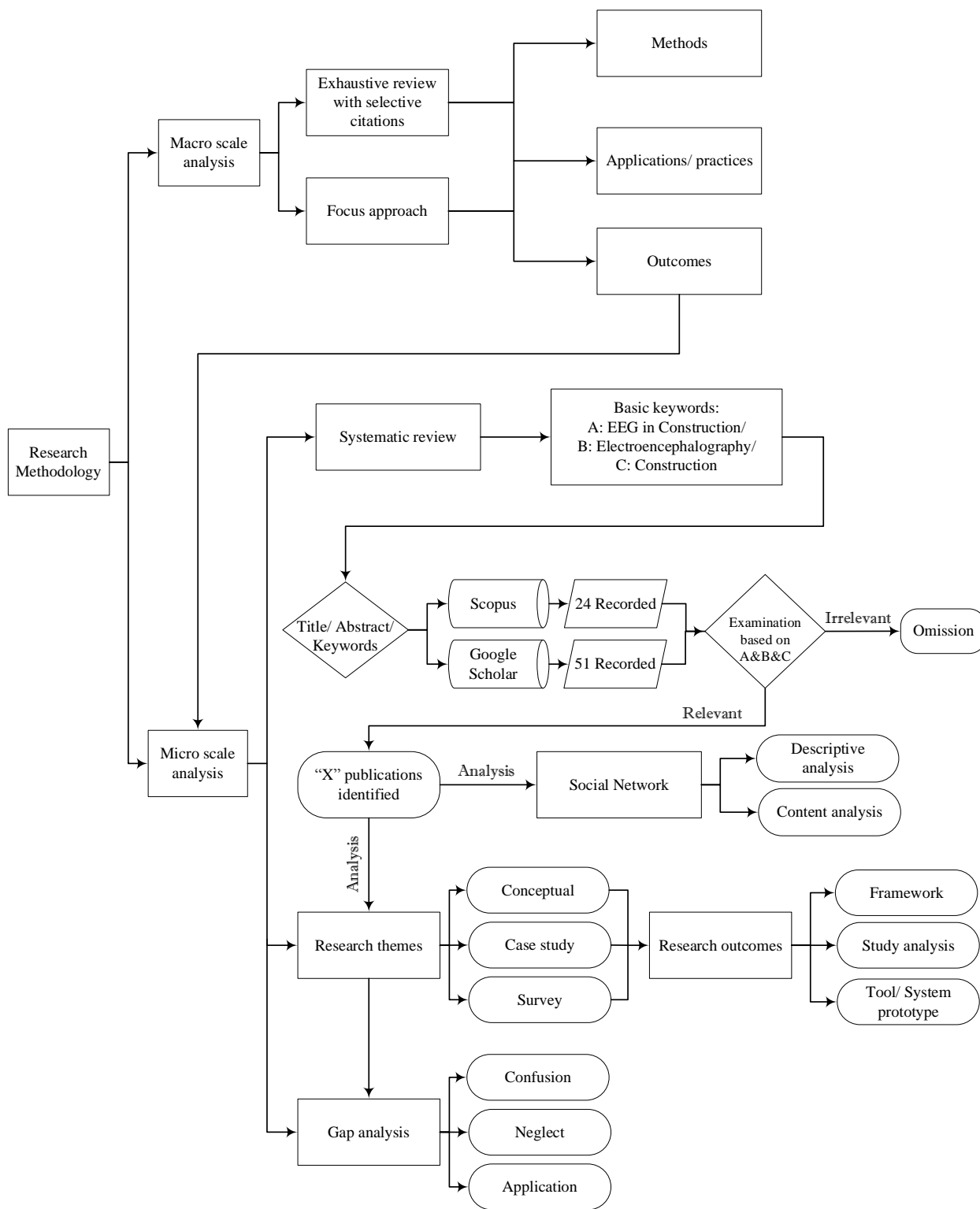


Figure 1

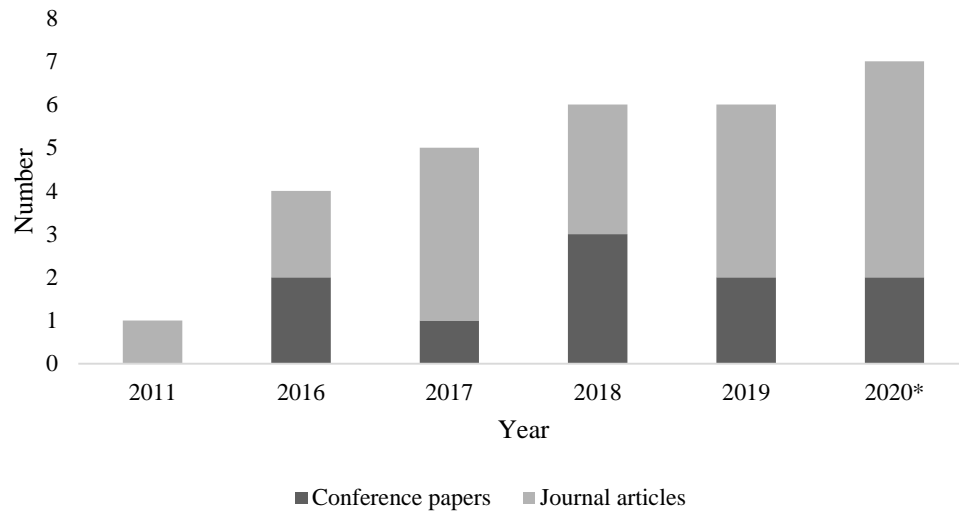


Figure 2

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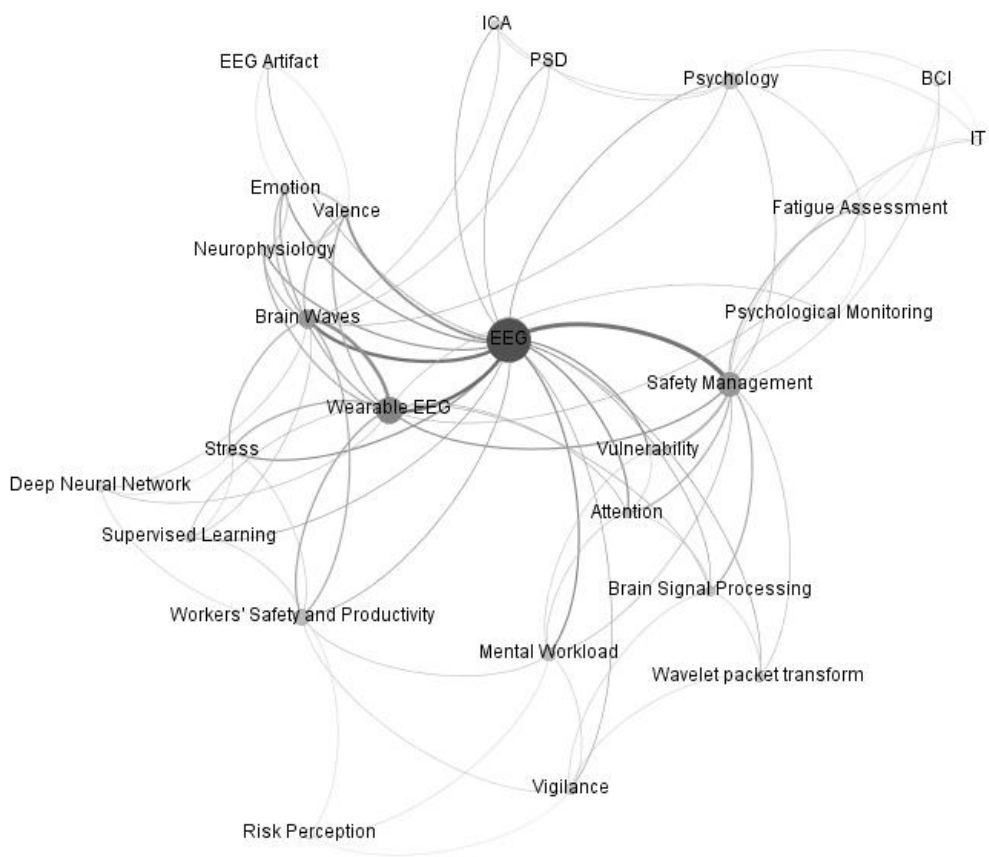


Figure 3

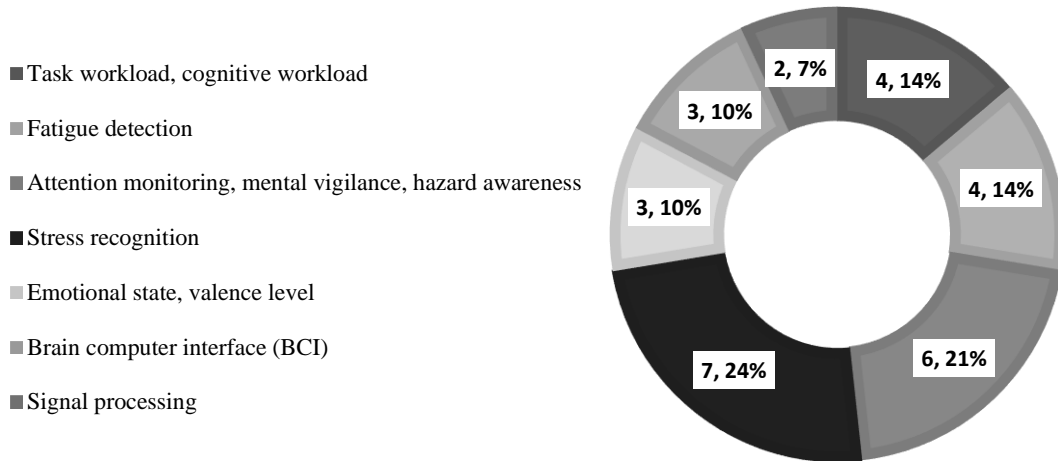


Figure 4

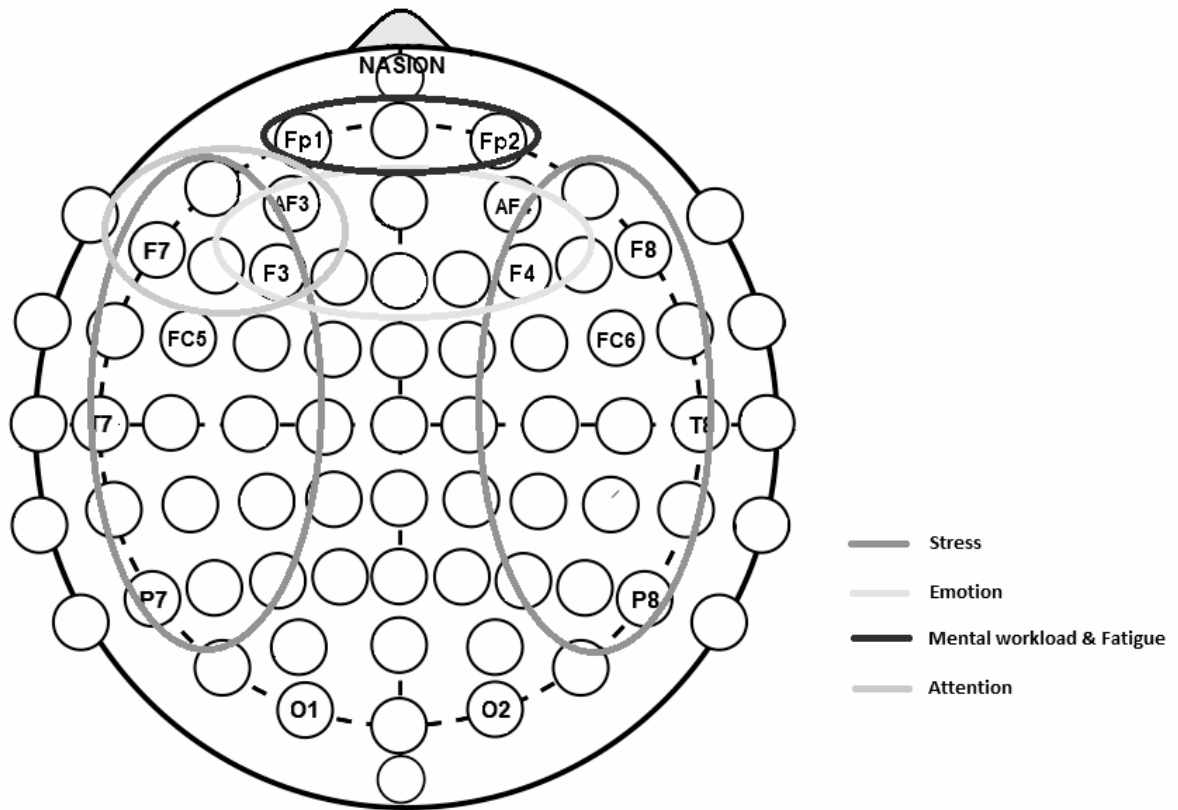


Figure 5

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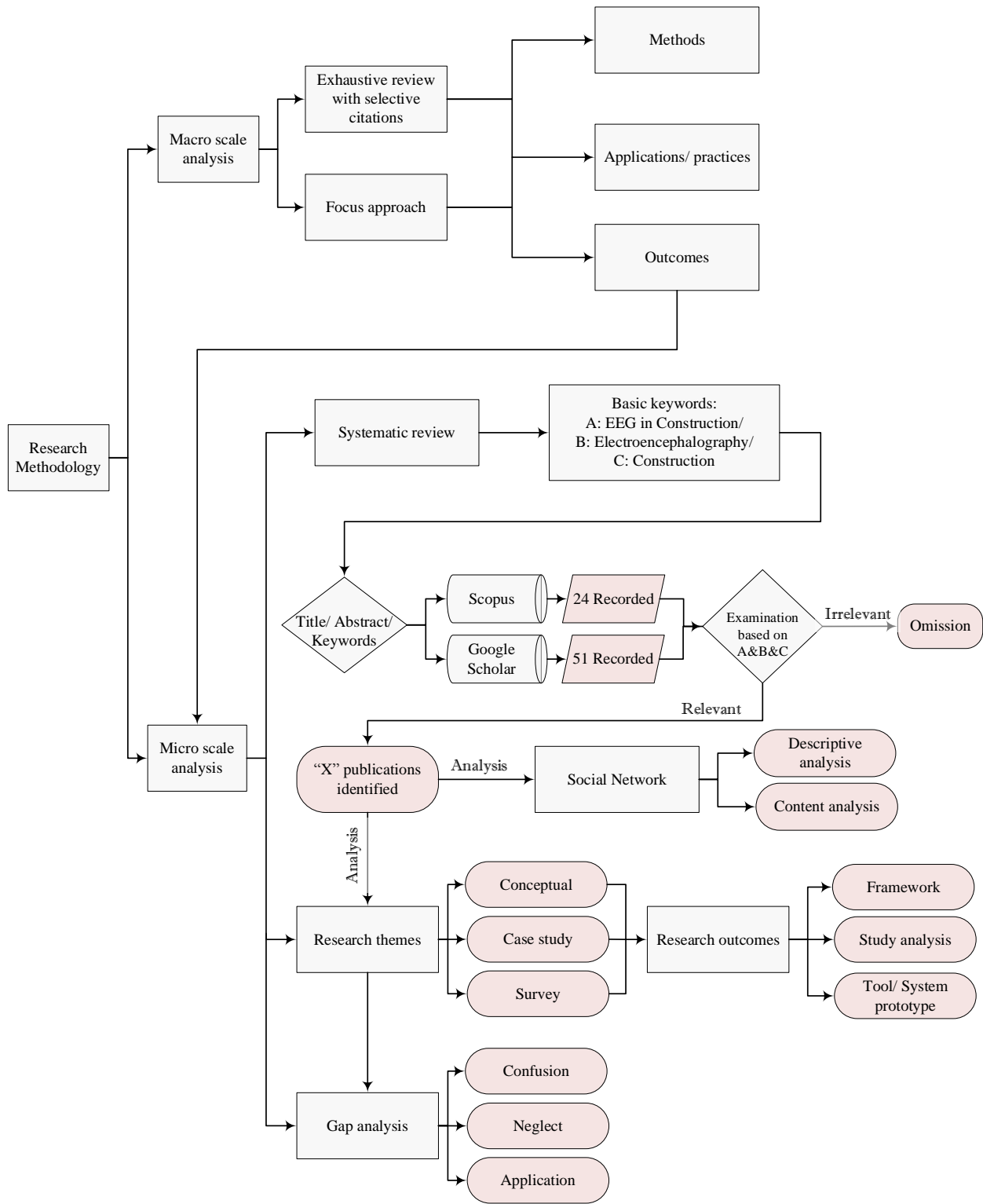


Figure 1

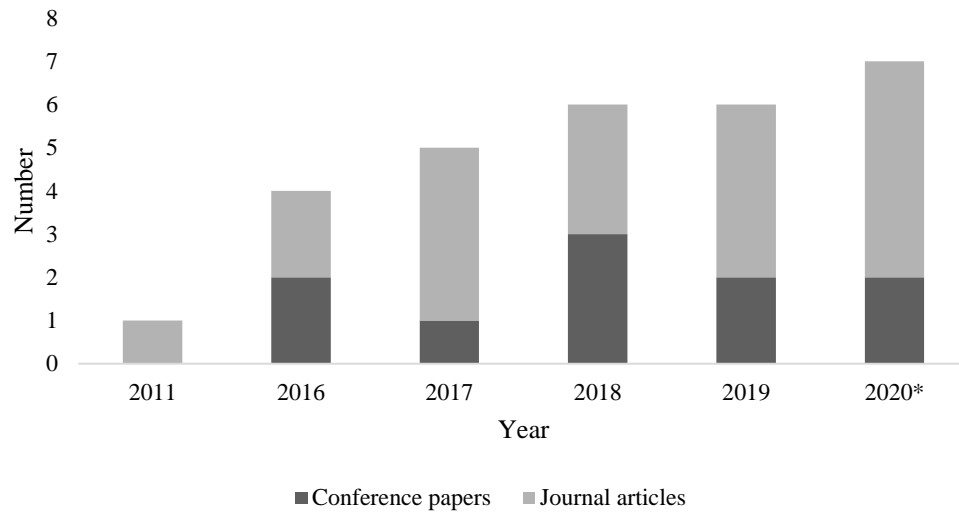


Figure 2

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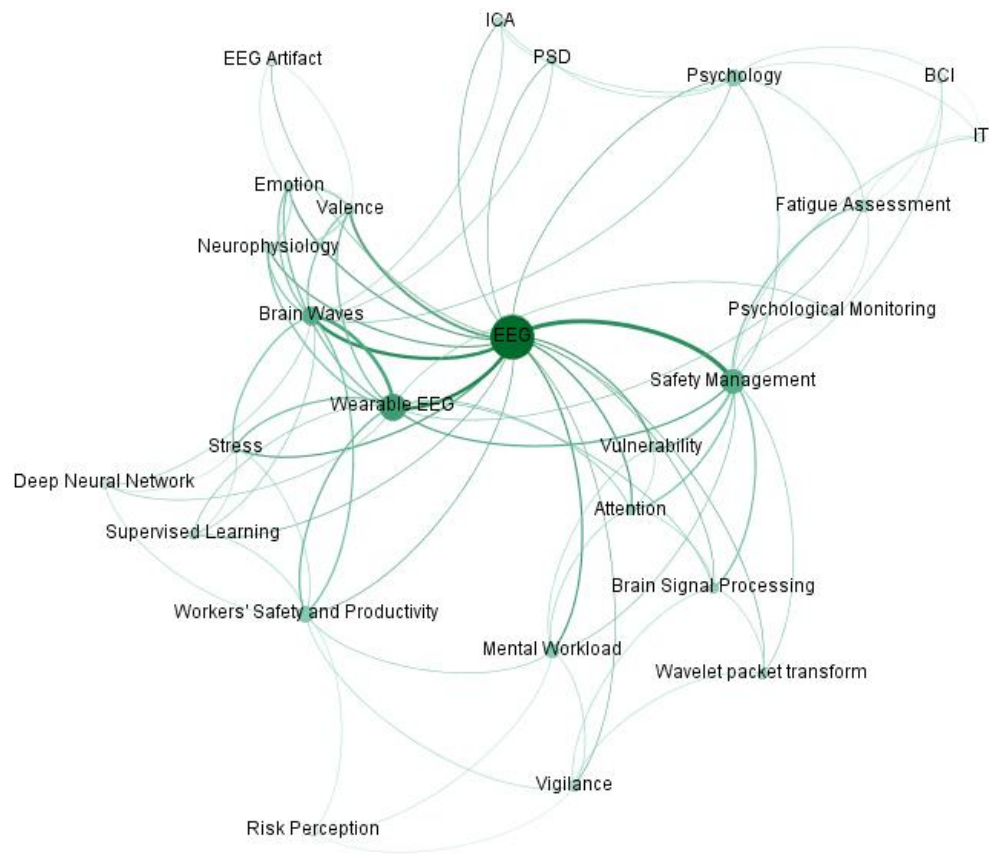


Figure 3

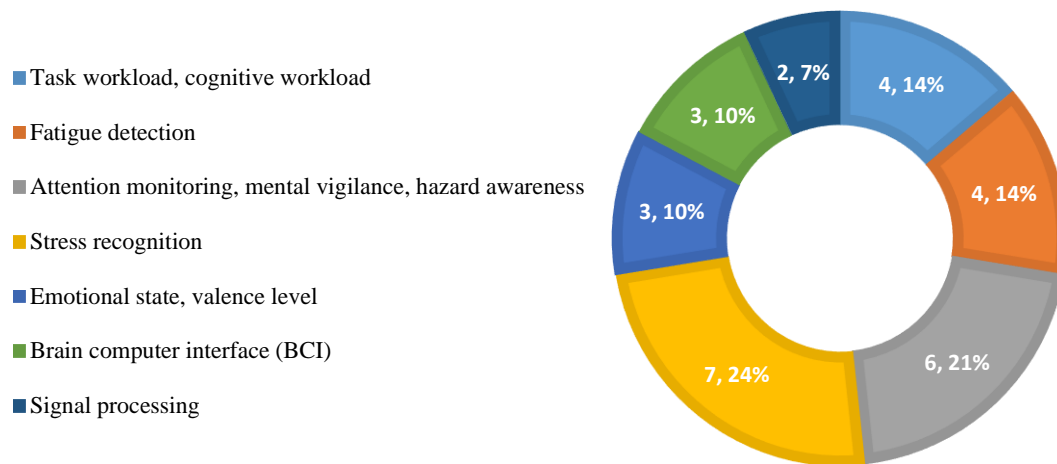


Figure 4

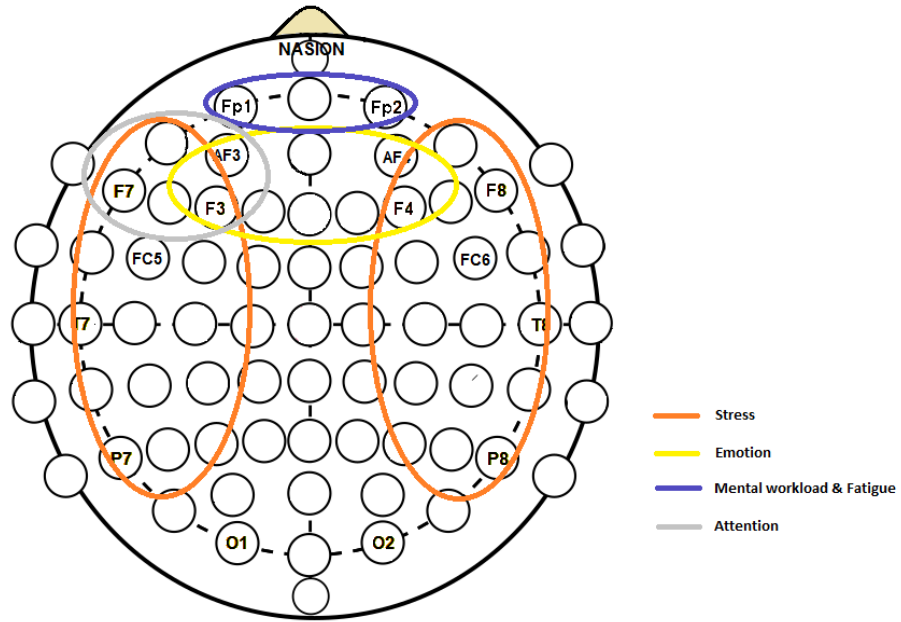


Figure 5